

Families and Wellbeing

Admission arrangements

Community primary and secondary schools, nursery classes

Academic year 2026-2027

warrington.gov.uk/schools



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

1. Primary Schools

1.1. Age of Admission

Admission authorities must provide for the admission of all children from the September following their fourth birthday.

1.2. Deferred Entry, Part-Time Attendance and Summer Born Children

Children reaching the age of five between 1 September and 31 August may be admitted full time on the first day of the autumn term before their fifth birthday. To help children adjust, schools may phase the intake over the first few weeks of term with reception children attending on a part-time basis. Arrangements are determined at school level, but part-time attendance does not usually last longer than the first four weeks of term.

- 1.3. Flexibility exists for parents/carers who feel their child is not ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents/ carers can defer the date which their child is admitted to school until later in that academic year but not beyond the point in which their child reaches compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made. Parents/carers may discuss this with the Headteacher of their allocated school.
- 1.4. If the parent/carers wish, their child may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. Parents/carers may discuss this with the Headteacher of their allocated school.
- 1.5. Parents/carers may wish to explore the possibility of their summer born child starting school in the September following their fifth birthday i.e. so their child is educated outside of their normal age group.
- 1.6. If a parent/carer chooses to explore this option, they should discuss it with the schools they are interested in and the local authority as soon as possible. Parents/carers should make it clear that they wish to apply for a reception class place a year later than the year into which the child could have been admitted.
- 1.7. If a parent/ carer wishes to pursue this, they should put their request in writing, including the names of their preferred school(s) and any supporting information they deem relevant to their request. This should be sent to the local authority admissions team who will log and co-ordinate the request. Requests take around 15 school days to process and the applicant will receive a letter detailing the decision.
- 1.8. The admitting authority is responsible for making the decision as to whether or not to educate outside of the normal age group based on the individual circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The admission authority will consult the Headteacher of the preferred schools for their views as part of the decision making process. If the decision of the admitting authority is to refuse entry outside of the normal age group, the parent/carer does not have the right of appeal. The right of appeal is only available if they have been refused a place at a school which they have applied for, not the year group.

- 1.9. If the decision of the admitting authority is to support an application for a place outside of the child's normal age group, applicants should note that a decision by one admitting authority is not binding on any other. Where a parent/carer's request is supported, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year. Parents/carers should also be aware that they must make a new request to the admission authority of their preferred schools at any future transition points or for any school transfers.
- 1.10. The Local Authority has a policy for own admission authority schools which is available upon request.

2. Infant Class Size Legislation – Key Stage 1

- 2.1. Infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. Additional children may be added under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The circumstances which would qualify a child to be considered as an excepted pupil are outlined in the school admissions code.

3. Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

- 3.1. The published admission number (PAN) is the number of places available at a school in the year of entry. Each maintained school PAN is largely based on the assessed capacity of the school. Outside of the year of entry it is expected that the PAN will continue to be applied. However, if circumstances at the school/academy have changed since the year of entry, a place may be refused even if the admission number has not been reached.
- 3.2. The PANs for academic year 2026-2027 for all Warrington community schools are:

Community Primary/Infant Schools	PAN for Reception Class Intake 2026
Barrow Hall	90
Bewsey Lodge	45
Callands	30*
Cherry Tree	30
The Cobbs	60
Grappenhall Heys	60
Newchurch	30
Stockton Heath	60
Twiss Green	30
 Community High School	 PAN for Year 7 Intake 2026
Culcheth High School	240

**The PAN has been reduced from 60 to 30 at Callands Primary School, following a variation to the admission arrangements. Please see the school's website for further information.*

4. Parental Preferences

- 4.1. Parents/carers have the right to state a preference for schools. At both the admission to reception class and the secondary transfer stages parents are invited to express up to three preferences and are given the opportunity to state their reasons for these preferences.
- 4.2. Parents/carers are advised to read the relevant composite prospectus for advice on how to do this and will be informed how preferences will be dealt with by the local authority for community schools and the admission authority for other schools. Read more on our admissions pages - [Schools | warrington.gov.uk](https://www.warrington.gov.uk/schools).
- 4.3. When preferences cannot be met and a place cannot be offered at any of the parent/carer's preferred schools, the applicant will be offered a place at the nearest school to the home address which has a place available. When this is a faith school or an academy, any offer of a place would be made in agreement with, and on behalf of the governing body or academy trust, as the admitting authority for the school.

