



CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR
ST HELENS LA MAINTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOLS
ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027

Applications for all publicly funded secondary schools and academies in St.Helens shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out in Part 1 and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Part 2 of this scheme. The scheme shall apply to the following schools and academies:

Academies

De La Salle
Hope Academy
Outwood Academy Haydock
Rainford High
Rainhill High
St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High
The Sutton Academy

Community Secondary Schools

Cowley International College

Voluntary Aided Secondary Schools

St Cuthbert's Catholic High

As required by the School Admissions Code this is an equal preference inter-authority scheme. St Helens co-ordinates with: Halton, Knowsley, Lancashire, Liverpool, Sefton, Warrington, and Wigan local authorities. Where necessary, information will be exchanged with other local authorities.

PART 1: THE SCHEME

Applying for a Year 7 Place

1. A common application form and secondary education information for parents' booklet will be available online via St Helens Council's website no later than 12 September 2026. Neighbouring local authorities will be asked for details of St Helens pupils in Year 6 of their primary schools so that information about the application process can be sent direct to the parents of these children.
2. The form will invite parents of St Helens children to express three preferences for schools both in and outside St Helens Local Authority they will also be asked to rank their preferences and, if they wish, the reason for these. Parents can return completed paper forms to their child's primary school in St Helens or directly to the Local Authority if the child is attending a school outside the Local Authority. A tear off slip will be attached to the bottom of the application form and be given to the parent as proof of receipt. For those parents who submit an online application an email receipt will be provided. **The closing date for applications will be 31 October 2026.**
3. Parents living outside St Helens Local Authority can view a copy of the secondary booklet on St Helens Council's website. They will, however, be advised to complete their home local authority's application form.

Supplementary Information

1. St Helens schools do not use supplementary information forms, therefore, parents who apply for voluntary aided/faith academy schools and wish their application to be considered against the priority faith criteria are asked to complete some faith questions on the common application form. Non-St Helens residents should submit the relevant documentary evidence to St Helens School Admissions Team. Where an out of borough primary school is associated with a St Helens voluntary aided/faith academy secondary school St Helens School Admissions Team will request details of baptism from those schools.
2. If a St Helens parent is expressing a preference for a school in another local authority, they are advised to contact that authority in order to determine whether supplementary information is required. Where a school receives a supplementary form from a St Helens resident it should not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed a common application form and the school is nominated on it.

Late Applications

1. It is important that parents return their form by the **31 October 2025** closing date.
2. Late applications received after the closing date but received in time to be included in the initial allocation will be considered. However, as the exact date of allocation cannot be predicted, parents have no guarantee that any application received after the closing date will be included.
3. Parents who apply after **31 October 2025** but before **1 March 2026** and their applications could not be included in the initial allocation will only be offered their preference if the school has less applications than available places. They will receive a decision letter by **8 March 2026** and advised of their right of appeal if any preference has been refused.

4. For applications received after **1 March 2026**, parents will normally be notified within ten working days of the school that has been allocated to their child and advised of their right of appeal if any preference has been refused.

Change of Preference

The Local Authority will not accept a change of preference after the closing date without proof of an exceptional change in circumstances e.g., house move to another area, or an older sibling has transferred schools.

Where there is no evidence of an exceptional change in circumstances the change of preference will be considered as a late application.

Determining Offers

St Helens Local Authority is the admissions authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. In the Voluntary Aided, Academy and Foundation Trust sectors, the Governing Body of the school is the admissions authority.

All first, second and third preferences will be treated as equal regardless of parents' ranking. This means that each preference will be considered by the relevant admission authority against their own oversubscription criteria without consideration of the ranking.

In order to determine offers:-

1. The Local Authority will forward applications **by 17 November 2025** to other local authorities if St Helens residents have expressed a preference for a secondary school in their area.
2. The Local Authority will provide admission authority schools with lists of applicants by **12 December 2025**.
3. If an admission authority school receives more applications than available places the governing body will apply its oversubscription criteria and rank applications accordingly. The governing body will send the ranked list to the Local Authority by **12 January 2026**.
4. The Local Authority will consider all preferences for Community schools. If there are more applications than available places, the Local Authority will apply its oversubscription criteria and rank applications accordingly.

Co-ordinating the Offer of a Single Place

1. The Local Authority will inform other local authorities of initial offers to be made to their residents and request details of offers they will be making to St. Helens residents **by 26 January 2026**.
2. During the period up to **9 February 2026** the Local Authority will continue to liaise with admission authority schools and neighbouring local authorities to resolve multiple offers and a single offer will be made using the ranking of schools given on the preference form.
3. Where the applicant is a St Helens resident and the Authority is unable to comply with any of the preferences stated on the form and, if applicable, is informed that another admission authority is

unable to offer a place at the parents preferred school, then the next nearest appropriate school with available places will be allocated. If the applicant resides in another local authority St Helens will not offer an alternative school.

4. All schools in the Local Authority will be informed by **23 February 2026** of offers being made to parents on **1 March 2026**.

Notifying Parents of Decisions

On the national offer date of **1 March 2026**, offers of places in St Helens secondary Schools and schools in other local authorities will be sent by St Helens Local Authority to St Helens residents. Where a higher ranked preference has been refused the offer letter will also include advice about waiting lists and right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Waiting Lists

The Local Authority will operate a waiting list for every St Helens secondary school that is oversubscribed from the time that places are initially allocated until the end of the 2027 autumn term. The waiting list will be kept in criteria (not date) order.

If a place becomes available within the admission number, the child whose name is at the top of the list will be offered a place.

Children who are the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the Authority's Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

Appeals

Parents will be informed about their right of appeal and how appeals can be made in the offer letter.

Admissions to Year 12 of Schools with Sixth Forms

St Helens schools with sixth forms will process their own applications for admission into Year 12. If they refuse any applicant they will advise them of their statutory right of appeal. Details of the admission arrangements for the sixth form will be published in the Local Authority's booklet and the school's prospectus both will be available in the autumn term of 2026.

Fair Access Protocol

The Local Authority has a separate Fair Access Protocol to ensure that education is secured quickly for children who have no school place and to ensure that all schools/academies in St Helens admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour - this is a statutory requirement.

Under the terms of the protocol schools may be required to admit above their published admission number, even if the year group concerned is full.

In-Year Applications

All other applications submitted outside of the normal admissions round (four weeks after the start of the academic year) will be processed under the Local Authority's In-Year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme.

PART 2: TIMETABLE OF SECONDARY CO-ORDINATED SCHEME

