

Northamptonshire County Council Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2022

Section 1

Timetable for Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions for September 2022

Date	Event
10 th September 2021	Online applications open and information to parents / carers
8 th October 2021	Generic reminder letters sent via schools for parents of Primary / Junior school children, advising them of the need to apply for a Year 7 place. Email sent to schools for them to remind parents of the need to apply
31 st October 2021	Closing date for applications (5.00 p.m.) (statutory). Late applications, i.e. those received after 5 p.m. on 31 October 2021, will not be processed until additional rounds of allocation (see below)
26 th November 2021	Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) sends applications to other LAs and Own Admission Authority (OAA) schools by 5.00 p.m.
12 th January 2022	Own Admission Authority schools send ranked lists to NCC by 5.00 p.m.
10 th February 2022	NCC applies agreed Scheme for Northamptonshire schools, informing other LAs of offers to be made to their residents by 5.00 p.m.
15 th February 2022	SEN must have informed School Admissions by this date about children who have an EHC Plan with named school (statutory)
25 th February 2022	Secondary schools informed by NCC of the final allocations, which may include offers made to pupils living in other LAs by 5.00 p.m.
1 st March 2022	National Offer Day - offers made to parents / carers by NCC and secondary schools informed via S2S (Statutory)
By 3 rd March 2022	Schools emailed and final allocation lists (ATFs) uploaded onto the S2S secure site
11 th March 2022	Start to share late applications received with Own Admission Authority schools and other LAs, with a weekly update of the number of late applications received
1 st April 2022	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in first round of reallocations
29 th March 2022	The deadline by which all appeal forms must have been submitted is by 5.00 p.m.
13 th May 2022	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in second round of reallocations
24 th June 2022	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in third round of reallocations
16 th June 2022	Appeals lodged before the closing date of 29 th March 2022 (5.00 p.m.) will be heard by this date (i.e. within 40 school days from the closing date)
13 th April, 1 st June and 4 th July 2022	Additional rounds of allocations will start on these dates
13 th July 2022	Places allocated to Northamptonshire children currently in Primary school who have not submitted an application for a place in Year 7. Letters sent to parents to advise of the places offered
1 st August 2022	In-year co-ordination commences

Section 2

Elements of the Scheme

2.1 Regulations

The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008 require local authorities to have a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools in its area. The scheme does not cover special schools. The purpose of a co-ordinated scheme is to establish mechanisms for ensuring, as far as reasonably practicable, that every parent of a child living within the LA who has applied for a school place in the normal admission round receives an offer of a single school place on National Offer Day. All schools must comply with the scheme.

2.2 Applying for a place in a secondary school

The normal point of entry to Secondary school is Year 7 and the local authority co-ordinates the process of allocating places to these schools.

2.3 Application forms

The Common Application Form (paper or online) must allow parents to apply for any Secondary school and to give reasons for their preferences. If parents apply directly to a school, the governing body/academy trust must inform the local authority. All applications are co-ordinated by the county council up to and including 31 July.

2.4 Residence in another local authority

Parents resident in one local authority who wish to apply for a place at a Secondary school maintained by a different local authority must apply using the Common Application Form (online or paper), for the local authority in which they live (i.e. their home local authority).

2.5 Exchange of information

Local authorities and admission authorities in the area must exchange information on applications made and potential offers by the dates specified in the scheme (see Section 1 above). A maintaining local authority must inform the home local authority if it intends to offer a place at one of its schools to a parent living in a different local authority area. Local authorities should exchange information on applications across their borders and seek to eliminate multiple offers across local authority borders wherever possible. The exchange of data must where possible, be carried out using secure data protection systems.

2.6 Information for Parents

Please note that throughout this scheme the term “parent” refers to both individual parents as well as those with parental responsibility for the child e.g. carers.

Parents who live within Northamptonshire are encouraged to apply online.

The benefits of using the online process are as follows:

Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for September 2022

1. Parents are less likely to make errors as the system guides them through the whole process
2. Parents are able to change or amend preferences up to 5pm on the closing date
3. On National Offer Day, parents will be able to log on to find out which school has been allocated. Parents using the paper application form will be informed by a letter posted on National Offer Day
4. Parents will receive an email with details of the school offered, and they will also be able to log on to view their offer online
5. Parents will be helping to reduce paper usage

The 'Applying for a Secondary School Place in Northamptonshire 2022-23' composite prospectus will be available in PDF format on the [School Admissions pages](#) of NCC's website from September 2021. Paper copies of the composite prospectus can be obtained by request from:

School Admissions
Northamptonshire County Council
1 Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED.

