Lancashire County Council

PRIMARY SCHOOL & ACADEMY ADMISSIONS - RECEPTION INTAKES SEPTEMBER 2027

Important Information for Governors and Headteachers

IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION FOR 2027/28
(SEPTEMBER 2027 RECEPTION INTAKES)

Online application system goes live (www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools)

1 September 2026 – there are electronic links to admissions.

Flyers are circulated to parents via primary schools and primary academies

Communication packs will be sent to schools electronically.

A small number of schools still require hard copy/paper copies. If this is your school please get in touch with us immediately if the information is not with you by the end of the first week of term.
pupilaccess.central@lancashire.gov.uk

September 2026 – schools and academies should forward these, electronically or by hard copy to each family who have registered an interest in a reception place for September 2026.

Closing dates (statutory) – the on-line application system closes at 11.59 pm on these dates

31st October 2026 – secondary application closing date
15th January 2027 – primary application closing date

Paper applications

Online is now the main means of applying for school and academy places (95%+for September 2026 intakes). Where there are reasons for a paper application being required parents may contact the Area Pupil Access Team or the County Pupil Access Team direct.

Prioritising all applications for a school or academy

Admission authorities must prioritise all applications in accordance with their own admission criteria. The Governing Bodies of all Lancashire voluntary aided and foundation primary schools and academies and free schools prioritise their own received applications. The order of parental preferences is not relevant at the initial stage and **will not** therefore be confirmed by the Local Authority. The Local Authority will undertake the allocation exercise for an academy or free school where it is an agreed part of a traded service agreement.

Offers – For September 2027 offers will be issued electronically only for all online, ON TIME applicants.

Letters will be issued on 16th April 2027 by second class post only to those who applied on a paper form. Online applicants will be able to view their own offer on the system on the morning of the offer date. All late applicants will receive an offer letter.

1st March 2027 – secondary offers confirmed electronically to on-line applicants.
16th April 2027 – primary offers confirmed electronically to on-line applicants

Date of receipt of offers

On-line applicants will have their offer confirmed electronically on the offer date. (There will be links to reserve list and appeal information). Paper applicants will have a letter issued by second class post on 1 March and 16th April 2027 respectively and delivery times will vary.

Supplementary information forms (SIFs)

There are standard SIFs for all Catholic and Church of England / Methodist voluntary aided primary schools. Please advise parents to complete a SIF for each faith school they apply to. **(Please note the advice on page 4)**

Please inform the Area Pupil Access Team immediately if you think that the information provided by parents/carers on their online application may need checking or validating. (Telephone numbers on page 7).

Paper forms now represent the minority of applications. When these are received, please forward them immediately to the Area Pupil Access Team and keep a copy. There will be exchanges of information during the application and allocation periods which will allow individual schools to monitor applications for September 2027.

Some School Admission Code Requirements:-

- Lancashire includes robust statements in the admission information for parents (online and paper) about shared parenting, residence and applying from abroad or out of area (whether new to country area or returning to a pre-owned property).

  The shared parenting statement confirms that the address used for an admission application will be that used for any subsequent assessment of home to school transport entitlement. Any change of address after a school place offer will not be accepted (even if a child's pattern of residence changes) unless there are very exceptional circumstances which the parents can evidence.

- Admission authorities may admit above their published admission number if they inform the Local Authority in time for it to effectively co-ordinate all admissions. **This must be before the [Christmas Holiday 2026 for Lancashire Secondary schools and academies and] February 2027 half term holiday for Lancashire primary schools and academies for September 2027 intakes.** Please note that there must be compliance with infant class size legislation. Exceeding a published number is a temporary change and does not constitute increasing the admission number for future years. Please contact 01772 531540 for further advice.

- Admission authorities do not need to consult where the only change is an increase in the published admission number. They must, however, notify the LA and refer to the change on their own school / academy website.

- There is a general requirement for children to start primary school / academy in the September after a 4th birthday. Parents may apply and then defer entry for 1 or 2 terms. Those who wish to start a year late, because the child's date of birth permits, usually apply for Year 1 places. Only

in the most exceptional cases will reception entry a year later than normal be considered by the relevant admission authority (in consultation with headteachers for community and voluntary controlled schools). Admission information for parents has been amended to reflect this and to confirm protocol in Lancashire.

