Staffordshire County Council

Secondary Information for Parents Booklet 2027

The closing date to make an application is 31 October 2026

Message from the Director for Children and Families

Welcome to Staffordshire's Information for Parents Booklet

Choosing a school is a big decision because a good education is one of the best investments we can ever make in life. It lays the foundations for a happy, healthy and prosperous future.

A good education is about much more than exam results, it's about having the right skills for work and for life.

As a parent, you are your child's biggest champion. You know them best, so to help you choose their school we've produced this booklet of important information and an explanation of the admissions process.

To support you to make an informed preference please use the search and compare schools facility available online

All you need to do is type your town, postcode or the school you're interested in and, at a glance, you can compare the schools in your area.

Staffordshire's website contains information on:

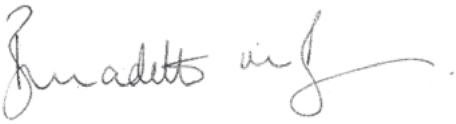
- school performance results
- the views of other parents on your local schools
- where the jobs will be in the future
- the different learning routes
- what to look for when you visit a school

We work hard to ensure that as many of you as possible get the school of your preference, and the great majority do. For families who applied to start school in September 2026, almost 93% got their first preference school and nearly 99% got one of their top 3 preferred schools.

This is the start of a very exciting journey and you have a vital role to play in getting the very best education for your child by supporting and challenging their school with the opportunities they offer. Think big. They've got a bright future ahead of them.

If you need further advice or support with any of the information shared in this booklet, please contact the School Admissions and Transport Service - details can be found on page 3.

Best wishes



Bernie Brown
Director for Children and Families

Important dates in the admissions process

Autumn Term 2026	Information is sent out via your child's current school or in some cases posted direct to your home address. During September and October, open evenings are held at all secondary/ high schools in Staffordshire.
1 September 2026	The online application service will open.
31 October 2026	The closing date for receipt of completed applications. Applications received after this date will be considered in line with the 'late applicatons' process.
Spring Term 2027	Applications are processed and information is shared between schools and neighbouring local authorities.
1 March 2027	Offer of school place. On-line applicants receive an email. For others this offer will be made in writing and posted 2nd class on this date.
Summer Term 2027	Admission appeals heard by independent appeal panels.

Contacts for School Admissions and Transport Service

Address for correspondence

School Admissions and Transport Service
1, Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street
Stafford ST16 2LP

Website: www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions

Email: admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk or

Email: transport.entitlement@staffordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 8007 Customer Contact Centre
(select option 2 for 'School Admissions and Transport')

Important points to remember

- You **must** apply by 31 October 2026.
- You **must** make an application, even if you have an elder child attending your preferred school.
- You are **strongly** advised to make more than one preference. Failure to do so could have repercussions in terms of the distance your child is required to travel to school.
- You will **not** gain an advantage by only listing one preference and this could affect your chances of being allocated a place at a local school within a reasonable distance from your home address.
- All applications are considered at the same time. Priority is **not** given to those who put the school first, or on a 'first come first served' basis.
- List the schools in the order that you would most prefer them, and not the order you think you might get them.
- **The order** in which you list the schools is **only used** if you can be offered more than one school. In this case, you will be offered whichever of those schools is ranked highest on your application.
- **Be realistic** about the schools you apply for. It is recommended that you include your catchment school as one of your preferences, as otherwise you will not be considered for a place.
- **Understand** the admission arrangements for each of your preferences. This will enable you to assess what order of priority will be given for each preference.
- Consider how your child will get to school. You can check if your child is entitled to home to school travel assistance online.
- You **may be required** to provide additional information or submit a supplementary form, if you are applying for a foundation, voluntary aided school, or academy.
- It is **your responsibility** to provide any supportive information with your application e.g baptismal certificate or medical evidence. The local authority will not seek to obtain this information on your behalf even if you refer to it within your application.

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Other Useful Links

Staffordshire school search facility

UTCs/Studio colleges in and around Staffordshire

Admission arrangements for Staffordshire schools

Co-ordinated scheme for admissions

Summary of September 2025 admissions to oversubscribed secondary/high schools

Summary of September 2026 admissions to oversubscribed secondary/high schools

Travel assistance to secondary schools

School admission appeals

In year fair access protocol

Paper application form

Neighbouring authorities

Data protection and fair processing

We would prefer to receive your application online.

Guidance on how to make an application and access to the online service can be found here.

Applying online

It's quick, easy and safe.

As a Staffordshire resident you can make your application online between 1 September and 31 October 2026 using Staffordshire's online application service.