The prospectus contains information about:

- How to apply online
- Secondary schools in each area of Northamptonshire
- How to complete a common application form
- The Published Admission Number (PAN) for each school
- Each school's oversubscription criteria
- Whether individual schools were oversubscribed in September 2021
- Key dates for the application and allocation process
- Children with special educational needs
- Home-to-school transport
- The process for late applications
- Contact details for the NCC School Admissions Team

2.7 Parents living in Northamptonshire wanting to complete a paper application form

Requests for paper application forms and booklets (for those who do not have access to the internet) should be made to the NCC School Admissions Team. Additionally, paper forms/booklets may be printed from the website.

2.8 The Common Application Form

Parents are encouraged to apply online wherever possible. It is the responsibility of all those making an application to ensure they: a) submit the application on time / receive a submission confirmation email every time a change is made to the application or the application is checked and b) request confirmation of a paper application by returning the confirmation slip. It is **not** the responsibility of the School Admissions Team to send reminders to parents.

The application form (either online or paper) will ask the parent to provide:

- A list of up to three preferred schools in rank order (if the applicant is resident in a neighbouring authority where more than 3 preferences can be expressed, any preferences for Northamptonshire Schools will be treated in line with the child's home local authority)
- Details of siblings (if relevant) who attend the preferred school/s
- Details of the child for whom the application is being made (address, date of birth, any relevant medical information or special social circumstances)
- Confirmation that the child has an EHC Plan (if applicable)
- Reasons for their preferences
- The name of their child's current school
- Details about the person completing the application (name, address, relationship to the child, contact details)

2.9 Supplementary information forms (SIFs)

If additional information is required by the governing body of a Foundation, Voluntary Aided school, Free School, or Academy in order to apply its oversubscription criteria, this will be detailed in the specific section about that school in the composite prospectus. Supplementary information forms (SIFs) for schools which require them will be available on the NCC website from September 2021. Alternatively, contact details for each school are included in the prospectus so parents may contact schools directly to obtain a SIF. **Supplementary Information Forms must be returned to the preferred school by 31 October 2021 (5 p.m.), unless otherwise stated in the schools' admission arrangements.**

Parents who are using the paper application form will be required to return the completed application form to the School Admissions Team at Northamptonshire County Council, One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton, NN1 1ED by **5 p.m. on 31 October 2021**. Applications received after this time and date will be considered as late applications and will not be processed until after the on-time applications have been dealt with (i.e. until after National Offer Day). It is strongly recommended that parents should use recorded delivery and obtain a receipt when posting their application forms. Northamptonshire County Council does not accept responsibility for applications which are received after the closing date if parents have not paid sufficient postage.

If applying online, parents can submit any additional paperwork (e.g. proof of a house move or evidence of a medical / social need) electronically, or post this to the School Admissions Team at Northamptonshire County Council, One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton, NN1 1ED clearly stating name of child, date of birth and the name of the school that the parent is applying for. If a house move takes place after the closing date, the school allocation will be based on the address we hold at the closing date.

2.10 Applications for Foundation, Voluntary Aided, Free Schools and Academies

The School Admissions Team will ensure that parents' preferences are logged on the School Admissions database. The School Admissions Team will send a list of all applications received, including any supplementary information, to the relevant Foundation, Free School, UTC, Voluntary Aided schools or Academies.

Applications will be sent to Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies by **26 November 2021 (by 5.00 p.m.)** and schools will be asked to rank applicants as described in 2.13. Any parent who has not submitted a common application form to the LA will not be considered in the ranking lists with on-time applicants. The LA will check all OAA lists to ensure that this procedure is followed.

2.11 Applications for schools outside the LA and for Northamptonshire schools from families living in other LAs

Applications from Northamptonshire residents for schools in other LAs will be logged on the ONE Admissions system and information relating to those preferences and any supplementary information will be electronically forwarded to the relevant maintaining local authority by 5 p.m. on 26 November 2021.

Similarly, the School Admissions Team will receive applications forwarded from other LAs for schools in Northamptonshire. These will be recorded and passed on to Foundation/Voluntary Aided/Free Schools or Academies as appropriate. If the application is for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, the School Admissions Team will process applications along with all other applications for NCC schools.

2.12 Multiple applications

If more than one application is made for a child prior to the closing date, only the latest dated application form will be processed. Any previously submitted application forms will not be processed.

