



## HALTON LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS – 2026/27 ACADEMIC YEAR

- 1.0 This document is intended to fulfil the statutory requirements for admissions into reception class in maintained infant and primary schools.
- 2.0 This Co-ordinated Primary Scheme applies to all those schools detailed on pages 8 and 9 of this document. Halton Borough Council (as the Local Authority - LA) is the Admission Authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools, and the Governing Body of each voluntary aided or academy school is the admission authority for the school.
- 3.0 Parents/carers **must** complete their home LA's preference form, therefore if a non-Halton resident is seeking admission to a Halton school, (or vice-versa) they must complete their own authority's form which will then be forwarded to the relevant authority and LAs will then share any cross border applications for consideration.
- 4.0 Halton residents will be required to complete a Halton preference form and will be given the opportunity to express a preference, with reasons, for up to 3 primary schools regardless of which authority the school is in. The LA must invite applications on the preference form and the preference form must comply with mandatory provisions and the requirements of the School Admissions Code. This form will be available on-line and parents are encouraged to apply for a school place via the Halton Borough Council website at [www.halton.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.halton.gov.uk/schooladmissions).
- 5.0 Where a Voluntary Aided School requires supporting information e.g. asking for a reference from a priest or other religious minister for a faith school, or details of baptism etc parents may be required to complete a supplementary form and VA schools **must** inform parents of their requirements within their school's published admission arrangements.
- 6.0 Admission authorities (the LA for community and voluntary controlled schools, and governing bodies for voluntary aided and academy schools) **must** ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. In Halton, as statutorily required, an Equal Preference Scheme is operated. Within

the equal preference scheme all preferences are considered equally against each school's published admission criteria. After all preferences have been considered if only one school named on the preference form can offer a place the maintaining LA will send out an offer of a place. If more than one school can offer a place parents will be offered a place at whichever of those schools is ranked highest on the preference form. This may not be the first preference school. If a school becomes oversubscribed then places will be allocated in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria.

- 7.0** Admission authorities **must** provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday and parents are allowed to request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year. In Halton this already happens. Parents can request their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age and admission authorities **must** accommodate these requests where it appears to be in the best interest of the child.
- 7.1** As recommended in the School Admissions Code the LA will allow parents/carers to defer their child's entry to school until the child is of compulsory school age, providing the parent applies and is offered the place within the normal admissions timetable, and the place is taken up within the same academic year.
- 7.2** In addition, the LA, as detailed within the Department for Education Guidance document "Admission of summer born children: advice for local authorities and school admission authorities" (updated April 2023) will ensure that flexibilities exist for children whose parents do not feel they are ready to begin school in the September following their fourth birthday. School admission authorities are responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to, but are required to make a decision based on the circumstances of the case. In these cases the School may seek the professional views of Local Authority officers including the Special Educational Needs Assessment Team, the Education Welfare Service, and the Educational Psychology Service, together with any other agencies who are involved with the child/family.
- 7.3** It should be noted that if a child is presently attending a nursery class/early years setting they do not have an automatic right to transfer to the primary school to which the nursery/early years setting is attached (the only exception being The Grange School which is an all-through school). Parents/carers are required to indicate a preference for a primary school along with all other parents/carers. The same applies for children who already have siblings already at a particular school, parents/carers must complete a preference form along with all other parents.

