



LEAD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

DECISIONS to be made by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Councillor Bob Standley

MONDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2024 AT 3.00 PM

REMOTE MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

AGENDA

1. Decisions made by the Lead Cabinet Member on 10 September 2024 (*Pages 3 - 6*)
2. Disclosures of interests
Disclosure by all Members present of personal interests in matters on the Agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct
3. Urgent items
Notification of items which the Lead Member considers to be urgent and propose to take at the end of the appropriate part of the Agenda
4. Admission arrangements for East Sussex schools 2026-27 (permission to consult)
(*Pages 7 - 48*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services
5. Household Support Fund 2024 (*Pages 49 - 52*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services
6. Any urgent items previously notified under agenda item 3

PHILIP BAKER
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27 September 2024

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LEAD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Councillor Bob Standley, on 10 September 2024 at Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Councillor Alan Shuttleworth spoke on item 4 (see minute 20)

Councillors Steve Murphy and Alan Shuttleworth spoke on item 5 (see minute 21)

16. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 25 JULY 2024

16.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2024.

17. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

17.1 There were none.

18. URGENT ITEMS

18.1 There were none.

19. REPORTS

19.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

20. PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF WEST RISE COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL AND WEST RISE JUNIOR SCHOOL

20.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

DECISIONS

20.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

- 1) approve publication of a statutory proposal in respect of a proposal to amalgamate West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School and lower the new school's age range to 2 to 11; and
- 2) delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposal prior to its publication if required.

REASONS

20.3 The proposal to amalgamate West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School builds on the improvements being made through the partnership working between the two schools and aligns with one of the guiding principles to school organisation in East Sussex.

20.4 The longer-term future for education in the local area can best be achieved through amalgamating the two schools into one all-through primary school, operating on the same site.

21. BURFIELD ACADEMY AND PHOENIX ACADEMY

21.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

DECISIONS

21.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to approve an updated response from the local authority to Step Academy Trust's consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Burfield Academy and Phoenix Academy, to note:

- The new pupil forecasts;
- The change in national policy on mandatory housing targets which may lead to additional pressure on school places in the Wealden District Council area; and
- That the Department for Education remains the decision-maker

REASONS

21.3 The proposed amalgamation of the two schools, and the subsequent reduction in capacity in the area, will mean that there is some increased pressure on pupil places across the area. East Sussex County Council (the local authority) also recognises that Step Academy Trust's proposal will mean that instead of two schools with low numbers there will be one school with pupil numbers close to their Published Admission Number (PAN). This is likely to provide

educational benefits to pupils due to the Trust being able to provide and sustain a greater breadth of curriculum, pupil support and extra curricula opportunities.

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Report to:	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability
Date of meeting:	7 October 2024
By:	Director of Children’s Services
Title:	Admission arrangements for East Sussex Schools 2026-27 (permission to consult)
Purpose:	To seek Lead Member approval to consult on the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the 2026-27 academic year.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) agree to consult on the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools for the 2026-27 academic year as set out in Appendix 1;**
- 2) note that there are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements;**
- 3) agree to consult on the proposed published admission numbers (PANs) for Community and VC schools for 2026-27, specifically the proposed PAN reductions at Motcombe and Pashley Down Infant schools, and possibly others; and**
- 4) agree to consult on the proposed co-ordinated schemes of admissions as set out in Appendices 3-6.**

1 Background

1.1 The School Admissions Code 2021 states that admission authorities must determine (set) their admission arrangements annually. However, provided the relevant admission authority is not proposing any changes to their admission arrangements, there is no requirement to consult annually; where there is no change to arrangements consultation must take place every 7 years.

1.2 For the avoidance of doubt, East Sussex County Council (‘the Council’) consults annually, whether there is a change or not.

1.3 As part of the consultation process, and in accordance with current statutory requirements, the Council will consult parents and carers, schools, the relevant Dioceses and neighbouring local authorities. Details of the proposed arrangements will be posted on the Council’s website.

1.4 The relevant area for the purpose of consultation is the administrative County of East Sussex, and there are no proposals to change this for 2026-27.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The Council does not propose to make any changes to the admission priorities for 2026-27. The proposed priorities are set out in Appendix 1.