If a school place offer has already been made by the LA and the applicant has chosen to submit further applications, the latest-dated application will take priority over any previous applications.

If it is possible to offer a place at one of the preferences on the latest-dated application, an offer will be made and the previous offer will be withdrawn without further reference to the applicant.

Applicants must place any requests to withdraw applications in writing to the Admissions Team (by letter or email) prior to the reallocation round.

Where there may be multiple applications from parents who are separated, parents will need to refer to section 2.21 of this scheme for further guidance.

2.13 How the Co-ordination Process produces the offer of a single school place

All schools have a Published Admissions Number (PAN). This is the number of places available at the normal point of entry. Admission authorities (Local Authorities, Foundation, Voluntary Aided, Free Schools and Academies) must consider all the applications they receive and, if there are more applications than places available, they must apply their oversubscription criteria to all those applying. This process can be carried out by the School Admissions Team on behalf of Own Admission Authority schools as part of a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Any school wishing to use this service should contact the School Admissions Team as soon as possible. School Admissions will always confirm any offer made with the school in question.

The local authority must allocate a place at the highest preference school where the child can be offered a place.

- If a child qualifies for a place at all 3 preference schools, the LA will offer a place at the school that is ranked highest on the CAF. The child's name will then be removed from the ranked list(s) at the lower preference schools where they qualified for a place so that other children may be offered a place at these schools.
- If a child can be offered a place at only one of their preference schools, they will be offered a place at that school regardless of the preference order on the common application form;

- If a child cannot be offered a place within the PAN of any of their preferred schools, the LA will offer a place at the nearest school with a place available (the nearest school which has not reached their PAN and therefore has a place/places available at the time);
- If a child is offered a place at a school which wasn't their first preference, they can go on to the waiting list of any of the schools which was a higher preference than the school offered.

Parents have the right to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied, unless a higher preference has been allocated. Information about how to make an appeal is published on the local authority's website.

All OAA schools are responsible for returning a ranked list of all applicants to the local authority by the date stated in the scheme. Some schools will be oversubscribed, others undersubscribed. The surplus places at undersubscribed schools will be allocated to children who were unable to obtain places at their preferred schools.

The local authority will publish details of how places at all schools were allocated on its website.

Schools using **random allocation** as a tie-breaker, or as part of their oversubscription criteria, must send lists which include the names of all applicants in ranked order to the School Admissions Team. The ranked list must include all children in the individual bands and not just those ranked up to the school's PAN. This procedure will enable the School Admissions Team to identify why a place has been refused.

All schools which are their own admission authority must return the ranked allocation lists to the School Admissions Team by **5 p.m. on 12 January 2022**.

For local authority schools - Community and Voluntary Controlled - the School Admissions Team will be responsible for applying the oversubscription criteria if the number of applications exceeds the Published Admission Number (PAN) of the school.

If a pupil is eligible for a place at more than one school, the applicant's order of preference will be considered and the highest preference will be offered.

Where it is not possible to offer a place at any of the preferred schools, a place will be allocated at the school closest to the home address where places are available at the time of allocation. Some pupils in this situation will be eligible for assistance with transport costs. Parents will be referred to the [school travel assistance](#) information on NCC's website.

A single place will be identified for each child by the end of this co-ordination process. When schools have more applications than places available, places will only be allocated up to the limit of the school's PAN. In the case of Foundation, Voluntary Aided, Free schools and Academies, the admission authorities of these schools **must** notify their local authority of their intention to increase the school's PAN and reference to the change should be made on the school's website. Where further capacity is required to provide every child with a school place, the local authority will consult relevant schools to reach an agreement.

2.14 Protocol for children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

Reviews of EHC Plans, discussions with parents about preference and placement enquiry procedures, will all be undertaken by the EHC team at NCC. Placement decisions will be taken by **15th February 2022**. The admission of children with EHC plans, where the school is named in the plan, will take priority over all other children.

The EHC Team will inform parents of the school allocated for their child on or around the **15th February 2022**. There may be circumstances where pupils have not been informed of the school allocated by this date. In these cases, schools may be required to admit children over PAN.

The offer of a school place will be made by the EHC Team who will also amend the EHC plan accordingly.

2.15 Notification of offers to all schools or other local authorities

As part of the process of Co-ordination, other LAs will be informed electronically by **5.00 p.m.** on **10 February 2022** of any offers of school places that NCC is able to make to their residents. All schools, including Foundation, Voluntary Aided, Free Schools and Academies will be informed of the final offers, which may include offers made to pupils living in other LAs, by **5 p.m. on 25 February 2022**. Schools **must not** communicate with parents until *after* the offer from NCC has been sent.