5. Oversubscription Criteria

- 5.1. Oversubscription criteria are used to establish an order of priority for allocating places when the number of applications for places exceeds the number of places available.
- 5.2. Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan will be admitted to the school named in the plan over and above the oversubscription criteria.
- 5.3. The oversubscription criteria **for community primary schools** are as follows and are applied in the order in which they are listed:
 1. Looked after children and previously looked after children including those previously in state care outside of England.*
 2. Siblings (pupils with elder brothers or sisters already attending the preferred school and expected to continue at the school in the following school year. This includes full, half or step brothers and sisters and foster brothers and sisters who are living at the same address as part of the same family unit).
 3. Children with proven medical needs which are directly relevant to the school concerned. If you wish to be considered under this category you must provide appropriate supporting evidence at the time of your application from a doctor or other professional. This evidence must explain why the preferred school is the most suitable and what difficulties would be caused if the child had to attend another school.
 4. Pupils living nearest to the school measured as a direct distance from the child's permanent place of residence to the school measuring using a geographical information address point system. Distances will be measured in a straight line from the central point of the child's permanent place of residence to the central point of the school. (Central points are as defined by the Warrington Local Land and Property Gazetteer and distances are based on the same system.)

*A child in care 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 under section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making the application to the 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).

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Note: Where a school reaches its published admission number from pupils within one of the categories listed above, those pupils to be admitted from within that category will be those whose permanent places of residence are closest to the school as defined in oversubscription criterion four.

For the purpose of dealing with applications for admission on the grounds of a sibling being in attendance, separate infant and junior schools will be regarded as a single unit.

6. Transferring from Infant to Junior School

6.1. Most children in attendance in Year 2 at Warrington primary schools will automatically transfer to Year 3, however, Warrington has two infant schools and two Junior schools that are separate establishments and have their own admission arrangements but are closely linked. These are:

6.2. **Thelwall Infant and Nursery School and Thelwall Junior School**

The Local Authority is the admissions authority for Thelwall Community Junior School. The BEAM Academy Trust is the admissions authority for Thelwall Infant School.

Places at Thelwall Infant School are allocated using the admission arrangements published on the school's website. All children on roll at Thelwall Infant School at the end of Y2 automatically transfer to Thelwall Community Junior School. There is no application required.

Any other admissions **on entry** to Year Three for Thelwall Community Junior School are processed by the Local Authority as an in-year transfer.

6.3. **The Cobbs Infant and Nursery School and Broomfields Junior School**

The Local Authority is the admission authority for The Cobbs Infant and Nursery School and The Challenge Academy Trust is the Admission Authority for Broomfield Junior School.

All children on roll at The Cobbs Infant and Nursery School **must apply** for a Year 3 place at Broomfields Junior School. If the academy is oversubscribed, places will be allocated using Broomfields Junior School's oversubscription criteria. Please visit the school's website for further details.

7. Secondary Schools

7.1. **Age of Admission**

Children transfer from primary to secondary schools in the September following their 11th birthday. The local authority must ensure that each child residing in their area has a secondary school place for the start of the new school year.

7.2. The oversubscription criteria **for community Secondary schools** are as follows and are applied in the order in which they are listed:

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children including those previously in state care outside of England.*
2. Siblings (pupils with elder brothers or sisters already attending the preferred school and expected to continue at the school in the following school year. This includes full, half or step brothers and sisters and foster brothers and sisters who are living at the same address as part of the same family unit).
3. Children with proven medical needs which are directly relevant to the school concerned. If you wish to be considered under this category you must provide appropriate supporting evidence at the time of your application from a doctor or other professional. This evidence must explain why the preferred school is the most suitable and what difficulties would be caused if the child had to

attend another school.

4. Pupils attending a designated partner primary school. St Helen's CE Primary School is partnered to Culcheth High School.
5. Pupils living nearest to the school measured as a direct distance from the child's permanent place of residence to the school measuring using a geographical information address point system. Distances will be measured in a straight line from the central point of the child's permanent place of residence to the central point of the school. (Central points are as defined by the Warrington Local Land and Property Gazetteer and distances are based on the same system.)

* A child in care 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 under section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989.

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).

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Note: Where this school reaches its published admission number from pupils within one of the categories listed above those pupils to be admitted from within that category will be those whose permanent place of residence is closest to the school as defined in oversubscription criterion five.

5. Children of UK Service Personnel and Crown Servants

- 5.1. For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area, by law the admission authority must allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a unit postal or quartering address.

6. Tie Breaker

- 6.1. A tie breaker must be applied to decide which applicant will be offered the last place at a school when two or more applicants cannot otherwise be separated.
- 6.2. If the last place available at a school is offered to a twin, triplet, etc. the local authority will admit the other twin, triplet etc. too.
- 6.3. Distances within Warrington admissions are measured in miles to 3 decimal places using a Geographic Information System (GIS). In the event of this measurement being the same for two or more applicants and when the last place to be allocated would be to one of these applicants, a random allocation will take place.
- 6.4. A random allocation will be determined by a local authority officer independent of the school and the admissions team. This will be done by drawing lots, and will be supervised by another local authority officer, independent of the school and the admissions team. The process will be recorded on a 'random allocation record sheet'.