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions

The benefits of applying online are:

- **We email your offer on the 1 March 2027 - so there's no need to wait for a letter in the post**
- **The service is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week up to the closing date of 31 October 2026**
- **It is quick and easy to do**
- **The system is secure so that your information is protected**
- **You will get email confirmation that your application has been submitted**

If you are not a resident of Staffordshire, use the online service for the local authority where you live.

95% of applications for 2026 admissions were made online

"It's easier doing it online than it ever is filling out a form by hand"

"Very smooth and easy process"

If you have any queries about the online school admissions process or any other aspect of the school admissions process please contact the team. Contact details can be found on page 3.

"Very user friendly and quick to complete"

Section 1
Making an Application

How do I apply?

- online at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions. Applicants who apply this way will receive their decision on 1 March 2027 by email.
- by post: complete the paper application form which you can download from our website. Applicants who apply this way will have their decision sent by 2nd class post on offer day.

When making your application, you must name all of the schools where you wish your child to be considered for a place in order of preference. This includes any foundation, voluntary aided school, academy and/or any other maintained school in one of Staffordshire's neighbouring local authorities.

If you wish to make more than 3 preferences please email admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk with the details of your additional preferences.

Who can apply?

Anyone with parental responsibility. We expect separated parents to agree on school places before an application is made. The local authority is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.

Is there a closing date?

The closing date for all applications is 31 October 2026 See other key dates given on page 3.

Why do I have to make an application?

Children are not automatically transferred from primary to secondary school, or from middle to high school. You must make an application to ensure that your child is considered for a place at your preferred school.

I already have an older child attending my preferred school, do I still have to apply?

Yes, you must still make an application for your preferred school. Available places are then allocated using the relevant admission arrangements.

But I live in the catchment area!

You are still required to apply.

What happens if I don't make an application?

A place will be allocated at school with spaces on 1 March 2027. This may not be your catchment school and transport assistance will not necessarily be provided.

If I name the same school three times will this give me a better chance of being allocated a place?

No. Extra weighting is not given for the number of times you include a preferred school, each school is only considered once.

Do I have to name my catchment school?

Your child will **not** be considered for a place at your catchment area school unless it is named as one of your preferred schools on your application.

Will I need to provide any additional information?

Some schools may ask you to provide additional information or submit a supplementary form.

For schools outside Staffordshire, this information can be obtained from the relevant local authority and you must complete any additional or supplementary information in line with any deadlines that they specify.

Please note: If you wish to provide evidence to support an application on medical grounds or other exceptional circumstances you must obtain the necessary evidence as specified within the admission arrangements.

We will not seek to obtain this information on your behalf even if you refer to it in your application. Please email or post any additional information directly to the school admissions team marked clearly with:

- The name of the child
- The school requiring the information
- Whether the application was made online or by other means

If you have been asked for a baptismal certificate, please send a copy to the school admissions team.

Section 2
Allocation of School Places

How are places allocated?

Staffordshire County Council does not operate a "first preference first" or "first come first served" policy. This means that every school listed in your application will be considered separately and fairly against the individual school's admission arrangements. If you can be offered a place at more than one preferred school, a place will be allocated at the school ranked highest. If a place cannot be offered at any of your preferred schools, a place will be allocated at an alternative school and you will be advised about the independent appeals process.

You can make at least three preferences. **It is strongly recommended that you name three different schools to increase your chances of securing a school that is acceptable to you.**

If you wish to make more than 3 preferences please email admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk with the details.

Is priority for admission given to children who attend particular primary or middle schools?

Places are allocated in strict accordance with the relevant admission arrangements and whilst we acknowledge that schools do work closely with their local pyramid schools, these close links do not automatically form part of the admission arrangements and places are not allocated with these links in mind.

A very small number of community and controlled secondary/high schools choose to name primary or middle schools as major contributors under criterion (5) of the admission arrangements Some schools that are their own admissions authority, also choose to give priority to pupils attending primary or middle schools and these are indicated in the relevant admission arrangements. Pupils attending the listed primary or middle school are not guaranteed admission to their preferred school, they simply have a higher priority for admission than other children.

Where can I find details of how places have been allocated in previous years?

Information is available in the summaries of admission to secondary/high schools which can be found under useful links.

How can I find out the catchment school for a certain address?

You can check the catchment school for your address online, but remember, not all schools operate a catchment area within their admission arrangements.

Your nearest school may not be your catchment area school.

Please note there is no guaranteed admission to your catchment area school, allocations will be dependent on the availability of spaces in the relevant year group.

Catchment areas are also subject to review and may alter from year to year.

How many places are available at each school?

Each school has a published admission number (PAN), which is the maximum number of pupils that the school can admit taking into account the accommodation and resources available. Each school's PAN can be found in the information on the school search facility

Section 3
The Admissions Process

What happens if I do not submit my application by the closing date?