- The Local Authority **cannot** inform other admission authorities of the priority order of parental preferences. The LA can inform schools and academies how many first, second and third preferences have been received (without attributing names and other information).

- Schools cannot request birth certificates until **after** offers have been made.

- Schools / Academies cannot offer places direct to parents – all offer letters must be from the home Local Authority (Lancashire County Council for Lancashire resident parents).

- Lancashire residents only should use Lancashire's application processes. Those living in neighbouring areas must apply to their home authority even if they wish to express preferences for Lancashire schools or academies.

- The Local Authority will keep all reception waiting lists until 31st August 2027.

- Individual admission authorities must keep reception waiting lists from 1st September 2027 until 31st December 2027.

- **Representatives of any school being appealed for must not support parents at their appeal hearings either in person or by providing written support.**

NOTES FOR PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS AND GOVERNORS

PRIMARY ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2027 (RECEPTION INTAKES)

1. Parents have from 1 September 2026 to 15th January 2027 (11.59 pm) to express up to 3 x primary school / academy preferences (any applications which are made earlier are not legal preferences). The online application system will go live from 1st September 2027 (www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools).

2. Flyers and posters will be distributed in September 2026 electronically via the Schools' Portal and these remind parents of the need to apply for primary school places for September 2027. Posters in Asian, Polish and other languages are available upon request at pupilaccess.central@lancashire.gov.uk or telephone 01772 531676 and speak to Shamim Javed for advice.

   The publicity distribution includes all Lancashire schools and academies, all maintained early years' providers in Lancashire and approximately 500 independent, private and voluntary early years' providers as well as other outlets. Press releases will be placed in local newspapers for county-wide circulation and there will be an advertising campaign on Lancashire County Council's website, Facebook page and X [formerly Twitter] reminders will also be used.

3. Communication packs have been sent to schools and academies where specifically requested. These include Lancashire's paper admissions application form. These will arrive in those primary schools and academies in early September 2027. **All parents who are seeking reception places in September 2027 should be sent a copy of a flyer which was also provided to your school / academy.**

Remaining schools and academies will issue the admissions details electronically, using their existing methods of communications with families. The details will be issued electronically using The Schools' Portal and will ready for the beginning of term.

Primary schools should contact all parents whose child's name is registered on their "interested list" in order for them to arrange to receive a flyer with a supplementary Information (SIF) form if necessary. The Local Authority also asks that you to include a short paragraph in any newsletters or bulletins to parents, please.

Parents living in Lancashire who wish to express preferences for primary schools should apply on-line or contact the Area Pupil Access Team if this is not possible.

Lancashire resident parents should apply on - line at:
www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools

Those living in other local authority areas such as Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Sefton etc, must apply via their home Local Authority in order to express their preferences for primary schools / academies – even if they wish to express preferences for Lancashire establishments.

(i) Parents who have expressed preferences for primary schools / academies in Lancashire should note the information on the LCC webpages. This includes legal and procedural information which help them decide about their preferences. **Please try not issue paper copies of the application form, unless absolutely necessary.**

Voluntary aided and foundation primary schools and academies are strongly urged to ensure that any required SIFs are circulated to parents and returned to them direct

IT IS REQUESTED THAT SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORMS (SIFS) ARE ISSUED WITH FLYERS PRIOR TO OCTOBER 2026 HALF TERM. SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES MUST INCLUDE THEIR NAME / NUMBER ON THE SIF ~ EVEN IF HANDWRITTEN ON TOP OF THE FORM.

(ii) The webpages do include standard information which applies throughout Lancashire. They also include three supplementary inserts which refer specifically to establishments in the North, South and East of Lancashire. If a parent requires further advice, then Area Pupil Access teams will assist.

4. During December 2026 and early January 2027 all primary schools and academies are strongly advised to check on progress towards receiving responses from parents who have expressed an interest in a reception place for 2027. This can be done by liaising with Area Pupil Access Teams and by checking lists which will be sent out via the Schools' Portal. Online applications are acknowledged automatically by email and the system will close on 15th January 2027 at 11.59 pm, exactly.

You are strongly advised to have your own receipting system for any paper applications returned by parents. Please forward these immediately to the Area Pupil Access Team and not in bulk at the closing date.

Please keep copies and a note of the date passed on to your Area Team. Thank you.

