

Northamptonshire County Council Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2021

Section 1

Timetable for Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions for September 2021

Date	Event
10 th September 2020	Online applications open and information to parents / carers
8 th October 2020	Generic reminder letters sent via schools for parents of primary / junior school children, advising them of the need to apply for a Y7 place. Email sent to schools for them to remind parents of the need to apply
31 st October 2020	Closing date for applications (5.00 p.m.) (statutory). Late applications, i.e. those received after 5 p.m. on 31 October 2020, will not be processed until additional rounds of allocation (see below)
26 th November 2020	Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) sends applications to other LAs and Own Admission Authority (OAA) schools by 5.00 p.m.
12 th January 2021	Own Admission Authority schools send ranked lists to NCC by 5.00 p.m.
10 th February 2021	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 2021	SEN must have informed School Admissions by this date about children who have an EHC Plan with named school (statutory)
26 th February 2021	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 2021	National Offer Day - offers made to parents / carers by NCC and secondary schools informed via S2S (Statutory)
By 3 rd March 2021	Schools emailed and final allocation lists (ATFs) uploaded onto the S2S secure site
9 th March 2021	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
2 nd April 2021	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in first round of reallocations
29 th March 2021	The deadline by which all appeal forms must have been submitted is by 5.00 p.m.
14 th May 2021	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in second round of reallocations
25 th June 2021	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in third round of reallocations
18 th June 2021	Appeals lodged before the closing date of 29 th March 2021 (5.00 p.m.) will be heard by this date (i.e. within 40 school days from the closing date)
19 th April 2021 1 st June 2021 2 nd July 2021	Additional rounds of allocations will start on these dates
13 th July 2021	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 2021	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 31st 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:

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' booklet will be available in PDF format on the [NCC website](#).

Paper copies of the booklet can be obtained by request from:

The School Admissions Team
Northamptonshire County Council
1 Angel Square
Northampton
NN1 1ED

The booklet contains information about:

- How to apply online;
- Secondary schools in each area of Northamptonshire;
- How to complete a preference form;
- The Published Admission Number (PAN) for each school;
- Each school's oversubscription criteria;
- Whether individual schools were oversubscribed in September 2020;
- 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 will remain at one of the preferred schools in September 2021;
- 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;
- 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 booklet. Supplementary information forms (SIFs) for schools which require them will be available on the NCC website. Alternatively, contact details for each school are included in the booklet so parents may contact schools directly to obtain a SIF. Supplementary information forms must be returned to the preferred school by 31st October 2020 (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 31st October 2020**. 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 26th November 2020 (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 in other local authorities (LAs) and applications for

Northamptonshire schools from families living in other local authorities

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 26th November 2020.

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 school 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 12th January 2021.

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 Transport webpages](#).

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 2021. 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 2021. 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 10th February 2021 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 26th February 2021. 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 31st October 2020 (5.00 p.m.). If an application form is received *after* 5.00pm on 31st October 2020 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' booklet (see Timetable for Secondary co-ordinated admissions for September 2021 on page 1)

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 31st 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 2021 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 in January and following the Easter break. (April/May).

2.19 National Offer Day

The School Admissions Team will notify all on-time applicants of their school offer on 1st March 2021 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 e mails 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 a 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 under this criterion. 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

For school admissions purposes:

When parents live separately and the child spends time with each parent, the child's home address used will be the address where the child lives for most of the school week (ie: Sunday-Thursday night inclusive). If the child spends an equal amount of time with each parent, parents must agree which address they wish to be the child's main address before we can process the application.

The School Admissions Team reserves the right to ask for proof of home address.

We can only make an offer of one school place and therefore, can only accept one application for a child.

If parents cannot agree and multiple applications are received with conflicting addresses and/or preferences, or the School Admissions Team becomes aware of a dispute between two parents, all applications will be placed on hold and will **not** be processed until such time that:

- one single application is made; or
- written agreement is provided by both parents; or
- a specific court order is obtained confirming which parent's application carries precedence.

If 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](#):

Where parents are separated and have not shared with each other information about applications, we will use the following procedure if we get a request for information:

1. We will contact both parents to establish who has parental responsibility;
2. Once parental responsibility has been confirmed, we will send the information each parent is entitled to.

Please note, we may only discuss what is on an application form with the applicant.

2.23 Children who are part of a multiple birth group

Being part of a multiple birth group (e.g. twins, triplets) does not entitle applicants to gain their first preference but does, where possible, entitle them to be kept together if they so wish. This may not be their first preference and may actually be at a different school altogether.

If parents make a preference for a school which uses random allocation as part of its oversubscription admission criteria, there is a chance that only one child will be allocated a place at the school. This could mean that twins, or other multiple birth groups, are allocated places at different schools.

2.24 Random allocation

Random allocation, which is used as a tie-breaker within an oversubscription criteria 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).

Appendix 1

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 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 purchase Service Level Agreements (SLAs) during the co-ordination process should contact the School Admissions Team as soon as possible to discuss their requirements.