Luton

Appendix A

Admission arrangements for Luton's community schools for September 2026

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Introduction

This paper sets out the admission arrangements for Luton's community schools for the academic year beginning September 2026.

Luton Council's admissions policy

Luton operates a catchment area system. Parents can find details of their designated catchment area school by going on the council's website (www.luton.gov.uk/admissions) and have the right to express a preference for any school.

Pupils are admitted to Luton schools, without reference to ability or aptitude, up to the published admission number for each school. If the number of places in a particular year group, at a school, is not sufficient to meet the number of applications from parents, the following criteria are applied (in the order of priority set out below) to determine how places will be allocated.

Priority may also be given to the admission of pupils in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocol.

Community infant and primary schools

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, children with an Education Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the school named in the Plan. Thereafter, the following priorities will apply:

1. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship

order[1], including those who appear to the council to have been in state care[2] outside of England and ceased to be in care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

2. Brothers and sisters of pupils attending the school or the linked junior school when the pupil starts at the school.

3. Pupils living in the catchment area of the school.

4. On medical grounds supported by medical evidence.

5. Children of staff who work at the School.

6. On the shortest distance, measured in a straight line, between the main entrance[3] of the school site and the pupil's home address, with those living closer to the school being accorded higher priority.

The admissions criteria will be applied separately and sequentially until all places are filled. If the council is unable to agree a place for all applicants meeting a specific criterion, the distance criterion (priority 6) will be used as a tiebreaker.

For infant and primary school admissions where one twin/child of multiple birth qualifies for a place and the other sibling(s) do not qualify for a place, both twins/multiple birth children will be promoted to the sibling criterion. This approach will also apply to siblings in the same year group who live together at the same address.

In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, witnessed by a council officer, independent of the Admissions Team.

Note:
Linked infant and junior schools normally share the same names (e.g. William Austin Infant School is linked to William Austin Junior School).

Community junior schools

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the school named in the Plan. Thereafter, the following priorities will apply:-

[1] An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by s.14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

[2] A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

[3] The main entrance of the School means the door used to access the School's main reception.
The home address is measured from a point at the address identified in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer.

1. A ‘looked after child’ or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order[4] including those who appear to the council to have been in state care[5] outside of England and ceased to be in care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

2. Brothers and sisters of pupils attending the school or the linked infant school when the pupil starts at the school.

3. Pupils living in the catchment area of the school.

4. On medical grounds supported by medical evidence.

5. Pupils attending the linked infant school.

6. Children of staff who work at the School.

7. On the shortest distance, measured in a straight line, between the main entrance[6] of the school site and the pupil’s home address, with those living closer to the school being accorded higher priority.

The admissions criteria will be applied separately and sequentially until all places are filled. If the council is unable to agree a place for all applicants meeting a specific criterion, the distance criterion (priority 7) will be used as a tiebreaker.

For junior school admissions where one twin/child of multiple birth qualifies for a place and the other sibling(s) do not qualify for a place, both twins/multiple birth children will be promoted to the sibling criterion. This approach will also apply to siblings in the same year group who live together at the same address.

In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, witnessed by a council officer, independent of the Admissions Team.

Note:

Linked infant and junior schools normally share the same names (e.g. William Austin Infant School is linked to William Austin Junior School)

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[5] A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

[6] Main entrance of the School means the door used to access the School’s main reception.
The home address is measured from a point at the address identified in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer.

Admissions process for community schools

The council will continue to use the equal preference system that was adopted for all Luton schools for intakes from September 2007.

'Equal preference' system

Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the schools' admissions criteria. At this stage the council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 60 places and there are 120 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference school available for another pupil.

Timetable for primary schools

- **1 September 2025:** Junior school transfer round and starting school admissions round are available for parents to make applications.
- **Week commencing 20 October 2025:** Parents receive information on the transfer to junior school process.
- **Week commencing 10 November 2025** – Parents of children born between 1/9/21 – 31/8/22 receive information on the starting school admissions process.
- **15 January 2026** – Closing date for submission of application forms.
- **23 February 2026:**
    - Details of applications are sent to own admission authority 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.
- **2 March 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 March 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
- **15 April 2026** – Allocation lists will be available to schools and academies.