2.2 The proposed changes to the co-ordinated schemes are to the dates only, as set out in Appendices 3-6.

2.3 The consultation will include Priory School, Lewes, and Parkland Junior School, Eastbourne, whose trusts are responsible for admissions to the schools. This is because their respective trusts have requested that the Council consults on their behalf as they propose to use the Council's admission arrangements. Should the admission authorities of any other schools request this before 31 October 2024 they will be added to the consultation.

Proposed PAN changes

2.4 The published admission numbers for Community and VC schools in East Sussex will be included in the consultation and are attached as Appendix 2.

2.5 Pashley Down and Motcombe Infant Schools in Eastbourne have requested that the Council consults on reducing the PANs at each school from 90 to 60 due to the number of vacant places in the schools. Pupil forecasts indicate that demand for places is unlikely to exceed this level in the short to medium term. However, accommodation would not be removed from the schools so, should demand for places increase in the future, it would be possible for the two schools to increase their PANs back to current levels to meet the demand.

2.6 There may be further requests for PAN reductions from school governing boards. If these are received prior to the consultation launch, and if the pupil forecasts indicate that the PAN reductions will not affect sufficiency of places, these requests will be added to the consultation.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Council is required by law to consult on its admission arrangements every 7 years, or sooner if any changes to those arrangements are proposed for schools for which it is the admission authority. The Lead Member is recommended to agree to consult on the attached admission arrangements for 2026-27 (with the proposed changes set out in section 2 above).

3.2 The results of the consultation will be reported back to the Lead Member after the consultation period closes in January 2024 with recommendations for amendments as necessary resulting from comments received. Final admission arrangements must be determined by 28 February 2025 and published by 15 March 2025 in line with statutory deadlines.

CAROLYN FAIR
Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS

ALL

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Admissions criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools in East Sussex

1. Looked after children and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or subject to residence orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following being looked after. An explanation of who falls into this criterion can be found in the 'Explanation of words and phrases' set out here: [Apply for a school place 2024 to 2025 | East Sussex County Council](#)
2. Children who will have a brother or sister (sibling) at the school (or linked infant or junior school-see priority 4) at the time of admission and who live at the same address, within the predefined community area*.

The definition of 'sibling' can be found in the 'Explanation of words and phrases' set out here: [Apply for a school place 2024 to 2025 | East Sussex County Council](#)

Details of the pre-defined community areas for each school can be found here:
[Find my community area \(secondary\) | East Sussex County Council](#)
[Find my community area \(primary and junior\) | East Sussex County Council](#)

3. Children of staff members contracted to work at the school in question where:

- a) The member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and/or
- b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

An explanation of who falls into this priority can be found below in the definitions section.

4. Children wishing to transfer between a linked infant and junior school.

Linked infant and junior schools are:

- Motcombe Community School - Ocklynge Junior School
- Parkland Infant School - Parkland Junior School
- Pashley Down Infant School - Ocklynge Junior School
- Roselands Infant School - Stafford Junior School
- St Andrew's CE Infant School - Tollgate Community Junior School
- West Rise Community Infant School - West Rise Junior
- Dudley Infant Academy- All Saints CE Junior Academy

5. Other children living within a pre-defined community area

Each home address within the county falls within a community area although living within the community area does not guarantee a place. Details of the pre-defined community area for each school can be found here:

[Find my community area \(secondary\) | East Sussex County Council](#)
[Find my community area \(primary and junior\) | East Sussex County Council](#)

6. Children who will have a brother or sister (sibling) at the school (or linked infant or junior school, see priority 3) at the time of admission who live at the same address, outside the predefined community area*.

The definition of 'sibling' can be found in the 'Explanation of words and phrases' set out here: [Apply for a school place 2024 to 2025 | East Sussex County Council](#)

7. Other children living outside the pre-defined community area.

Tiebreaker

□ In the event of oversubscription within any category, place allocation will be decided by prioritising applications on the basis of home to school distance measured in a straight line (as the crow flies) from the address point of the family home to that of the school. Priority given to those whose homes are closest to the school. For split site schools, we will measure to the site where the child will attend for the majority of lessons at the point of entry.

□ In the event that applicants cannot be prioritised using the tie-breaker above because the distance measurements are the same, the Authority will use random allocation to decide which children will be offered the remaining places. This will be done electronically using the Authority's admissions software.