There is no guarantee that any application received after the statutory closing date will be dealt with at the same time as those received on time. Individual admission authorities should refer to their policies about the appropriateness of accepting late applications and dealing with them at the same time as on time applications. Late applications are referred to in the scheme which has been agreed with all schools to co-ordinate primary admissions. **The primary national closing date is on 15th January 2027 and is statutory. Late applications should only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, where the applicants have provided appropriate evidence, in line with the published admission arrangements, listed on your policy.**

5. The LA will confirm primary school offers electronically to all Lancashire resident on-line applicants on **16th April 2027.** The LA will issue offers for voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies and free schools. Under the terms of the statutory co-ordinated scheme for primary school admissions, only offers issued by the home LA are legally valid. Letters to paper applicants will be sent by second class post on 16th April 2027. We cannot give out offer details over the telephone.

   Online applicants will be able to access details of their primary school offer via the online system. It is essential, therefore, that applicants retain details of their login details/password and keep their email address for the entire admissions process, making sure their inbox has space for the email on offer day. The online system will go live on the morning of 16th April 2027 and this will allow applicants to view only their own primary school offer.

6. It is not possible for any school to refuse the expression of a preference by any parent. All parents are legally entitled to express a minimum of 3 preferences and these must all be treated equally at the outset. The co-ordinated primary admission arrangements agreed for Lancashire for 2027/28 will mean that every Lancashire parent will receive only a single offer for a primary place (either a Lancashire primary school or academy or one in a neighbouring area). The offer will be issued by each parent's home local authority.

7. The autonomy of the Governing Bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies and free schools to determine their own admission policy and number and to allocate places remains unaffected by the co-ordinated admissions scheme. These establishments may use supplementary forms to collect information which is relevant to their particular admissions policy and which will be needed by the Governing Body to allow the allocation of places. The completion of supplementary forms is not, however, a legal requirement. School and academy Governing Bodies must consider all applications received, irrespective of whether they are accompanied by a supplementary information form. All parents **must**, however, have applied online **or** if required, have completed the standard paper application form to register within the admissions process for 2027/28.

   Voluntary aided and foundation primary schools and academies and free schools should **by the required date** provide the Area Pupil Access Team with a list of **all** received applications ranked in priority order against the school's admission criteria.

The LA will apply the agreed co-ordinated scheme and will confirm with schools and academies the list of children who will receive an offer for a place at that establishment.

8. All Lancashire primary schools and academies must **immediately** forward any paper applications received to the Area Pupil Access Team. Schools and academies must ensure that the original version of each paper application form is sent along with any additional information provided by parents to support their application. Please keep copies. Please do not retain forms and forward these at or after the closing date. The Local Authority will input information at the time of receipt of each application.

9. **Reserve lists:** for all schools and academies any places which become available after initial offers must be allocated in accordance with the published admission policy. The Area Pupil Access Team will liaise with schools and academies about the allocation of places from reserve lists. The LA will continue to issue reception offer letters up to 31st August 2027. After 31st August 2027 reserve lists must be kept by individual admission authorities (unless this differs under a traded service agreement). Please note that after initial offers, any parents can access reserve lists and request appeal forms – not just those who originally expressed preferences for particular schools and academies.

10. In instances where an initial offer is not for the parent's preferred school or academy, the LA will ensure that an alternative offer is issued. This offer will automatically include information about accessing reserve lists and appeals procedures.

11. After offers have been issued and parents accept or refuse places, reserve lists will change. This will necessitate regular contact between Area Pupil Access Teams and schools/academies in order to check that the information being held is accurate and to ensure that any places allocated from reserve lists are in accordance with the correct admission policy**. It is essential, therefore that all primary schools and academies inform the Area Pupil Access Team if parents contact them direct to confirm that they no longer require a place which has been offered.**

12. The LA cannot determine offers for reserve list places at voluntary aided and foundation schools or academies and free schools without approval from the Governing Body. The LA will liaise with each establishment about these offers.

    If the LA does not act in accordance with the Governors' wishes and a place is offered in error, then this may be withdrawn (subject to legal advice). Information issued for parents does refer to this possibility.