- **16 April 2026** – Offer date.
    - Offer emails sent to parents during the course of the working day.
    - Decision letters will be sent to parents.
- **From June 2026** – Admission appeals take place.
- **23 April 2026** – Late starting school applications received by this date will be processed week commencing 11 May 2026.
    - The outcome of the late starting school round will be posted to parents on 4 June 2026.
- **7 May 2026** – Late junior school applications received by this date will be processed week commencing 11 May 2026.
    - The outcome of the late junior school round will be posted to parents on 18 May 2026.
- **21 May 2026** – Late starting school applications received by this date will be processed week commencing 22 June 2026.
    - The outcome of the late starting school round will be posted to parents on 14 July 2026.
- **June 2026** – For the starting school admissions round, a letter/email will be sent to parents asking them to confirm whether they wish their child's details to remain on the waiting list for their preferred school(s). Parents must respond by 11 July 2026.
- **23 July 2026** – Late junior school and starting 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 receive direct applications they must inform Luton Council of the application and forward it to the council by the closing date regardless of whether the child(ren) reside in the Luton area.

The council may undertake the processing of applications for foundation high schools and academies; this is subject to negotiation with schools/academies.

Application process

Parents are encouraged to apply online, however, paper application forms are available on request. Parents can express up to three preferences on the council's application form.

Applications for schools outside of Luton

Luton parents wishing to apply for a place at a school(s) outside of the Borough should specify the school(s) on Luton Council's application form. The council will ensure that applications for a place at schools outside of the Borough will be sent to the relevant council for consideration.

Application forms submitted by Luton parents direct to other local authorities will not be accepted. The council will have regard to whether a place can be offered at a school outside of the Borough. 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 not be offered.

Parents will also be advised to check with the out of borough school to see if they need to complete any supplementary forms supplied by the school.

Luton Council will liaise with neighbouring councils over the outcome of applications for Luton pupils.

Applications for Luton schools from parents residing outside of Luton

Out of Borough applications will be processed in parallel with Luton applications. Out of Borough applications will be forwarded to the relevant admission authority for the school for consideration.

Luton Council will then notify the home council as to whether a place can be offered.

Waiting lists

Where it is not possible to agree all applications for a school, a waiting list will be devised. A child's name may be held on up to three waiting lists, for their three preferred schools, if these are Luton community schools. Waiting lists are organised in the order of priority of the school's admissions criteria. Waiting lists are not based on the date the application was added to the list.

For the new Reception and Junior school intakes (Years R and 3) – children's names will be held on the waiting lists until 31 July 2027, however, applications received in the summer term 2027 will remain on the waiting list until July 2028. Parents will need to reapply for a place at their preferred school(s) after this date if they wish their child's name to be carried forward on the waiting list.

For the new Reception intake, parents will be sent a letter/email in June 2026 asking them to confirm whether they wish their child's details to remain on the waiting list for their preferred school(s). Parents must respond by 11 July 2026.

For all other year groups, unsuccessful applications received from the start of the autumn term 2026 until the end of the spring term 2027 will be placed on a waiting list until 31 July 2027. Applications received from the start of the summer term 2027 to the end of the academic year will be placed on a waiting list until 31 July 2028.

Home address

For the purposes of allocating places in the normal admissions round (i.e. the initial allocation of places for Year R and 3 intakes to junior schools) where a school is oversubscribed, the pupil's catchment area will be determined by their home address as at the closing date for applications.

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

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered in the initial allocation of places, except in very exceptional circumstances.

Where parents have submitted an application form 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.

Nursery Admissions

The admission arrangements for Nursery Schools and Year N classes within schools are delegated to governing bodies.

Children who gain a place in the nursery or early years unit attached to the school or on the school site are not guaranteed admission to the main school. Parents/carers must apply for a statutory school place using the council’s application form for Luton residents.

Deferred entry

Community infant and primary schools in Luton admit children into Reception classes in the September prior to the child’s fifth birthday. Parents/carers can choose to defer their child’s entry to school or take up the place part-time until he or she is of compulsory school age, providing this place is taken up within the same academic year and they are not on roll at an alternative school.