****Children living in the priority areas for Denton Primary School and for Harbour Primary School, whose sibling joined one of these school before 1 September 2022 will continue to be considered under priority 2 for the school their sibling attends.***

****Children living in the Brodricklands and Hamlands Farm estates whose siblings joined Polegate School, Willingdon Primary School or Willingdon Community School prior to 1 September 2024 will continue to be considered under priority 2 for the school their sibling attends.***

Definitions

Twins and children from multiple births (all community and voluntary controlled schools).

Where the admission of both twins or all siblings from a multiple birth would cause the school to rise above its Planned Admission Number, both twins or all of the siblings will be admitted.

Where the admission of the additional child or children from multiple births to an infant class would result in the class size rising above 30, the additional child/children would be exceptions to the Infant Class Size legislation throughout the infant phase or until the number in the class reduced to 30.

Children of staff definition:

A member of staff will be considered to be a child's parent for the purpose of this criterion if they are living in the same family unit as the child at the same address and are:

- their mother or father;*
- any other person who has parental responsibility, such as an adoptive parent, a special guardian or person named in a child arrangement order;*
- any other person who does not have parental responsibility but otherwise has the care of the child, such as a foster carer.*

For applications made as part of a normal intake, the length of employment will be considered as at the closing date for applications. For in year applications and for the purpose of maintaining a waiting list, the length of employment will be considered as at the date the application is received.

To be considered under this category, applicants must indicate this in the reasons section of the application and supply an official letter/email from the headteacher/Chair of Governors of the school in question verifying that the parent with care qualifies under a) or b).

Applications for admission out of year group

Arrangements for requesting a delayed reception start can be found here: [How to apply: deadlines, community areas | East Sussex County Council](#)

Arrangements for requesting admission out of year group at other points in a child's education can be found here: [How to apply: deadlines and community areas | East Sussex County Council](#)

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Proposed Published Admission Numbers

The tables below show the schools and the published admission numbers (PANs) where the County Council is the admission authority (any changes from 2025-26 shown in **bold**). Schools shown in *italics* are their own admission authority (A = Academy, T = Trust, F = Free School, VA = Voluntary Aided (Church)). Their admission numbers are included for reference only and may be subject to change.

Secondary Schools - proposed published admission numbers for year 7 admissions for the 2026-27 school year.

1. Eastbourne area

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>The Cavendish School (A)</i>	120
<i>The Eastbourne Academy (A)</i>	180
<i>Gildredge House (F)</i>	84
<i>Ratton School (A)</i>	243
<i>St Catherine's College (A)</i>	208
<i>The Turing School (A)</i>	189
Willingdon Community School	210

2. Hastings/St Leonards area

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>Ark Alexandra Academy (A)</i>	360
<i>The Hastings Academy (A)</i>	180
<i>The St Leonards Academy (A)</i>	300

3. Other areas of the County

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>Beacon Academy (A)</i>	250

<i>Bexhill Academy (A)</i>	300
Chailey School	180
Claverham Community College	230
<i>Hailsham Community College Academy Trust (A)</i>	300
Heathfield Community College	240
<i>King's Academy Ringmer (A)</i>	150
<i>Peacehaven Community School (A)</i>	180
<i>Priory School (T)</i>	232
Robertsbridge Community College	160
<i>Rye College (A)</i>	150
<i>St Richard's Catholic College (VA)</i>	200
<i>Seaford Head School (A)</i>	232
<i>Seahaven Academy (A)</i>	180
Uckfield College	270
<i>Uplands Academy (A)</i>	150

Primary, Junior and Infant Schools - published admission numbers for the 2026-27 school year.

1. Bexhill area

School	Admission number 2026-27
All Saints Church of England Primary School	30
<i>Chantry Community Primary School (A)</i>	30
<i>Glenleigh Park Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>King Offa Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>Little Common School (A)</i>	90
<i>Pebsham Primary Academy (A)</i>	30
<i>St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School (VA)</i>	30
<i>St Peter and St Paul CE Primary School (VA)</i>	60

2. Crowborough area

School	Admission number 2026-27
Ashdown Primary School	60
<i>Jarvis Brook School (A)</i>	30
<i>St John's CE Primary School (VA)</i>	30
<i>St Mary's Catholic Primary School (VA)</i>	30
<i>Sir Henry Fermor CE Primary Academy (A)</i>	60

