

# Secondary schools and academies in Luton co-ordinated admission arrangements September 2026

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## Summary

1. This paper outlines the co-ordinated admission arrangements for secondary schools and academies for the Year 7 intake in September 2026. It also sets out arrangements for in-year admissions for academic year 2026/27. This scheme excludes admissions to special schools.

## Background

2. Co-ordinated admission schemes are intended to simplify the admissions process for parents whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination for Year 7 intakes establishes a mechanism that ensures every parent of a child living in a local authority area who has applied to a maintained school or academy is sent one, and only one, offer of a school place by their (home) local authority (LA).
3. Co-ordinated admission schemes do not affect the rights and duties of the Governing Bodies/Boards of Directors of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies to set and apply their own admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

## Luton context

4. There are currently three maintained secondary schools and ten academies in Luton. All are comprehensive.
5. The following two high schools are foundation schools. Responsibility for admission to these schools rests with the governing bodies.
  - Queen Elizabeth School
  - Lealands High School
6. The following 11 high schools are academies. Responsibility for admission to these schools rests with the Academy Trust:
  - Cardinal Newman Catholic School
  - Challney High School for Boys
  - Challney High School for Girls
  - Chiltern Academy
  - Denbigh High School
  - Icknield High School
  - Lea Manor High School
  - Putteridge High School
  - Stopsley High School
  - The Chalk Hills Academy
  - The Stockwood Park Academy

7. Luton operates a catchment area system. Parents are advised of their catchment area school/academy and of their right to express a preference for any school/academy.
8. Pupils are admitted to Luton schools/academies up to the published admission number for each school.
9. Foundation high schools and academies can commission the LA to undertake the allocation of places on behalf of their Governing Bodies/Board of Directors.

## Co-ordinated admission arrangements for the Year 7 intake

### Admissions process

#### Stage 1

Parents will be invited to express three preferences on a 'common application form' (either on-line or using a paper application). Parents will be able to apply for schools/academies within and outside the Luton area on this form. Parents who specify Cardinal Newman Catholic School as one of their preferences will also need to complete a supplementary form which will be provided to parents.

#### Stage 2

All applications are considered using the admissions criteria determined by the relevant admission authority.

#### Stage 3

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school/academy the highest ranking school/academy will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded.

#### Stage 4

Those pupils who have not been allocated a place at any of their preferred schools/academies will be allocated a school place at one of the nearest schools/academies to their home address with vacancies.

## Timetable

- **1 September 2025:** High school transfer round is available for parents to make applications.
- **Week commencing 8 September 2025:** Parents receive information on the transfer to high school process.
- **September/October 2025:** High school/academy open evenings take place.
- **31 October 2025:** Closing date for submission of application forms.
- **3 December 2025:**
  - Details of applications are sent to schools who do not want the council to undertake the ranking of applicants on their behalf.
  - Out of borough applications are sent to the relevant LA for consideration.

- **7 January 2026:** Admission authorities undertaking the ranking of applications must provide the LA's Admissions team with a list of applicants ranked against their admissions criteria.
- **2-27 February 2026:** Exchange of data between LAs:
  - Luton will notify neighbouring LAs of the outcome of applications for out of borough residents requesting a place at a Luton school
  - Luton LA receives notification of the outcome of applications to schools outside of the borough
- **27 February 2026:** Allocation lists will be available to high schools and academies.
- **2 March 2026:** Offer date.
  - Offer emails sent to parents during the course of the working day.
  - Decision letters will be sent to parents.
- **19 March 2026** – Late high school applications received by this date will be processed week commencing 20 April 2026.
  - The outcome of the late high school round will be posted to parents on 15 May 2026.
- **From May 2026:** Admission appeals take place.
- **30 April 2026** – Late high school applications received by this date will be processed week commencing 1 June 2026.
  - The outcome of the late high school round will be posted to parents on 25 June 2026.
- **23 July 2026** – Late high school applications received by this date will be processed and parents will receive the outcome of before September 2026. Applications received after this date will be processed as in-year applications and parents will receive the outcome in due course.

If schools/academies receive direct applications, they must inform Luton LA of the application and forward it to the council by the closing date of 31 October 2025, regardless of whether the child resides in the Luton area.

## Change of address

10. For the purposes of allocating places, in the initial allocation, where a school is oversubscribed the pupil's catchment area will be determined by their home address as at 31 October 2025.
11. Children who gain a place at a school because their parents/carers have given the council a false home address will have their place withdrawn.

## Late applications

12. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered in the initial allocation of places, except in very exceptional circumstances.
13. Where parents have submitted an application before the closing date, but then seek to change their preference after the closing date, this late expression of preference will be treated as a 'late' application and will not be considered in the initial allocation of places, other than in exceptional circumstances.
14. Late applications and late changes of preference will be processed as soon as possible after 2 March 2026. Late applications for a Year 7 place must be routed through Luton LA until the end of the Summer term.

## Applications for schools outside of Luton

15. Luton resident parents wishing to apply for a school or academy outside of Luton must apply using Luton LA's application process. The council will ensure that applications for a place at schools outside of Luton are sent to the relevant local authority (LA) for consideration. Application forms submitted by Luton parents, direct to other LAs, will not be accepted.
16. The council will have regard to whether a place can be offered at a school outside of Luton. If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school, and the highest ranking offer is for an out of borough school, this place will be offered and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded.
17. Parents will also be advised to check with the out of borough school to see if they need to complete any supplementary forms.
18. Luton LA will liaise with neighbouring LAs over the outcome of applications for Luton pupils. Luton Council will send the decision letter to the parent.