Definition of a Child's Home Address/ Shared Parental Responsibility

- 6.5. For the purposes of the community school admission arrangements, the address given on the application to be used for admission, should be the child's permanent place of residence at the time of the application, not a childminder's or grandparent's.
- 6.6. We will only accept one application per child for a school place. If parents are separated and the child spends equal time at each parents' address, the address which will be used for admission purposes is the address where the child sleeps the majority of the school nights (Sunday to Thursday) during the week in term time. Where there is dispute or equal nights are slept, the applicant will be asked to provide proof of the address registered with the child's GP.
- 6.7. We may ask to see additional forms of evidence of your home address. This may include:
 - council tax bill
 - driving licence
 - utility bill (water, gas or electric)
 - proof of your child benefit/ child tax credits
 - a signed copy of the contract for the sale and purchase of the property or a signed copy of a tenancy agreement (at least six months)
- 6.8. Any evidence you provide must show that the parent or main carer lives at this address. We may seek evidence by other means if the parent/carers is unable to provide sufficient proof of their residence.

7. Waiting Lists

- 7.1. Waiting lists for the normal round of admission to reception year in primary and year 7 in secondary schools are held by the local authority for the whole of the Autumn Term of the academic year of admission. Waiting lists must be held strictly in oversubscription criteria order. We do not hold waiting lists for in-year admission applications.

8. Right of Appeal

- 8.1. Under the terms of the 1998 Education Act, parents/carers have the statutory right of appeal against the decision of an admission authority to refuse a place for their child at any school. Such appeals are made to an independent appeals panel via the local authority which maintains the preferred school.

9. Admission to Maintained Nursery Schools and Classes

- 9.1. There is no requirement for admission authorities to consult on admission arrangements for maintained nursery schools and classes. However, the local authority is required to publish any separate entry requirements and oversubscription criteria. [You can find out more at warrington.gov.uk/nursery-school-admissions](https://warrington.gov.uk/nursery-school-admissions)
- 9.2. If your child goes to a maintained nursery attached to the school, they do not have an automatic right to a place in a reception class at the school. You must send in your application form or apply on-line by the closing date for applications.

10. Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements and Timetable

- 10.1. It is a requirement for all local authorities to co-ordinate the admission arrangements within their areas for the normal admissions rounds i.e. admission into Year 7 and first admission to Reception Class.

11. Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Admissions

- 11.1. You can [find full details of the primary admissions co-ordination scheme on our website warrington.gov.uk/determined-admission-arrangements-community-schools](https://warrington.gov.uk/determined-admission-arrangements-community-schools)
- 11.2. You can [apply online for children due to start Reception class, visit warrington.gov.uk/schools](https://warrington.gov.uk/schools). Applications must be made through the applicant's home Local Authority even when the preferences are for faith schools, Academies or out of Borough schools.
- 11.3. The closing date for receipt of application forms for 2026 admission is 15 January 2026. The online facility will not be available after this date so any parent/carer who applies late will have to contact the Admissions Team. Late applications will be processed after all those received on time unless the child has changed address or recently been taken into care.
- 11.4. Parents/carers should receive their offer of a place at a primary school on the national offer date which is 16 April 2026.
- 11.5. All offers for primary schools will be sent out by the home local authority including offers on behalf of the admission authority for Academies, faith schools and on behalf of the maintaining local authority when the school offered is outside the home local authority's area.

12. Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Admissions

- 12.1. You can find [full details of the secondary admissions co-ordination scheme on our website warrington.gov.uk/determined-admission-arrangements-community-schools](https://warrington.gov.uk/determined-admission-arrangements-community-schools)
- 12.2. You can [apply online for children due to start Year 7, visit warrington.gov.uk/schools](https://warrington.gov.uk/schools). Applications must be made through the applicant's home Local Authority even when the preferences are for faith schools, Academies or out of Borough schools.
- 12.3. The closing date for receipt of application forms for 2026 admission is 31 October 2025. The on-line facility will not be available after this date so any parent/carer who applies late will have to contact the Admissions Team. Late applications will be processed after all those received on time, unless the child has changed address or recently been taken into care.
- 12.4. Parents/carers should receive their offer of a place at a secondary school on the national offer date which is 2 March 2026.
- 12.5. All offers for secondary schools will be sent out by the home local authority including offers on behalf of the admission authority for Academies, faith schools and on behalf of the maintaining local authority when the school offered is outside the home local authority's area.

