



North East
Learning Trust

Admissions Policy

NELT County Durham Academies

2026/27

Introduction

The North East Learning Trust is the Admissions Authority responsible for determining and applying this policy in the following Academies:

- Browney Academy
- Middleton-in-Teesdale Academy
- Sacriston Academy
- Easington Academy
- Hermitage Academy
- Teesdale School and Sixth Form
- The Academy at Shotton Hall

The Trust will consider all admission applications sent to them by the Local Authority (LA) and will apply the policy fairly and consistently to every application received.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

The PAN is the number of places we intend to make available for our normal intake. Once the PAN has been set for an Academy, we will not refuse any applications submitted during the normal admission round for Reception, and Year 7 where the PAN has not been exceeded.

However, if there is an unexpectedly high demand and the Trust believes we could admit additional children, we will inform the LA and either admit children above the agreed PAN or increase the PAN accordingly to accommodate more children.

The PAN applies to the intake year which is Reception for primary and Year 7 for secondary. The PANs for 2026/2027 are:

Academy	Phase	PAN
Browney	Primary	25
Middleton-in-Teesdale	Primary	25

Sacriston	Primary	30
Easington	Secondary	150
Hermitage	Secondary	200
Teesdale School and Sixth Form	Secondary	140
The Academy at Shotton Hall	Secondary	230

Applying for a place in reception

To apply for a place at Browney Academy, Middleton-in-Teesdale Academy and Sacriston Academy parents/carers should complete the common application form supplied by Durham LA. The completed application form must be returned to the LA by no later than **15 January 2026**.

Address

The address given must be where the child and parents/carers live permanently. It must not be that of a childminder, grandparent, or other relative's address. If parents/carers share custody of a child then the Trust may request to see the court order, child tax credit letter, child benefit letter, medical card, or other evidence to establish where the child is resident for most of the time during weekdays. *If there is joint custody for the child, then the address of the parent/carer receiving the child benefit will be used.*

Oversubscription Criteria for Browney Academy, Middleton-in-Teesdale Academy and Sacriston Academy

- 1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order* including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.**

A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. (See definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989.

An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

2. Medical reasons

Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement. Supporting evidence from a professional (such as a doctor known to your child) must be included with your application. The evidence MUST explain why the school you wish your child to attend is the only school that can meet the child's medical needs and what difficulties would be caused if they had to attend an alternative school.

3. Sibling links

Children who have a sibling already attending the Academy and who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission. Sibling is defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, half-brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters and children of the parent/carer's partner.

4. Children of staff employed at the academy

Children of all staff employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made and/or the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post at the Academy where there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

5. Distance

Children who live nearest the preferred Academy measured by the shortest walking route. This will be based on the child's address. Where the last place to be allocated would mean that a multiple birth sibling group i.e. twins, triplets, or other multiple birth sibling groups, would be split, the sibling group will be given priority over other children. Otherwise, if only one final place can be offered, and two or more applicants live equidistant from the Academy, random allocation (names out of a hat or other

suitable container) will be used. This process will be supervised by a person independent of the Trust.

In assessing home to Academy distance, the measure will be by the shortest walking route. Routes are measured from the centre point of the applicant's house, or in the case of a flat from the centre point of the building to the nearest Academy entrance. A Geographic Information System (GIS) is used to identify and measure the shortest walking route. The GIS identifies routes on the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network and Urban Paths Network, which are national recognised datasets. The routes include all man-made paths i.e. those that are metalled or surfaced.

Tiebreaker

Where an Academy is oversubscribed within any of the categories, priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school applied for.

For further information, please see CYPs Primary Admissions in County Durham brochure at www.durham.gov.uk

Notification of place

The formal offer of a place will be issued by Durham LA who will write to parents/carers on **16 April 2026**.

Late Applications for a County Durham Primary School Place

Applications received after the closing date of 15 January 2026 and on or before 5 March 2026 will be considered and, as far as possible, offered a school place on 16 April 2026. Applications received by the closing date take priority over late applications, however, applications which are received for very good reason after the closing date because of very exceptional circumstances may be accepted and treated as on time applications provided, they are received on or before 5 March 2026, the date the allocation procedures begin. Parents/carers must provide clear evidence for the Admissions Authority to consider as to why they could not apply during the preference period. The determination of the Admissions Authority will be final.

