

Stoke-On-Trent City Council
Admission Arrangements
Community and Voluntary Controlled
Nursery Settings and Primary Schools 2026/27

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1 Nursery admissions

Children aged three years on or before 31 August are able to attend a nursery class or nursery school in September. Attendance at nursery school is not a requirement at this age but is at the discretion of parents.

Attendance at a particular nursery setting will not guarantee admission to a reception class at the same school.

As nursery education is not compulsory there is no right of appeal against the refusal of a place. However, every effort will be made to accommodate the wishes of parents.

1.1 Nursery admissions oversubscription criteria

Where there are more applications for a nursery setting than there are places the following priorities will be used, in order, to allocate places:

1. Children in the care of the local authority and children who were previously looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order), including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted;
2. Children living within the catchment who have an elder brother or sister at the school who will still be attending at the time of admission (or at the linked junior school in the case of infant schools);
3. Other children living within the catchment;
4. Children living outside the catchment who have an elder brother or sister at the school who will still be attending at the time of admission (or at the linked junior school in the case of infant schools);
5. Children who live nearest to the school as determined by a straight-line measurement from the child's home address point to the main entrance of the school.

1.2 Nursery admissions waiting list

Once the class is full a waiting list based on the oversubscription criteria will be held until the end of the academic year.

2 Primary admissions

Admission to primary school is provided for all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Where a child is offered a place at a school, that child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made. Where the parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

All applications for admission to school at 4+ are co-ordinated by home local authorities¹. All local authorities provide a common application form for this purpose. Preferences made by parents living

¹ The local authority in the area that the family lives.

in Stoke-on-Trent for schools in other local authority areas must be included on the application form provided by Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

Parents are invited to name five schools in order of preference. Admissions authorities have to consider preferences in accordance with their published admissions criteria. They cannot take account of where the school is placed in the order of preferences.

2.1 Published admission numbers (PAN)

All schools must have a Published Admission Number (PAN), which applies to the relevant age group², e.g. the reception class in a primary school. The PAN is normally based on the school's net capacity.

School	Published Admission Number
Ball Green Primary	45
Burnwood Primary	90
Heron Cross Primary	60
Hillside Primary	30
Sandford Hill Primary	60
St. Paul's CE (C) Primary	45
Willows Primary	90

2.2 Oversubscription criteria

Where there are more applications for a school than there are places available, the Local Authority will use the following priorities, in order, to allocate places:

1. Children cared for by a local authority and children who were previously looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order), including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Children living in the catchment area of the school who have an older brother or sister attending at the time of admission (or at the linked junior school in the case of infant schools).
3. Other children living within the catchment area of the school.
4. Children living outside the catchment area of the school who have an elder brother or sister at the school at the time of admission (or at the linked junior school in the case of infant schools).
5. Children who live nearest to the school as determined by a straight-line measurement from the child's home address point to the main entrance of the school.

If priorities have to be decided within any of these categories, children will be placed in order of priority using distance from their home to the main entrance of the school as measured by straight line. Where distance is equal for two or more applications, a tie-breaker will be applied whereby places will be determined by random allocation.

² This is the age group at which pupils are or will normally be admitted to the school e.g. Reception and year 7. In Stoke-on-Trent, for some schools there are other relevant age groups, which can include Year 3 (infant to junior) and Year 5 (first to middle school).

The Local Authority will also consider any reasons put forward by parents in support of their preference. These reasons should be supported with evidence wherever possible. If the reasons concern the child's health or social wellbeing, the evidence should be provided by a medical practitioner or other social care professional. If the Local Authority considers that the reasons for a place at a particular school are sufficiently strong, it will place the child on the school list at the top of the criterion of which they have been ranked.

2.2.1 Catchment areas

Copies of school catchment area maps are available from the Local Authority or individual schools.

2.2.2 Siblings

For admission purposes, an older brother or sister is defined as a child who lives at the same address and who is the brother/sister, half-brother/sister (i.e. share one common parent), step brother/sister (i.e. related by parent's marriage/civil partnership) or unrelated, but their parents are living together as partners at the same address as the child for whom the place is being requested. It also includes any other child living at the same address, under the terms of a Residence Order.

Special arrangements will apply if there is space for only one of a set of twins or triplets or other multiple birth. In this circumstance the Local Authority will usually admit above the published admission number (PAN) unless it is impossible to accommodate siblings in such a way, when the parents will be asked to decide on behalf of the family.

2.2.3 Distance measurements

The Local Authority uses a geographic information system (GIS) to calculate home to school distances. This determines co-ordinates of the applicant's home address using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and OS Address Point data³. For allocation and waiting list purposes, this distance will be measured as a straight-line distance from home to school in miles.