2.16 Late applications

Every effort will be made to encourage parents to complete application forms by the closing date of **31 October 2021 (5.00 p.m.)**. If an application form is received *after* 5.00pm on 31 October 2021 it will not be possible to consider it until all the on-time applications have been processed. Late applicants will not receive an offer of a school place on National Offer Day. Late applications will be considered on the reallocation dates published in the 'Applying for a Secondary School Place in Northamptonshire 2022-23' composite prospectus (see Timetable for Secondary co-ordinated admissions for September 2022 on page 1 of this document).

In the Co-ordinated Scheme in Northamptonshire, parents will not be allowed to have more than three live primary or secondary preferences at any point in time, prior to the offer date. Parents will not be allowed to change the order of schools listed as preferences after the closing date. After this date, changes to preferences must be made on a late application form which will be processed in the further rounds of allocation (see page 1 for dates).

For Foundation, Voluntary Aided, Free Schools and Academies, NCC will forward any late applications directly to the schools for their consideration (by agreed timelines). If places are not available at the preferred school, the School Admissions Team must be informed by the school so that a place can be offered at an alternative school with places available. If the alternative school is its own admission authority, details of the applicant will be sent to the school before an allocation is made by the local authority.

N. B. The Co-ordinated Process in Northamptonshire continues up to and including 31st July of each year. From 1st August, the In-year process commences.

2.17 Right to appeal

Parents have the right to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied. When an admission authority informs a parent of a decision to refuse a place, it **must** include the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents **must** be informed that, if they wish to appeal, they **must** set out their grounds for appeal in writing. Admission authorities **must not** limit the grounds on which appeals can be made.

The admission authority **must** establish an independent appeals panel to hear the appeal. The panel will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal. Where a panel upholds the appeal the school is required to admit the child.

2.18 Waiting lists

Parents who have been refused a place at a school (this could be after National Offer Day, after an unsuccessful appeal or after making a late application) may wish to place their child's name on a waiting list. Parents must contact the School Admissions Team in order to request that their child's name is added to the waiting list. Following the Secondary National Offer Date, there will be no distinction drawn on school waiting lists between on time and late applications: all applications will be ranked in accordance with schools' oversubscription criteria.

For OAA schools (i.e. Academies, Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools), parents need to contact the individual schools directly to ask for information on the waiting list policy for the school.

If a place becomes available, the school's oversubscription criteria will be applied to the waiting list to determine who should be allocated the vacant place. Any places that become available after the initial allocation will be re-allocated on a monthly basis (details available on the School Admissions website) by the School Admissions Team. **The local authority continues to co-ordinate the allocation of places at all schools up to and including 31 July.** This requires all schools which are their own admission authority to ensure clear and up-to-date communications with the School Admissions Team regarding the ranking lists for each round of allocations. No allocation will be made by the School Admission Team without prior agreement with the individual admission authority.

For every over-subscribed Community and Voluntary Controlled school, the School Admissions Team will retain a waiting list until the end of the 2022 Autumn term (31st December). Following this date, waiting lists will be ended. If parents still wish their child's name to remain on the new waiting lists which will be established for the following term, they will need to request this in writing to the NCC School Admissions Team. Waiting lists will be restarted every term, so if a parent wishes to remain on a waiting list for a whole academic year, they would make a request in writing to the School Admissions Team at the start of January and following the Easter break (March/April).

2.19 National Offer Day

The School Admissions Team will notify all on-time applicants of their school offer on **1 March 2022** by email (for all online applicants) or by post (for all applicants who submitted a paper application, a first class letter will be sent). The communication will include information about how school places have been allocated in the county and if necessary, information about how to appeal. In addition, we will publish on the NCC website a breakdown of how places were allocated in accordance with each school's oversubscription criteria. Links to this page will be provided on all offer emails and letters.

The School Admissions Team will assume that the place has been accepted unless communication from the parent is received to advise to the contrary.

2.20 Rejection of a school place

Parents will be required to notify the relevant admission authority in writing (by email or letter) if they **do not** propose to accept the school place offered. These places will then be reallocated following the process as set out above in 2.13. Places will not be removed until the School Admissions Team has been advised by the parent that the child/student/pupil has secured an alternative school place.