13. **Infant Class Sizes:** the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 places a duty on LAs and Governing Bodies to limit the size of infant classes to a maximum of 30 pupils per single qualified teacher for all ordinary teaching sessions (this applies to Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes). Headteachers and Governors must have regard to the infant class size legislation when considering reception admissions in September 2027. The LA and Diocesan/Church Authorities will work with all schools to ensure compliance with this statutory duty.

    During the course of the allocation process, the Headteachers and Governors of voluntary aided and foundation schools are reminded of the need to take every possible care to ensure the accuracy of the process and to allocate places strictly in accordance with the published admission policy of the school.

If any school has concerns, Area Pupil Access Teams will assist. It is important to ensure the accuracy of all school admissions processes and especially so where any error would necessitate additional admissions and increase class sizes.

If an error in the allocation process is discovered after the initial allocation of places, additional children may have to be admitted. In these circumstances the class size limit may be exceeded until numbers fall back to 30. Where agreed exception(s) may be for the full infant key stage (to the end of Year 2).

14. **Appeals:** any primary school or academy, which is over-subscribed and which expects parents who are not offered places to appeal, is advised to consider the content of their appeal case carefully and as early in the admissions process as possible. Community and voluntary controlled primary schools will be asked to provide information to the LA. The LA will then decide on the final content of its appeal case for that particular school. Voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies and free schools which buy back an appeals service from the County Council, will need to liaise direct with The School Appeals Team at County Hall (telephone 01772 533416 or 533417).

    Advice about the content of appeals cases is available from Area Pupil Access Teams – on page 8 of this document.

EQUALITY ACT 2010
A DUTY NOT TO DISCRIMINATE:-

Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, unlawful discrimination is defined as:

- Direct discrimination (where someone is treated less favourably **because of their disability**),
- Indirect discrimination (where the application of a policy or practice particularly disadvantages people with a disability),
- Discrimination arising from a disability (where someone is treated unfavourably **because of a reason connected with their disability**),
- A failure to make reasonable adjustments.

It is also unlawful to harass, or to victimise, anyone in relation to their disability.

If one pupil receives worse treatment than others, simply because he/she is disabled, that will be 'direct discrimination'. **Such discrimination can never be justified, and is unlawful**. A disabled child can never be excluded because they are disabled.

With regard to 'indirect discrimination', this can be justified but any general rule, policy or practice which has the effect of disadvantaging a disabled pupil must be clearly intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced and reasonable way.

With regard to 'discrimination arising from a disability', the law essentially provides that it will be unlawful if, without justification, a disabled child is treated unfavourably because of the effect of his/her disability – even if that was not the intention.

All staff and governors involved in allocating school places are advised to carefully apply their pre-determined and published admission arrangements.

A standard paragraph in LA information to parents is:-

"If you feel discrimination has occurred on the basis of a protected characteristic (as defined within the Equality Act 2010) please request further information and assistance from an Area Pupil Access Team. The defined protected characteristics are disability, race, gender, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy or maternity and marital and civil partnership status"
The protected characteristics refer to the wider family and carers – as well as the child.

Contacts for Information and Advice:-

Pupil Access (North)
Lancaster, Morecambe, Wyre and Fylde

- James, Phil or Kate

telephone 01524 581148 (Primary /Secondary)

Pupil Access (South)
Preston, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Chorley

- Jamie, Rukaiya and Toni

telephone 01772 532109 (Primary /Secondary)

Pupil Access (East)
Ribble Valley, Hyndburn, Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale

- Donna, Denise or Helen

telephone 01254 220747 (Primary /Secondary)

Pupil Access (County Hall)

- Nan, Shamim, Andrew or Halima

telephone 01772 531676 (Policy and resource enquiries)

VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES ARE ALSO ADVISED TO CONTACT THEIR DIOCESAN / CHURCH AUTHORITY OFFICER / TRUST FOR VALUABLE ADVICE

Thanks to all governors, headteachers, school and academy staff and others involved with school admissions. The Local Authority is grateful for your hard work and assistance which is much appreciated, and which ensures the effective and fair co-ordination of admissions for all Lancashire families and for neighbouring authorities and their parents.

Your comments, suggestions and proposals in relation to school admissions are always welcomed.

You may contact your Area Pupil Access Team or the County Pupil Access Team,

Nan Hogg, County Co-ordinator, on

01772 531540 or Email nanette.hogg@lancashire.gov.uk