## **8.0 APPLYING FOR A PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACE FOR SEPTEMBER 2026**

- 8.1** Halton LA publishes online an “Admission to Primary School” booklet (a Composite Prospectus). A letter and information leaflet will be issued to all Halton Primary Schools and will be available at Halton Direct Link Offices, Halton Libraries, on line via the council’s website, and upon request from the Admissions Team. The booklet will be published online in **September 2025** and the on-line application system will be available at the same time.
- 8.2** The preference form will seek three preferences in ranked order. All applications, whether made online or submitted in paper format (by request only) must be submitted by no later than **15<sup>th</sup> January 2026**. This closing date is a statutorily set closing date. The online application system will not be available after this date and late applications must be submitted on a paper copy of the preference form.
- 8.3** Halton resident parents may request information (a prospectus) regarding schools in neighbouring local authorities but **must** complete their preferences on their home LA form.
- 8.4** The Admissions Team will load all preferences onto the database including those received from neighbouring LAs (inter-LA exchange to take place week commencing Monday 26th January 2026). Halton LA will then forward all application details, regardless of whether they are first, second and third preferences to all Voluntary Aided schools and Academies where admission is being sought, at latest by Friday 6th February 2026. The Admissions Committee of those governing bodies **must** meet and place in ranked order against their criteria the details of all pupils applying to their school. Governing bodies must treat first, second, and third preferences equally against their admissions criteria, and **must** then notify the Admissions Team by Sunday 1st March 2026 all pupils’ details in ranked order against their criteria.
- 8.5** The LA will then undertake a final data exchange with neighbouring LAs to ensure that all children have an allocated school by Friday 13th March 2026.
- 8.6** When all preferences have been considered and allocations finalised, Halton residents will be able to view their allocated school place online on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026**, together with details of the appeal process if applicable. Letters advising of the allocated school place will be posted to parents submitting a paper copy of the preference form on this date. Parents/carers will be required to decline any offer of the school place within 10 school days. If the LA does not hear from the parent/carer then it is assumed the place has been accepted.
- 8.7** Parents will have until Monday 18th May 2026 to lodge any appeals with the LA.

## 9.0 OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

9.1 If a Halton community or voluntary controlled school becomes oversubscribed, places will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria:

- 1) Looked after children and children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order), and children who appear to the Local Authority as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (IAPLAC);
- 2) Siblings – pupils with elder brothers or sisters including half brothers and sisters and unrelated children **living together as part of the same household**, already attending the school and **expected to continue in the following year**;
- 3) Pupils living nearest to the school measured using the LA's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) address point system which measures a straight line distance from the unique address point of the child's permanent address to the unique address point of the school in metres.

For admission to community and voluntary controlled schools the following notes apply:

a) Children who have an Education, Health & Care Plan will be allocated a place at the school named in the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). Where a child with an EHCP is allocated a place this will reduce the number of remaining places available to allocate within the above oversubscription criteria. All placements of children with an EHCP will be determined by the SEND Team and parents of children with an EHCP should discuss this with their child's SEND Coordinator, as an application does not need to be made.

b) If oversubscription occurs within any one of the above criteria 1-3, places will be allocated on distance grounds as described within the distance criteria (3) above. In the instance of a tie regarding distance for the last place to be offered (to two decimal places in metres), a place will be offered using the electronic admission system's random allocation function.

c) Where applications are received for twins, triplets etc, the LA will apply the oversubscription criteria and will oversubscribe the school if a family would otherwise be separated.

d) The address to be used in measuring distance for the purpose of allocating school places will be the child's permanent home address. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility the LA will use the address where the child lives for the majority of the week, e.g. where the child wakes up between Monday and Thursday. Details should be provided to enable the Local Authority to determine which address will be used for admission purposes. If sufficient evidence has been provided then this address will be used for assigning a criterion to the application. Where there is dispute or equal nights are slept, the address provided for claiming child tax credits or equivalent will be applied to the admission application. In such circumstances, documentary evidence must be provided. It may also be necessary for the Council to carry out checks that the address given is genuine and parents may be requested to produce further documentary evidence of the child's address.

The above criteria will apply without reference to the Halton Borough Council boundary.

e) Where applications are received from families of UK Service personnel and other Crown servants, school places will be allocated to children in advance of the approaching school year if accompanied by an official MOD, FCO or GCHQ letter declaring a return date with full address details and providing they would meet the criteria when they return to the UK.

f) If none of the parent's preferences can be met, Halton LA will allocate a school unless there are insufficient places remaining in the authority. In Halton, a place will be allocated at the nearest school, with places available, to the home address measured in a straight-line distance measurement from the child's permanent residence to the school. This does not affect parent's rights to appeal for a place at the school(s) they have been refused.