For applications received between 6 March 2026 and 4 May 2026 inclusive, the LA will, on 7 May 2026 the re-allocation day, offer a place in accordance with parental preference, where possible, and if not possible, at the nearest school with places available. These will be considered equally along with all other applicants that are on the waiting lists.

For applications received between 7 May 2026 and 31 August 2026 inclusive, offer/refusal communications will be sent out within 14 days of the LA receiving the application form. Any parent/carer approaching the Trust and/or an Academy direct will be referred to the LA. The LA will offer a place at the school highest in the parent's order of rank that has a place available, or if this is not possible, at the nearest suitable school that has a place available. For those who do not receive a higher preferred school the waiting lists will continue to operate.

Waiting list/appeals

The Trust will maintain the waiting list. Positions on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Unsuccessful applicants may also contact School Admissions, North East Learning Trust by telephone 0191 5634190 Option 1 or email schooladmissions@nelt.co.uk to be advised of their right to an Independent Appeal Panel and/or request to be included on the waiting list.

The waiting list will be maintained until 31 December 2026.

Withdrawing an offer of a place

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if:

- It was made in error.
- Parent/carer fails to respond to the offer of a place within the agreed deadline.
- It is established that the offer of a place was obtained through fraudulent or misleading application.

Definition of Statutory School Age for Primary Phase Children

Legally, children do not have to be in full time education until the term following their fifth birthday. This is compulsory school age. However, children are normally admitted to school in the September following their fourth birthday.

Child's Fifth Birthday	Can defer until	If deferred child will join class.
1 September – 31 December	January	Reception class
1 January – 31 March	April	Reception Class
1 April – 31 August	Please see section 'Deferred entry to reception class, but if a summer born child defers entry to the following September, they would be expected to enter a Year 1 class full-time.	

Deferred entry to reception class

Where an applicant to reception is below compulsory school age the parent/carer can request:

- a) That the date their child is admitted is deferred until later in the academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age; or
- b) That their child takes up the place part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Delayed entry to reception class

Summer born children (children born from the beginning of April to the end of August) reach compulsory school age in the September following their fifth birthday. If a parent/carer wishes for their summer born child to start school in the reception year group in the September following their fifth birthday the Trust will decide based on the circumstances of the individual case. Factors considered may include:

- In the case of children born prematurely, the fact that they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth.
- Whether delayed social, emotional, cognitive, or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school.
- Whether they have been previously educated outside their normal age group.

Applying for a place in Year 7 in County Durham

To apply for a place at a secondary Academy within the Trust parents/carers should complete the common application form supplied by Durham Local Authority. The completed application form must be returned to the Local Authority by no later than **31 October 2025**.

Address

The address given must be where the child and parents/carers live permanently. It must not be that of a childminder, grandparent, or other relative's address. If parents/carers share custody of a child then the Trust may request to see the court order, child tax credit letter, child benefit letter, medical card, or other evidence to establish where the child is resident for most of the time during weekdays. *If there is joint custody for the child, then the address of the parent/carer receiving the child benefit will be used.*

Oversubscription Criteria for Easington Academy, Hermitage Academy, Teesdale School and The Academy at Shotton Hall

1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order* including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.

A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. (See definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989.

An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

2. Medical reasons

Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement. Supporting evidence from a professional (such as a doctor known to your child) must be included with your application. The evidence MUST explain why the school you wish your child to attend is the only school that can meet the child's medical needs and what difficulties would be caused if they had to attend an alternative school.

3. Sibling links

Children who have a sibling already attending the school and who is expected to be on roll in Years 7 – 11 at the time of admission. Sibling is defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house permanently, including natural brothers or sisters, half-brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters and children of the parent/carer's partner.

4. Children of staff employed at the Academy

Children of staff employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made and/or the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage, and/or the member of staff has relocated.