Schools which are their own admissions authority must inform the School Admissions Team as soon as a place is rejected so that the School Admissions Team has an accurate picture of the available school places for the reallocation dates.

2.21 Definition of a sibling/sibling link for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools

Some schools give priority to children whose brother(s) or sister(s) are already on roll at a preferred school (this is called a sibling link). A sibling is defined as a child's brother or sister. A sibling must be living at the same permanent address and as part of the same family unit (one or two parents plus children) to qualify for a sibling link. NCC's definition of 'sibling' for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools includes:

- half-brothers and half-sisters
- step-brothers and step-sisters
- adopted children
- children in foster care
- children living in the same family unit, even if they are not biological brothers and sisters – for example when the parents are not married/in a civil relationship.

Cousins are not regarded as siblings.

The sibling link will only be valid if the sibling will be attending when the child applying starts school. This means that it may not count as a sibling link if a child wants a place in a Primary school, but their brother is in Year 6 and will therefore have left the school when the child applying starts at the school.

2.22 Parents who do not live together

When parents live separately and the child spends time with each parent, the home address will be treated as the place where the child sleeps for most of the school week (i.e. Sunday night – Thursday night inclusive).

If the child spends equal amounts of time at two addresses, the parents must agree which address they wish to be the child's main address.

Documentary evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required together with proof of actual permanent residence at the property concerned.

The LA can only process one application. Where more than one adult shares parental responsibility and if the adults live at different addresses, it is important that an agreement be reached on which schools to apply for, prior to making the application.

If multiple applications are received for the same child with conflicting address and/or preferences, or the School Admissions Team is made aware of a dispute between two parents, all applications will be placed on hold and will **not** be processed until:

- a new single application is made, signed by all parties; or

- written agreement is provided from both parents indicating which application they have agreed on; or
- a court order is provided confirming which parent's application carries precedence.

If no agreement can be made, parents are recommended to seek legal advice. If an agreement cannot be reached before the closing date, this may affect the chances of your child being allocated a place at your preferred school/s.

Further information on parental responsibility can be found on the [DfE website](#):

2.23 Children who are part of a multiple birth group

Under paragraph 2.15 (g) of The School Admissions Code, infant class size restrictions may be exceeded where a child who is part of a multiple birth group is allocated as the 30th pupil. For Community and Voluntary Controlled School, the admission number will be exceeded to accommodate the other children from this birth group. These children will remain as 'excepted pupils' for the time they are in an infant class (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) or until class numbers fall back to the current infant class limit. Own admission schools may have another policy in place.

2.24 Random allocation

Random allocation, which is used as a tie-breaker within an oversubscription criterion for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, will be observed by an independent person (not employed by the local authority or with a connection to the school). This is to ensure that the process is administered correctly.

If a place is allocated from the waiting list after the initial round of allocations, and the tie-breaker is used, a new round of random allocation will be performed but not observed.

2.25 Definition of Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children ('Children in Care')

The highest priority in the oversubscription criteria for all schools must be given to 'looked after children' and 'previously looked after children'. 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 (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

'Previously looked after children' are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order).

2.26 Admission of children out of their normal year group (out of cohort)

Northamptonshire County Council's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group where possible, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".

Parents/carers may however seek a place for their child out of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. They must put their request in writing to the School Admissions Team (for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools) and directly to the school for schools who are their Own Admission Authority, at the time of application.

The Admission Authority of the school will consider the request and make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of:

- the parent's/carer's views;
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group;
- whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely;
- the views of the Head teacher of the school concerned.

The Admission Authority of the school **MUST** set out clearly for parents the reasons for their decision about the year group a child should be admitted to.

Parents/carers do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

Schools for which the Local Authority is not the Admission Authority may have a different process. Please check individual schools' admission arrangements directly with the schools or on their websites to ensure you are following the correct procedure.

Please see further information in the [School Admissions Code](#) (page 25, paragraph 2.17) about the admission of children outside their normal age group.

2.27 Sharing information with schools

When sharing information regarding the co-ordinated scheme with schools, the local authority (NCC) will:

- Supply information about what is required in the co-ordination process;
- Provide useful tips to schools;
- Be clear about the dates when information should/must be returned to the LA.

If schools already have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the School Admissions Team, the team will carry out the agreed work and will share with the school the outcome of applications made to the school by sending out lists of successful applicants.

Schools wishing to establish a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the co-ordination process should contact the School Admissions Team as soon as possible to discuss their requirements.