3. Eastbourne area (including Polegate and Willingdon)

School	Admission number 2025-26
Bourne Primary School	60
<i>The Cavendish School (A)</i>	60
<i>Gildredge House (F)</i>	56
<i>Heron Park Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>Langney Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
Motcombe Community School (for pupils aged 4-7)	60 (was 90)
<i>Oakwood Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>Ocklynge Junior School (A) (for pupils aged 7-11)</i>	210
<i>Parkland Infant School (A) (for pupils aged 4-7)</i>	60
<i>Parkland Junior School (A) (for pupils aged 7-11)</i>	60
Pashley Down Infant School (for pupils aged 4-7)	60 (was 90)
Polegate School	90
<i>Roselands Infant School (A) (for pupils aged 4-7)</i>	90
<i>Shinewater Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>St Andrews Church of England Infant School (A) (4-7)</i>	90
<i>St Johns Meads Church of England Primary School (A)</i>	30
<i>St Thomas a Becket Catholic Primary School (VA)</i>	60
<i>Stafford Junior School (A) (for pupils aged 7-11)</i>	90
<i>The Haven CE Methodist Primary School Primary School (A)</i>	60
<i>Tollgate Community Junior School (A)(for pupils aged 7-11)</i>	90
<i>West Rise Community Infant School (for pupils aged 4-7)</i>	90

West Rise Junior School (for pupils aged 7-11)	90*
Willingdon Primary School	60

*There is a proposal to merge West Rise Infant and Junior schools with effect from 1 May 2025. Should this go ahead, West Rise Junior School will no longer exist as a separate school and there will be no PAN for 2026-27, as West Rise will become an all-through primary school.

4. Hailsham

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>Burfield Academy (A)</i>	30
<i>Grovelands Community School (T)</i>	90
<i>Hailsham Community College Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>Hawkes Farm Academy (A)</i>	60
Hellingly Community Primary School	30
<i>Phoenix Academy (A)</i>	30
<i>White House Academy(A)</i>	30

5. Hastings/St Leonards area

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>All Saints CE Junior Academy (A) (for pupils aged 7-11)</i>	60
<i>Ark Blacklands Primary Academy (A)</i>	90
<i>Ark Castledown Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>Ark Little Ridge Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>The Baird Primary Academy (A)</i>	45
<i>Christ Church CE Primary and Nursery Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>Churchwood Community Primary Academy (A)</i>	30
<i>Dudley Infant Academy (A) (for pupils aged 4-7)</i>	60
<i>Hollington Primary Academy (A)</i>	30
<i>Ore Village Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>Robsack Wood Primary Academy (A)</i>	60

<i>Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School (VA)</i>	30
<i>St Leonards CE Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>St Mary Star of the Sea Primary School (VA)</i>	30
<i>St Paul's Church of England Primary Academy (A)</i>	90
Sandown Primary School	60
<i>Silverdale Primary Academy (A)</i>	90
<i>West St Leonards Primary Academy (A)</i>	60

6. Heathfield

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>All Saints and St Richard's CE Primary School (VA)</i>	20
Cross-In-Hand Church of England Primary School	60
Parkside Community Primary School	30

7. Lewes area

School	Admission number 2026-27
South Malling Church of England Primary School	30
Southover Church of England Primary School	45
Wallands Community Primary School	30
<i>Western Road Community Primary School (T)</i>	30

8. Newhaven area

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>Breakwater Academy (A)</i>	30
Denton Community Primary School	30
Harbour Primary and Nursery School	60
<i>High Cliff Academy (A)</i>	30

9. Peacehaven/Telscombe Cliffs area

School	Admission number 2026-27
Meridian Primary School	60

<i>Peacehaven Heights Primary Academy (A)</i>	60
<i>Telscombe Cliffs Community Primary Academy (A)</i>	90

10. Rye area

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>Rye Community Primary School (A)</i>	30

11. Seaford area

School	Admission number 2026-27
<i>Anney Catholic Primary School (A)</i>	30
<i>Chyngton School (A)</i>	60*
Cradle Hill Community Primary School	90
Seaford Primary School	60

* It is understood that Chyngton School may consult on a PAN reduction to 30 for 2026-27

12. Uckfield area

School	Admission number 2026-27
Harlands Primary School	30
<i>Little Horsted CE Primary School (VA)</i>	15
Manor Primary School	60
Rocks Park Primary School	30
<i>St Philip's Catholic Primary School (VA)</i>	30

13. Rural Primary Schools

School	Admission number 2026-27
Alfriston School	15
Barcombe Church of England Primary School	20
Battle and Langton Church of England Primary School	60
Beckley Church of England Primary School	15
<i>Blackboys Church of England Primary School (VA)</i>	20