Late applications for schools for which Staffordshire is the admission authority, i.e. community and voluntary controlled schools, will be considered alongside those applicants who applied on time wherever possible. Where it is not possible, because places have already been allocated, then late applications will only be considered after those applicants who applied by the published closing date.

It is important to note that if one of your preferred schools is not a Staffordshire community or voluntary controlled cchool then the relevant admission authority may decide not to accept your application if it is made after 31 October 2026 and your application may not be considered alongside those who applied on time.

A late application does not affect the right of appeal or the right to be placed on a school's waiting list.

What happens if I want to change my preferences after I have submitted my application?

If you apply online you will be able to change your preferences up to the closing date. **Please remember to resubmit your application, otherwise the changes you make will not be registered.**

Alternatively, you can change your school preferences by writing to or emailing the School Admissions Team up to 31 October 2026.

Parents wishing to change their preferences to include schools not previously named or wishing to change their preferences after offer day will need to email admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk to make a late application. Your application will be administered in line with the late applications process.

I know which school I want my child to go to, why should I have to list other preferences?

If you live in Staffordshire and you only list one school and your child cannot be offered a place at that school, a place will be allocated at an alternative school and you will be advised about the independent appeals process. There may well have been other schools that you would have preferred your child to go to.

What do I need to do if I want my child to go to a school outside Staffordshire?

If you are a Staffordshire resident you will still need to make an application via Staffordshire County Council even if you want to apply to a school outside of the county. This is because we exchange details of pupils applying for schools outside Staffordshire with all of our neighbouring authorities as part of the co-ordinated admission scheme. You will be able to find relevant details of the admission arrangements for other authorities in their own version of this information booklet. We would encourage you to view this information in order that you are aware of the likelihood of your preferences being met.

What is the 'Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme'?

The scheme sets out the way in which the local authority co-ordinates its admission arrangements with other neighbouring authorities and schools that are their own admissions authority. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that each pupil living within Staffordshire receives only one offer of a school place, whether that be at a school within the county or one maintained by a neighbouring authority.

The full scheme can be found under useful links.

Will I need to provide proof of my home address?

The local authority may undertake checks or home visits without prior notice to verify a child's home address. If a school is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from a child's normal and permanent home address, then that place is likely to be withdrawn.

What if I am moving home?

If a child's home address changes during the admissions process it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the School Admissions Team immediately.

If you are applying for a community or voluntary controlled school and you can provide satisfactory evidence of a new home address (e.g. a solicitor's letter confirming a completion date) by 29 January 2027, we will take that information into consideration when deciding on the offer of a school place.

Otherwise we make decisions based on the address supplied by your child's primary school. Please note that an 'intention to move' will not be used when allocating places at oversubscribed schools.

Section 4

Additional Information - Including waiting lists, appeals process and admissions out of year

I have not been offered a place at my preferred school.

All children who have been refused a place at a Staffordshire school will be automatically added to the waiting list. The waiting lists will be maintained until the end of the Autumn Term (31 December).

Waiting lists for all Staffordshire schools are ranked using the admissions arrangements for the school. Your child's position on a waiting list at a Staffordshire school can be obtained by emailing admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk or telephoning 0300 111 8007.

It is important to note that a child's position on any waiting list is not fixed and is subject to change.

Guidance on waiting lists for schools that are not located within Staffordshire should be sought by contacting the relevant local authority.

Can I appeal?

If you have not been offered a place at one or more of your preferred schools then you have a statutory right of appeal to an independent panel.

If you have not been successful in obtaining a place at a school that is located outside of Staffordshire and would like to appeal then please contact or visit the website of the relevant local authority.

Can I apply again for the same school if my appeal is unsuccessful?

It is not the council's policy to consider repeat applications in the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in the circumstances of the applicant or the school. If you have evidence that this is the case you need to provide the details to the School Admissions Team outlining the significant material changes and providing evidence for consideration.

Can my child stay at their primary school for an additional year?

Your child's current headteacher will need to confirm that it is in your child's best interests and that there are exceptional reasons for this to occur. You should be aware that any arrangements are subject to review and your child may be expected to rejoin their chronological year group during their time at secondary school.

Can my child transfer to secondary school early?

Only in very exceptional circumstances will it be agreed that a child should transfer to secondary school ahead of their normal age of transfer.

Where early transfer is requested, the application should be submitted by the 31 October 2026 along with supportive information which demonstrates why the child should be treated as an exception and not be placed in the correct cohort for their age.

For academies, voluntary aided, or foundation schools, the decision will be made by the governing body. Applicants will be given a right of appeal to an independent panel should their request be refused.

Will my appeal be successful?