## Applications for Luton schools from parents residing outside of the LA area

19. Parents living outside of Luton must apply to their home LA for a place at a Luton school or academy. Their home LA will pass the application to Luton Council for processing. Luton LA will then notify the applicant's home LA as to whether a place can be offered. The applicant's home LA will inform the parent of the outcome of their application.
20. Where a family is moving to Luton they may apply direct to Luton Council for a school place when they have documentation to confirm that contracts are signed on a purchase of a new house in Luton or a rental agreement is signed.

## In-year admission arrangements

### In-year admissions

21. In-year admissions are applications that are submitted during the academic year for entry to school outside of the normal admission round/intake point.

### Mandatory requirements for in-year admission arrangements

22. The requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year admissions for all of Luton's schools (including academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools) has been revoked. The Admissions Code sets out the following requirements with regard to the co-ordination of in-year admissions:

- There is no requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year applications, but they **must** provide information in the composite prospectus on how in-year applications can be made and will be dealt with.

Local authorities **must**, on request, provide information to a parent about the places still available in all schools within its area, and a suitable form for parents to complete when applying for a place for their child at any school for which they are not the admission authority.

Any parent can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school outside the normal admissions round. They can do this by applying directly to admission authorities, except where other arrangements are in place locally (e.g. the local authority coordinates all in-year admissions).

- Own admission authority schools **must**, on receipt of an in-year application, notify the local authority of both the application and its outcome, to allow the local authority to keep up to date figures on the availability of places in the area. The admission authority **must** also inform parents of their right to appeal against the refusal of a place.

### Luton's scheme for in-year admissions

23. The council will coordinate in-year admission arrangements for community schools and other own admission authority schools/academies that 'opt-in' to these arrangements. For these schools parents will be asked to complete one application form stating three preferences.

The council will liaise with the schools/academies on the application form to ascertain the highest preference that can be offered and will send the decision letter to the parent. Where higher ranked preferences are refused, parents will be advised of their right of appeal and the waiting list procedure.

Where the parent does not qualify for a place at any of their preferred schools they will be asked to apply for a place at an alternative school with vacancies.

24. Own admission authority schools that 'opt-in' to the in-year co-ordinated scheme can, if they wish, commission the LA to rank application forms against their school's admissions criteria, maintain waiting lists and check proof of address.

25. The council will provide an alternative application form for parents wishing to apply for schools/academies 'opting out' of the in-year co-ordinated admission scheme. Own admission authority schools must accept applications made on the form supplied by the LA.

Parents can use this form to apply directly to these schools and will be able to make individual applications to all of the schools that interest them. Own admission authority schools will be responsible for:

- giving parents the opportunity to make a formal written application, even if the year group is full. This will ensure that where a place cannot be offered at the preferred school(s) the pupil's name is placed on the relevant waiting list(s) (where these operate) and the parent will be advised of their right of appeal
- informing the council that they have received an application (within three school days) and providing brief details of the application (e.g. name, address, date of birth, previous/current school)
- sending a decision letter, either offering a place or refusing the application and advising the parents of their right of appeal and the waiting list procedure. Where a pupil is without a school place the school must refer the parents to the LA. A copy of the decision letter and application form must be sent to the council's Admissions team for their records
- processing applications in a timely manner for example within 10 to 15 school days

26. Where the LA receives an application for a school that has 'opted out' of the co-ordinated in-year scheme, the application will be returned to the parent advising them to apply direct to the relevant school.

27. All headteachers/principals of schools and academies must nominate a member of their staff to provide the Admissions team with the number of pupils on roll in each year group on a fortnightly basis. If vacancies occur in the interim the nominated representative at the school/academy must notify the Admissions Team.

28. The in-year application forms can be completed by Luton resident parents and those living outside of Luton wishing to apply for a Luton school. Luton parents wishing to apply for a place at a school outside of Luton should use that LA's in-year application form.

29. Parents applying for a place at a voluntary aided school within Luton will also need to complete a supplementary form.

## Children in care

30. The admission of children in care follows a separate process. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local authorities must admit children in care to a school that is considered to be in the child's best interests, even if this would exceed the School's admission number. The council may direct admission authorities to admit a child in care to the school.



## In-year fair access protocol

31. Some pupils will be placed in a school/academy using Luton's In-Year Fair Access Protocol. Such placements override the normal admission arrangements; this includes admitting children above the published admission number to schools/academies that are already full.

## Waiting lists

32. Each Luton admission authority has set out whether it will operate waiting lists in its published admission arrangements. Waiting lists must be ranked using the admissions authority's published admissions criteria and not the date the pupil's name was added to the waiting list.

33. The council will maintain waiting lists for community schools and other admission authorities 'opting in' to the in-year admissions service.

## General information for Year 7 intakes and in-year admissions

### Pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

34. Luton provides a range of facilities and services for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and aims to meet those needs within the local mainstream schools as far as possible.

35. For children with an EHCP, the LA acts as the admission authority.

36. Where a school is proposed to be named in a child's EHCP the LA, in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice, will consult with the 'named' school on the proposal.

## Publication of admission arrangements

37. The LA will publish an information booklet for parents of pupils transferring into Year 7 in September 2026.

38. An information booklet will also be available for parents of pupils seeking admission outside of the normal admission rounds (in-year admissions).

39. Assistance for parents with English as an additional language can be arranged through the LA's Translation and Interpretation Service.