Bodiam Church of England Primary School	15
Bonnors Church of England Primary School	15
Brede Primary School	20
Burwash Church of England Primary School	25
Buxted Church of England Primary School	30
Catsfield Church of England Primary School	15
Chailey St Peter's Church of England Primary School	20
Chiddingly Primary School	15
Crowhurst Church of England Primary School	15
Dallington Church of England Primary School	15
Danehill Church of England Primary School	15
<i>Ditchling (St Margaret's) Church of England Primary Academy (A)</i>	24
East Hoathly Church of England Primary School	15
Etchingam Church of England Primary School	15
Firle Church of England Primary School	15
Five Ashes Church of England Primary School	10
Fletching Church of England Primary School	15
Forest Row Church of England Primary School	30
<i>Framfield Church of England Primary School (VA)</i>	15
Frant Church of England Primary School	15
<i>Groombridge St Thomas Church of England Primary School (VA)</i>	30
<i>Guestling-Bradshaw Church of England Primary School (VA)</i>	30
Hamsey Community Primary School	15
Hankham Primary School	20
Herstmonceux Church of England Primary School	30
High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School	15
<i>Hurst Green Church of England Primary Academy (A)</i>	20
Icklesham Church of England Primary School	15
Iford and Kingston Church of England Primary School	30
Laughton Community Primary School	15

<i>Mark Cross Church of England Primary School (VA)</i>	15
Mayfield Church of England Primary School	20
Maynards Green Community Primary School	30
Netherfield Church of England Primary School	20
Newick Church of England Primary School	30
<i>Ninfield Church of England Primary School(A)</i>	20
<i>Northiam Church of England Primary Academy (A)</i>	15
Nutley Church of England Primary School	15
Park Mead Primary School	15
Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School	15
Pevensey and Westham Church of England Primary School	60
Plumpton Primary School	20
Punnetts Town Community Primary School	15
Ringmer Primary and Nursery School	45
Rotherfield Primary School	30
<i>St Mark's Church of England Primary School (VA)</i>	15
<i>St Mary the Virgin Church of England Primary School (VA)</i>	15
St Michaels Church of England Primary School (Playden)	15
St Michaels Primary School (Withyham)	15
<i>St Thomas' Church of England Primary School (Winchelsea)</i> (VA)	20
Salehurst Church of England Primary School	30
<i>Sedlescombe Church of England Primary Academy (A)</i>	30
Staplecross Methodist Primary School	15
Stone Cross School	60
Stonegate Church of England Primary School	15
Ticehurst and Flimwell CE Primary School	30
Wadhurst Church of England Primary School	45
Westfield School	30
Wivelsfield Primary School	30

Co-ordinated Admission Scheme for reception and year 3 (of junior schools) entry September 2026-27

Contents

Introduction	1
Primary scheme 2026-27.....	2
Key dates.....	2
Applications made in the main round	2
Applications received after 15 January 2026 but by 13 March 2026.....	4
Changes of preference	4
No application form received	5
Applications received on or after 14 March 2026.....	5
Appeals	6
Waiting lists.....	6
Admission of summer born children to Reception classes.....	7

Introduction

Local Authorities (LAs) are required each year to draw up a scheme for co-ordinating the normal admissions round to primary and secondary schools. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that all parents receive a single offer of a school place on the national allocation date. If the prescribed date falls on a weekend or bank holiday, offers are sent on the next working day.

The scheme proposed by the County Council will be the subject of consultation with all maintained schools in the county and neighbouring local authorities.

The co-ordinated schemes apply only to admissions to Reception, and year 3 of junior schools at the start of term 1.