Therefore:

- Children born between 1/9/21 – 31/12/21 can defer their place until January 2027.
- Children born between 1/1/22 – 31/8/22 can defer their place until April 2027.

Parents/carers cannot defer their child’s entry beyond the dates given above. Parents/carers of children born between 1/4/22 – 31/8/22, who would like their child to start Year 1 in September 2027 would need to reapply for admission at a later date. These applications would be treated as an ‘in-year’ admission request and a place would only be offered if there were vacancies in the year group.

Parents/carers wishing to defer their child’s entry to school must put their request in writing to the allocated school, ideally within 21 days of being offered a place by the council.

Admission of children outside of their normal age group

Parents seeking a place for their child outside of the chronological age group should submit their written case to the council. Parents should include information regarding the child’s academic, social and emotional development; and whether they have previously been educated outside of their normal age group. If the child has been born prematurely, parents should include these details in their application.

Applications will be discussed with the headteacher(s) of the preferred school(s) and other relevant local authority professionals. The council will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and parents will be informed of the reasons for the decision in writing.

In-year admissions

In-Year admissions are applications to enter a year group that has already started at the school. The council is responsible for co-ordinating in-year applications for Luton's community schools. Therefore, parents seeking a community school place should complete the council’s In-Year application form and return this form directly to the council. The council will then liaise with all the Schools listed as a preference to ascertain which (if any) preferences can be met. If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school the parent's highest ranked preference will be offered and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded.

Publication of admission arrangements

The council will publish information booklets for parents on the admissions process. An interpreter service is available to assist parents/carers. Assistance can also be provided for hearing or visually impaired parents.

Relevant area

The current relevant area for admissions consultation purposes is all admission authorities within the Borough of Luton, neighbouring councils and all admission authorities within a three-mile radius of Luton.

Definitions

Siblings

The term 'siblings' includes both natural, adopted and step brothers and sisters. It also includes fostered siblings, where foster care has been arranged by Children and Family Services. Other family relationships such as cousins will not be considered under this criterion.

Medical Grounds

This refers to the health of the child for whom a place is being requested and for whom the requested school is the most suitable in the area to meet the child's medical needs. It must relate to a recognised medical condition for which the child is receiving treatment. Medical evidence must be provided to substantiate the claim. The medical evidence will be sent to the Health Authority for advice in determining whether the child should be prioritised on medical grounds with regard to admission to the requested school.

Children of Staff

The LA regards children of staff as someone employed to work at the School on a permanent contract for at least 15 hours per week, who meets one of the following criteria at the time of application:

(a) has been in post continuously for a least two years
or:

(b) is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

Children of staff that have given notice of resignation will not be considered under this criterion.

For the purposes of satisfying these criteria, a member of staff is defined as a permanent member of the teaching staff, or a permanent member of the non-teaching staff.

The staff member must be the child's parent or legal guardian and the child must be living permanently with the member of staff.

Home Address

The LA regards a pupil's home address as where she or he spends the majority of the school week (i.e. Monday to Friday, including nights) with her/his parent or legal guardian. The address of a childminder or family member who looks after the child before or after school cannot be used. If there is any query on the home address this will be checked against official documentation.

Catchment Areas

Details of catchment areas can be found on the council's website at luton.gov.uk/admissions.

Catchment area lists are also available from the council by telephoning the Admissions helpline on 548016.

Community Schools in Luton – Admission Numbers for intake years (September 2026)

Beech Hill Primary School	120
Beechwood Primary School	120
Bramingham Primary School	60
Bushmead Primary School	90
Denbigh Primary School	90
Downside Primary School	150
Foxdell Primary School	90
Hillborough Infant School	90
Hillborough Junior School	90
Icknield Primary School	90
Maidenhall Primary School	90
Norton Road Primary School	60
Parklea Primary School	90
Pirton Hill Primary School	60
Putteridge Primary School	90
Ramridge Primary School	60
Someries Junior School	60
St Matthews Primary School	120
Stopsley Primary School	60
Surrey Street Primary School	60
The Meads Primary School	90
Warden Hill Infant School	120
Warden Hill Junior School	120
Waulud Primary School	60
Wigmore Primary School	90
William Austin Infant School	120
William Austin Junior School	120