2.3 Waiting lists

If an infant class is full, a waiting list based on the above criteria must be held until the end of December of that academic year. By local agreement, waiting lists will be maintained until the end of the relevant academic year. A position on a waiting list is not fixed and applicants may move up and down the list. Inclusion on the waiting list does not guarantee a place at the school. All unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the waiting list of a school or schools and will remain on the list until the list closes, a place becomes available, or the family ask to be removed from the waiting list.

2.4 Admission outside the normal age-group

Admission outside normal age-group – parents may request that places be made available outside the normal age group (e.g., if a child is summer-born⁴, gifted and talented, or has experienced problems such as ill-health, etc). A decision will be taken by the admission authority on the basis of the circumstances of the case and taking account of the views of the headteacher of the school concerned.

2.5 Appeals

Where parents are unsuccessful in securing a place at their preferred school, an appeal against the decision can be made to an independent appeals panel set up by the City Local Authority. The

³ The child's home address point is used to determine the catchment within which the property lies.

⁴ Children born from 1st April to 31st August are summer born children and reach compulsory school age in the September following their fifth birthday.

decision to appeal does not prevent parents from accepting an alternative school while the appeal process takes place.

2.6 Late applications

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application is submitted on-time. Any application submitted after the closing date is deemed to be late. All additional school preferences (including where the applicant has decided to change their preference) must be made in writing to the School Admissions Team and those requests submitted after the closing date will be processed after all on-time applications.

Late applications for community and voluntary controlled schools will be considered alongside those received by the closing date only in the event of one of the following:

1. The family moved into the area after the deadline for the receipt of applications.
2. Exceptional circumstances, stated in writing with evidence, which prevented the form from arriving on time.
3. An error on the part of the school.

The Local Authority cannot accept responsibility for any application or evidence that is not submitted correctly via the on-line system or is lost in the postal system. Correctly submitted on-line applications generate an electronic receipt, which must be retained by the applicant. Paper applications can be given to your local primary school. It is recommended that you obtain a receipt. If posting an application, it is recommended that the form is sent by recorded delivery.

3 Additional notes

Families are strongly encouraged to read the Stoke-on-Trent prospectus, which provides details of the application process, key deadlines and information about Stoke-on-Trent schools.

3.1 Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

These children are considered separately and before everyone else and must be accepted by the school named on their EHCP. They will count towards the school's admission number. Pupils undergoing a statutory assessment that has not been completed must also make an application for a school place through the Local Authority's co-ordinated admission scheme.

3.2 Parental responsibility

Only those holding parental responsibility for the named child are able to make an application and they will be required to make a declaration to this effect as part of the application process. Ordinarily it is expected that this person resides at the same address as the child and is referred to as the parent for admission purposes. Where parental responsibility is equally shared, the child's parents should determine which parent should submit the application.

3.3 Parental disputes

Only one application can be made for each child. Parents should agree on school preferences for a child 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. If parents cannot agree and neither has obtained a court order stating who should be making the application/what the preference(s) should be, the Local Authority will accept an application from the parent living at the address at which the child is registered either at a previous nursery/primary school or at the GP.

3.4 Withdrawing places

Once parents have been notified of an offer of a school place the Local Authority will withdraw the offer only in exceptional circumstances, such as:

1. If the offer was made based on fraudulent or misleading information on the application form e.g. a false claim to residence within a catchment area.
2. Where a place was offered in error.

3.5 Home address

The applicant's home address is the child's along with their parent's main and genuine place of residence at the time of the allocation of places. Where a pupil lives with separated parents, with shared responsibilities, each for part of the school week, the home address will be that at which the child is registered at a previous nursery/primary school or at the GP.

3.6 Decisions on applications

The Local Authority will notify all applicants of the outcome of their application for a school place on the specified offer date (refer to the admissions timetable). Applicants who choose to make an online application will receive an email confirming their decision on the offer date. Decision letters to parents making paper applications will be issued by second class post.

4 In-year Admissions

All in-year applications must be made to the school. An in-year application is for the admission of a child to a relevant age group⁵, but it is submitted on or after the first day of the first term of the admission year, or if it is for the admission of a child to an age group other than a relevant age group.

During the school year there are limited school places available and applicants moving into or within Stoke-on-Trent should not assume that their child will be automatically allocated a place at their local school. There is no guarantee of a place at any school, even if it is the catchment area school. If the school is already at capacity in the year group, the application may be refused.

The Local Authority will make appropriate arrangements with schools for data sharing and pupil tracking.

⁵ The age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school.