Primary scheme 2026-27

Key dates

September 2025: Admissions information made available

15 January 2026: Closing date for applications

23 January 2026: Preferences for each school established

6 February 2026: Exchange of preference data between local authorities

13 March 2026: Admission authorities in East Sussex advise LA of ranked order

27 March 2026: Finalise allocations

16 April 2026: Allocations confirmed to primary schools

16 April 2026: Decisions conveyed to parents by email

May 2026: (to be confirmed): Closing date for appeals

June to July 2026: Appeals heard

Applications made in the main round

1. The co-ordinated scheme is based on all preferences expressed by parents being treated equally, but where more than one school can be offered, the highest possible preference school named by the parent will be allocated. It will be for individual admission authorities to prioritise all preferences expressed for their schools against the published admissions criteria, which they have consulted on and determined. Individual academies can agree that the County Council ranks applicants on the academy's behalf. This would be a traded service. The only valid preferences are those stated on the LA common application form which is available online or in hard copy. Other admission authorities in East Sussex must not use any other application form. A separate, supplementary information form can only be used where additional information is required to determine admission within their published criteria. This form will be obtainable from and returnable to that admissions authority (voluntary aided (VA) schools). A supplementary information form on its own is not a valid application. Applicants living outside East Sussex must use the common application form that is supplied by their home local authority.

2. The process will begin with the information on admission arrangements and methods of application being made available early in September 2025.
3. The LA application form enables parents to name up to any three maintained schools stated in order of preference. It should be completed and submitted to the LA by the closing date of 15 January 2026.
4. By 6 February 2026 East Sussex County Council (“the County Council”) will exchange preference data with any local authority where an application has been received.
5. By 13 March 2026 East Sussex schools that are their own admission authorities will consider all applications for their school, apply their published admissions criteria and provide the County Council with a list of those applicants ranked accordingly.
6. By 13 March 2026 other local authorities will advise the County Council of decisions reached on applications for their schools from East Sussex residents. The County Council will apply its published admissions criteria to those schools where it is the admissions authority and determine the outcome of each preference expressed.
7. By 27 March 2026, the County Council will match the ranked lists against the parental preferences to ensure only one place is allocated per child. Qualifying late applications received before 13 March will be included in this process.

Where a child is:

- Eligible for a place at only one school given on the application form that school will be allocated
- Eligible for two or three schools, a place will be allocated at the highest-ranking preference school
- Not eligible for a place at any of the named schools and the child lives in East Sussex, a place will be allocated at the nearest school to the home with a space.

8. In the period 30 March 2026 to 15 April 2026 decision notifications will be prepared. The LA where the child lives will be responsible for sending these to parents.
9. On 16 April 2026 lists will be prepared of children allocated places at each primary school in East Sussex, and these will be sent to the schools in question.
10. 16 April 2026 - allocation decisions will be notified to parents by email. Letters will only be sent where specifically requested, or where the application has been made on a paper form. Where a preference is not being met, the notification email will signpost parents to the County Council website where information can be found explaining to parents how places have been allocated at their preferred school(s) and advising parents of the right of appeal.

Applications received after 15 January 2026 but by 13 March 2026

1. If an application form is received after 15 January 2026, it will still be passed to the relevant admissions authority with a note that it has been received after that date. It will be for the admissions authority to decide how it wishes to respond to the application. This will continue up until 13 March 2026.
2. If an application is received after 15 January 2026 but before 13 March 2026, together with proof of a change of address* since the closing date, or proof of another good reason why it was not possible for the family to apply on time, it will be treated as on time in respect of community and voluntary controlled schools. If there is no proof, or the reason is not considered valid by the County Council, the application will be treated as late. There is no separate right of appeal against the decision as to whether the application is treated as on time or late.
3. Applicants whose forms are received between these dates will be sent a decision on 16 April 2026. For applications received after 13 March 2026, we will aim to send a decision email within 20 school days.

Changes of preference

1. Parents may change their preferences at any stage up to the closing date of 15 January 2026. After 15 January 2026, we will not allow preferences to be

changed without an exceptional reason. The LA will judge each case on its merits but will only usually accept a change of preference where there has been a significant change of circumstances (such as a house move*) thus making the original preferences no longer practical. Parents will be required to put their reasons for changing their preferences in writing, and in all cases, supporting evidence will be required. If the change of preference is agreed, a decision will be sent on 16 April 2026 provided the request was received by 13 March 2026. Such applicants will be advised that they have the right of appeal if the revised preference cannot be met.

* In the case of house moves, proof of ownership or tenancy on an East Sussex property (such as exchange of contracts or signed tenancy agreement of one year) is required if an address is to be used for the purpose of allocating a school place. If an applicant cannot provide evidence, the application cannot be accepted.