## **9.2 THE GRANGE ALL THROUGH SCHOOL**

The Grange is a designated all through school, therefore children enrolled in the nursery at the closing date will automatically transfer from the nursery to infants, infants to juniors, and juniors to secondary within The Grange. Following the transfer of those children from the nursery to reception class the remaining places will be allocated in accordance with the school's admissions criteria. If a child is enrolled to the nursery after the primary closing date, and allocations have been made and the school is full, the child will be placed on the waiting list.

## **10.0 LATE APPLICATIONS FOR HALTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Late applications for places at Halton Local Authority maintained community and voluntary controlled schools received after the closing date will not be considered until after the main allocation of places has taken place for all those applications received on time. If an application is received after places have been allocated and the school(s) of

preference are oversubscribed, the child will be placed on the school's waiting list, the child's position on the waiting list being determined by the admission policy. Parents have the right of appeal if admission is refused and details on the appeals process are given in paragraph 15 below. If parents are making a late application to a voluntary aided school or academy the school will advise how this will be dealt with. Late applications **must** be made on a paper copy of the preference form which can be obtained from any of the Halton Direct Link Offices or directly from the School Admissions Team. The online application system is not available after the deadline for application, **15<sup>th</sup> January 2026**.

#### **11.0 CHANGE OF PREFERENCE**

If parents decide to change their preference after the closing date they will need to request and complete another preference form. The on-line facility will not be available after the closing date. If places have already been allocated the LA may not be able to meet the change of preference and the child's name will be added to the waiting list as detailed in paragraph 14 below. It should be noted that the online application process will cease on the closing date, so parents/carers will need to request and complete a paper copy of the application form.

#### **12.0 CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

If a pupil moves house **after the closing date of 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and before** 11th February 2026, parents must notify the LA. The LA may require documentary evidence to confirm this change of address. For changes made on or after 12th February 2026, the address used for the initial allocation of places will be the permanent place of residence provided in application before this date. A new address may be submitted for purposes of waiting list position if required and documentary evidence will be necessary to confirm this change of address.

#### **13.0 WITHDRAWAL OF OFFER OF A SCHOOL PLACE**

Halton LA and the admission authorities of schools in the LA, reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a school place in limited circumstances. These may include where a fraudulent/intentionally misleading preference form is received claiming a false sibling or false residence.

#### **14.0 WAITING LISTS**

The LA will maintain waiting lists for oversubscribed community and voluntary controlled primary schools. The waiting list will comprise of those pupils refused admission to the school(s) of preference. This list will be maintained from the time of initial allocation until the end of the Autumn Term (**31<sup>st</sup> December 2026**), at which point the waiting list will cease. If a place becomes available at an oversubscribed school, the place will be reallocated in accordance with the published over-

subscription criteria detailed above. Parents should be aware that their child's place on the waiting list might alter, either up or down, dependent upon the movement of other applicants. The waiting list forms part of the co-ordinated scheme, therefore applications received up to the end of the Autumn Term will be considered within the scheme, following which any applications received after this date will be dealt with as an in-year admission and the in-year application process will be applied.

## **15.0 ADMISSION APPEALS**

Parents who are not offered a place at any of their preferred community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided trust or academy schools have a right of appeal to an independent appeals panel under section 94 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be submitted in writing but parents have the right to present their case to the panel in person. Appeals will be conducted in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. The decisions of independent appeals panels are legally binding on all parties.

Regulations made under Section 1 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 limit the size of an infant class (in which the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6, or 7 during the school year) to 30 pupils per school teacher. Parents will have a right of appeal but an appeal panel can only uphold this appeal if it is satisfied that:

- a) It finds that the admission of additional children would **not** breach the infant class size limit; or
- b) It finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or
- c) It decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

The decisions of independent appeals panels are legally binding on all parties.