5. Distance

Those children who have applied for a place at the nearest school to their home address measured by the shortest walking route. This will be based on the child's address. Where the last place to be allocated would mean that a multiple birth sibling group i.e. twins, triplets, or other multiple birth sibling groups, would be split, the sibling group will be given priority over other children. Otherwise, if only one final place can be offered, and two applicants live equidistant from the Academy, the LA's system of random allocation (names out of a hat or other suitable container) will apply.

In assessing home to Academy distance, the measure will be by the shortest walking route. Routes are measured from the centre point of the applicant's house, or in the case of a flat from the centre point of the building to the nearest Academy entrance. A Geographic Information System (GIS) is used to identify and measure the shortest walking route. The GIS identifies routes on the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network and Urban Paths Network,

which are national recognised datasets. The routes include all man-made paths i.e. those that are metalled or surfaced.

6. All other applicants

Tiebreaker

Where an Academy is oversubscribed within any of the categories above the following tiebreakers will be applied:

- a) For those children who have applied for a place at the school nearest to their home address, priority will be given to those living closest to the nearest school measured by the shortest walking route.
- b) For other children, priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school applied for.

In the unlikely event of the Academy being oversubscribed within categories 1, 2 and 3 and 4 tiebreaker (b) will apply.

For further information, please see CYPs Secondary Admissions in County Durham brochure at www.durham.gov.uk

Notification of places

The formal offer of a place will be issued by Durham LA who will write to parents/carers on **2 March 2026**.

Late applications for a County Durham Secondary School Place

Applications received after the closing date of 31 October 2025 and on or before 24 January 2026, will be considered and, as far as possible, will be offered a school place on 2 March 2026. Applications received by the closing date take priority over late applications, however, applications which are received for very good reason after the closing date because of very exceptional circumstances may be accepted and treated as an on-time application provided they are received before 24 January 2026, the date the allocation procedures begin. Parents/carers must provide clear evidence for the Admissions Authority to consider as to why they could not apply during the preference period. The determination of the Admissions Authority will be final.

For applications received between 25 January 2026 and 21 March 2026 the LA will, on 23 March 2026, offer a place in accordance with parental preference, where possible, and if not possible, at the nearest school with places available. These will be considered equally along with all other applicants that are on the

waiting lists for a higher preferred school because they did not receive their first, or in some cases their second and third preferences on 2 March 2026.

For applications received between 23 March 2026 (the reallocation day) and 31 August 2026 inclusive, offer/refusal communications will be sent out within 14 days of the LA receiving the application. Any parent directly approaching a school must be referred to the LA. The LA will offer a place at the school highest in the parent's order of rank that has a place available, or if this is not possible, at the nearest suitable school that has a place available. For those who do not receive a higher preferred school the waiting lists will continue to operate.

Waiting lists/appeals

The Trust will maintain the waiting list. Positions on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Unsuccessful applicants may also contact School Admissions, North East Learning Trust by telephone 0191 5634190 Option 1 or email schooladmissions@nelt.co.uk to be advised of their right to an Independent Appeal Panel and/or request to be included on the waiting list.

The waiting list will be maintained until 31 December 2026.

Withdrawing an offer of a place

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if:

- It was made in error.
- Parent/carer fails to respond to the offer of a place within the agreed deadline.
- It is established that the offer of a place was obtained through fraudulent or misleading application.

In-year admission to Academies within County

Durham

The Trust are responsible for managing in-year admissions, further information can be found in the Trust's In-Year Admission Policy.

Sixth Form Admissions

PAN for External Applicants only

Hermitage Academy	50
Teesdale School and Sixth Form	100

Hermitage Academy and Teesdale School and Sixth Form

The Admissions Authority for Hermitage Academy and Teesdale School and Sixth Form is the North East Learning Trust, which is responsible for determining and applying the policy. Any query regarding sixth form admissions should be directed to the school.

Applications for the Sixth Form should be made directly to the school. Parents/carers or students wishing to apply for a place in the Sixth Form should telephone or email the Academy by the **15 February** in the year of admission.

Admission to Year 12 of the sixth form will be from:

1. Pupils in Year 11 on roll at the school
2. Pupils in Year 11 from outside the school

All students must meet the specific requirements for each course they wish to study, details of which are outlined in the prospectus and on the website.