2. There is no right of appeal where the LA does not accept the change of preference.

No application form received

1. No Reception or junior transfer places will be allocated unless a completed application form has been received.

Applications received on or after 14 March 2026

1. Only preferences stated on the LA application form will be valid. If the preference is for an 'own admission authority' school, the County Council will pass details to the school for a decision. The school must then advise the County Council within fourteen days as to whether a place can be allocated so the County Council can formally advise the parent of the decision. Where the preference is for a community or voluntary controlled school, the County Council will determine the outcome. If there are no places available at one of the preferred schools a place will be allocated at the nearest school with a place available (if the identified school is its own admission authority the County Council will ask the school whether a place can be allocated). We will aim to

process late applications within 20 school days. Any refused preference will carry the right of appeal.

2. Where the preference is for a school in a neighbouring authority, the details will be passed to that authority for a decision to be made. Any authority refusing an application should advise the LA of the decision so the LA can consider allocating an alternative school.
3. The Co-ordinated Scheme will end on 31 August each year. Applications received after this date will be processed as in year applications.

Appeals

1. Parents must be allowed at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and submit their written appeal. The appeal must be against any refused preference, thus if a parent puts on the appeal form a school which did not feature as a preference on the original application form an appeal hearing will not be arranged.
2. Parents submitting an appeal will be entitled to at least 10 school days' notice of the date of the appeal. Papers relevant to the appeal will be sent seven working days before the hearing. Appeals must be heard within forty school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. Appeals for late applications will be included with those being heard for the same admission round wherever possible. If this is not possible, they must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
3. The County Council must be advised of the outcome of all appeals to other admission authorities.

Waiting lists

1. The County Council will operate waiting lists for all community and voluntary controlled primary, infant and junior schools so that it is clear which child will be offered any place which becomes vacant. Such waiting lists will be operational after the closing date for appeals to be lodged. The waiting list must reflect the admissions criteria. The County Council must be notified by admissions authorities of any places that are subsequently allocated from the

waiting list. Until co-ordination ends, it remains for the County Council to offer places to parents when places become available and are allocated from the waiting list whether the admissions authority is the County Council or not.

2. Waiting lists will operate until the end of Term 2, 2026.

Admission of summer born children to Reception classes.

Parents of summer born children who are due to start in reception can request that their child starts on a part-time basis or joins Reception later during the school year.

However, parents can also request that their child starts in Reception in the September following their fifth birthday (i.e. when they would normally be starting Year 1). Parents making such a request should do so during the normal admission round.

The County Council will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the child's academic, social and emotional development together with the Headteacher and parent's views. If the request is refused but the child is offered a place in the school (but not the preferred year group) the parent would not have the right of appeal.

If the request is agreed, parents will need to be clear that this does not mean the child will remain in the year below their chronological age group for all of their school career, particularly on transfer to secondary school.

The County Council will base its decision-making on the assumption that it is in the best interests of summer born children (i.e. those born between 1 April and 31 August) to be admitted to Reception at compulsory school age where their parents request it, unless there are clear reasons why this is inappropriate (e.g. safeguarding or the pupil has an EHCP or is undergoing statutory assessment).

Parents are, however, required to make a case for this so that it can be demonstrated that the County Council has considered the rationale behind the request and made the decision in the child's best interests. Parents also need to be clear that own admission authority schools in East Sussex will not necessarily work on the same assumption, although they are encouraged to do so by the County Council.

The County Council will, however, advise all parents whose request for admission out of year group is agreed of the potential difficulties this could cause later on, and will require parents to agree that they have understood this and take responsibility for this decision before the child is admitted to school in East Sussex by signing a disclaimer to this effect. Should the parent refuse to sign, admission will not be held up if the child is already compulsory school age, but it will be clearly documented that the parent has been advised of the risks but has refused or otherwise failed to sign the disclaimer.

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Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for the normal year of entry for secondary schools

Contents

Introduction	1
Secondary scheme 2026-27	2
Key dates	2
Applications made in the main round	2
Applications received after 31 October 2025 but by 31 January 2026	4
Changes of preference	5
No application form received by 31 January 2026	5
Applications received on or after 2 March 2026	5
Appeals	6
Waiting lists	6
Applications for children to be educated out of chronological year group	7

Introduction

Local Authorities (LAs) are required each year to draw up a scheme for co-ordinating the normal admissions round to primary and secondary schools. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that all parents receive a single offer of a school place on national offer day. If the prescribed date (1 March or 16 April) falls on a weekend or bank holiday, offers are sent on the next working day.