The information provided in the admission summaries under useful links indicate the number of appeals heard and the number successful. The decision of an independent appeal panel is final and binding on all parties.

In the event of your appeal being unsuccessful you may wish to contact the School Admissions Team who will be able to advise you on the schools with places available, in addition to the school place that you have already been offered.

Admissions during the school year i.e. in year admissions

Staffordshire Local Authority does not co-ordinate in-year admission applications. Parents and carers can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school. The local authority collates information of where places may be available but applications should be made directly to the school or by using an in year application form which is available from the website. Schools must inform the local authority of all applications received and the outcome to allow the local authority to keep up to date figures of availability of places. If refusing an application, an admission authority (such as academies and aided schools, or the local authority for community and controlled schools) must inform the local authority and advise parents of their right to appeal against the refusal.

You may also wish to view the in year fair access protocol.

Section 5

Other useful information and contacts

SEND IASS - Staffordshire Family Partnership – Information, advice and support about education, health and social care issues for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities.

Special Educational Needs - Education, health and care plans (EHC) have replaced the old 'statement of special educational need'.

Education, health and social care professionals work together with parents. You can address all your children's needs in one process. The system is much easier and quicker. You now have the power to control personal budgets for your children with profound health and learning needs

Public Transport – for information relating to public transport.

Ofsted School Inspection Reports – Ofsted is the inspectorate for children and learners in England.

Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education – for information and advice about admissions to Church of England Voluntary Aided Schools.

Archdiocese of Birmingham Diocesan Education Service - for information and advice about admissions to Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary Schools.

Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service - for information and advice about admissions to Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary Schools.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) – for information on starting or joining a PTA.

Parental Responsibility (PR) – for admissions purposes, an individual can only apply for a school place if they have parental responsibility for the child named on the application form.

The Schools Guide gives you lots of information to help you choose a school.

The Department for Education is the government site for education. The site also provides parents with the facility to **search schools** in England and view school performance, characteristics and spend per pupil data.

The Independent Schools Council exists to promote choice, diversity and excellence in education, the development of talent at all levels of ability and the widening of opportunity for children from all backgrounds to achieve their potential.

Office of the Schools Adjudicator - The main functions of the office of the school adjudicator are as follows:

- to determine objections to admission arrangements
- to resolve disputes where there is local disagreement on statutory proposals for school reorganisation or on the transfer and disposal of non playing field land and assets.
- to decide on competitions for new schools where the local authority has entered the competition with its own proposals.
- to decide on requests to vary determined admission arrangements.
- to determine appeals from schools against a direction from the local authority to admit a particular pupil.

The Local government and social care ombudsman looks at complaints about councils and some other authorities, including education admissions appeal panels.

Get the right school is a public interest site focused on getting your child into the school of your choice.

Note: Staffordshire County Council is not responsible for the content of external web sites.

Appendix 1

Definition Of A "Baptised Catholic"

A "Baptised Catholic" is one who:

- Has been baptised into full communion (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 837) with the Catholic Church by the Rites of Baptism of one of the various ritual Churches in communion with the See of Rome (i.e. Latin Rite, Byzantine Rite, Coptic, Syriac, etc, Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1203). Written evidence* of this baptism can be obtained by recourse to the Baptismal Registers of the church in which the baptism took place (Cf. Code of Canon Law, 877 & 878).

Or

- Has been validly baptised in a separated ecclesial community and subsequently received into full communion with the Catholic Church by the Right of Reception of Baptised Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church. Written evidence of their baptism and reception into full communion with the Catholic Church can be obtained by recourse to the Register of Receptions, or in some cases, a sub-section of the Baptismal Registers of the church in which the Rite of Reception took place (Cf. Rite of Christian Initiation, 399).

Written Evidence Of Baptism

The Governing bodies of Catholic schools will require written evidence in the form of a Certificate of Baptism or Certificate of Reception before applications for school places can be considered for categories of "Baptised Catholics". A Certificate of Baptism or Reception is to include: the full name, date of birth, date of baptism or reception, and parent(s) name(s). The certificate must also show that it is copied from the records kept by the place of baptism or reception.

Those who would have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism for a good reason, may still be considered as baptised Catholics but only after they have been referred to their parish priest who, after consulting the Vicar General, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

Those who would be considered to have good reason for not obtaining written evidence would include those who cannot contact the place of baptism due to persecution or fear, the destruction of the church and the original records, or where baptism was administered validly but not in the Parish church where records are kept.

Governors may request extra supporting evidence when the written documents that are produced do not clarify the fact that a person was baptised or received into the Catholic Church, (i.e. where the name and address of the Church is not on the certificate or where the name of the Church does not state whether it is a Catholic Church or not).