Applications for admission to Aided Church schools will be referred to the Admissions Committee of the governing body of the school concerned. The LA, acting on behalf of the governors, will notify parents of the result of their application. If the application is not approved parents will be notified of their statutory right of appeal.

## **16.0 SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

The LA as commissioner of school places is continually reviewing and monitoring the number of places available against projected pupil

numbers and updates head teachers accordingly. It is possible that occasionally, there may be certain geographical areas within the borough where demand for places is higher than the actual number of places available, and the LA will, in discussion with the school, give consideration to admitting above a school's Published Admission Number (PAN). Admitting above a school's PAN will only be agreed between the school and the LA where it is confirmed that to do so will not affect the school in the longer term and will not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring schools and providing it does not breach infant class size legislation.

The figure in brackets denotes the school's proposed Published Admission Number for 2026 but may alter as a result of any school reorganisation. Please note that schools for whom the LA are not the admission authority may still be in the process of determining their 2026 PAN and these figures may change as a result of consultation.

**COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

All Saints Upton C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (30)  
Astmoor Primary (25)  
Beechwood Primary (20)  
Brookvale Primary (40)  
Castleview Primary (20)  
Fairfield Primary (90)  
Farnworth C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (60)  
Gorsewood Primary (30)  
Hale C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (30) – an increase from current PAN of 25  
Halebank C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (15)  
Hillview Primary (30)  
Lunts Heath Primary (60)  
Moore Primary (30)  
Moorfield Primary (45)  
Murdishaw West Community Primary (30)  
Oakfield Community Primary (40)  
Pewithall Primary (30)  
The Brow Community Primary (25)  
Victoria Road Primary (30) – a reduction of 10 from current PAN of 40  
Westfield Primary (25)  
Weston Primary (30)  
Windmill Hill Primary (25)  
Woodside Primary (20)



**ALL THROUGH ACADEMY SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

The Grange (60)

**VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND:**

Runcorn All Saints' CE Aided Primary (20)  
St Berteline's CE Aided Primary (44) Consulting on a proposal to reduce to 30

**CATHOLIC:**

Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary (30)  
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Primary (30)  
St Basil's Catholic Primary (30)  
St Bede's Catholic Infant (75)  
St Bede's Catholic Junior (75)  
St Clement's Catholic Primary (30)  
St Edward's Catholic Primary (20)  
St Gerard's Roman Catholic Primary & Nursery (30)  
St John Fisher Catholic Primary (30)  
St Martin's Catholic Primary School (30)  
St Michael's Catholic Primary (30)  
The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary (20) Indicated they may wish to reduce to 15

**ACADEMY SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

Bridgewater Park Academy (30)  
Daresbury Primary (30)  
Ditton Primary (60)  
Hallwood Park Primary (25) – Shaw Trust considering reducing to 15, (Academy responsibility to consult and determine).  
Halton Lodge Primary (30)  
Kingsway Primary Academy (30)  
Palace Fields Primary Academy (30)  
St Augustine's Catholic Academy (25)  
St Mary's CE Aided Primary (35)  
St Michael's with St Thomas C E Primary (30)  
Weston Point Primary (20)  
Widnes Academy – Wade Deacon Trust are consulting on proposal to reduce from 30 to 20

**TIMETABLE FOR SEPTEMBER 2026 PRIMARY ADMISSIONS**

**15<sup>th</sup> January 2026**  
Closing Date for applications

**From Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026**  
Inter LA exchange of preferences

**By Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026**  
preference details sent to all VA  
and Academy schools to rank  
applications in criteria order

**By Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026**  
VA and Academy schools must have  
ranked all applications in criteria  
order and submitted the details to  
the LA

**By Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
Final exchange of data between  
neighbouring LAs to confirm  
allocations

**16<sup>th</sup> April 2026**  
Online notification of offer for  
parents submitting preferences  
online. Letter posted to parents  
submitting paper copy.

**By Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026**  
Appeals to be lodged with LA