The scheme proposed by the County Council will be the subject of consultation with all maintained schools in the county and neighbouring local authorities. This co-ordinated scheme applies only to admissions to year 7 at the start of term 1. The County Council has delegated responsibility for admission to year 12 of community schools with sixth forms to the relevant governing bodies and each school displays its own admission procedures and external published admission

numbers (PANs) for this year group on its website, together with any requirements for entry to particular courses.

Secondary scheme 2026-27

Key dates

September 2025: Admissions information made available

31 October 2025: Closing date for applications

28 November 2025: Exchange of preference data between local authorities

9 January 2026: Admission authorities in East Sussex to advise LA of ranked order

13 February 2026: Finalise allocations

25 February 2026: Allocations confirmed to secondary schools

2 March 2026: Decisions conveyed to parents by email

April 2026 (to be confirmed): Closing date for appeals

April to June 2026: 'On time' appeals heard

Applications made in the main round

1. The co-ordinated scheme is based on all preferences expressed by parents being treated equally, but where more than one school can be offered, the highest possible preference school named by the parent will be allocated. It will be for individual admission authorities to prioritise all preferences expressed for their schools against the published admissions criteria, which they have consulted on and determined. Individual academies can agree that the County Council ranks applicants on the academy's behalf. This would be a traded service. The only valid preferences are those stated on the LA common application form which is available online or in hard copy. Other admission authorities in East Sussex must not use any other application form. A separate, supplementary information form can only be used where additional information is required to determine admission within their published criteria. This form will be obtainable from and returnable to that admission authority (c/o the school or academy). A supplementary information form on its own is

not a valid application. Applicants living outside East Sussex must use the common application form that is supplied by their home local authority.

2. The process will begin with the information on admission arrangements and methods of application being made available early in September 2025.
3. The LA application form enables parents to name up to three maintained schools stated in order of preference. The form should be completed and submitted to the County Council by the closing date of 31 October 2025.
4. By 28 November 2025, East Sussex will exchange preference data with any local authority where an application has been received.
5. By 9 January 2026, East Sussex schools that are their own admissions authorities will consider their applications, apply their published admissions criteria and provide the County Council with a list of those applicants ranked accordingly.
6. By 9 January 2026, other local authorities will advise the County Council of decisions reached on applications for their schools from East Sussex residents. The County Council will apply its published admissions criteria to those schools where it is the admissions authority and determine the outcome of each preference expressed.
7. By 13 February 2026, the County Council will match the ranked lists against the parental preferences to ensure only one place is allocated per child. Qualifying late applications received up to 31 January will be included in this process.

Where a child is:

- Eligible for a place at only one school given on the application form, that school will be allocated
- Eligible for two or three schools, a place will be allocated at the highest-ranking preference school
- Not eligible for a place at any of the named schools and the child lives in East Sussex, a place will be allocated at the nearest school to the home with a space.

8. In the period 16 February to 27 February 2026, decision notifications will be prepared. The LA where the child lives will be responsible for sending these to parents.
9. From this point on secondary schools will be able to see their allocations in SAM. Primary schools will be able to view destination schools for their year 6 leavers in SAM with effect from 2 March 2026.
10. On 2 March 2026 allocation decisions will be notified to parents by email. Letters will only be sent where specifically requested, or where no email address has been provided. Where a preference is not being met, the notification email will signpost parents to the County Council website where information can be found explaining to parents how places have been allocated at their preferred school(s) and advising parents of the right of appeal.

Applications received after 31 October 2025 but by 31 January 2026

1. If an application form is received after 31 October 2025, it will still be passed to the relevant admissions authority with a note that it has been received after the closing date. It will be for the admissions authority to decide how it wishes to respond to the application. This will continue up until 31 January 2026.
2. If an application is received after 31 October 2025 but before 31 January 2026, together with proof of a change of address* since the closing date, or proof of another good reason why it was not possible for the family to apply on time, it will be treated as on time in respect of community and voluntary controlled schools. If there is no proof, or the reason is not considered valid by the LA, the application will be treated as late. There is no separate right of appeal against the decision as to whether the application is treated as on time or late.
3. Applicants whose forms are received between these dates will be sent a decision on 2 March 2026. For applications received on or after 1 February 2026, we will aim to send a decision letter within 20 school days.

Changes of preference

1. Parents may change their preferences at any stage up to the closing date of 31 October 2025. After 31 October 2025, we will not allow preferences to be changed without good reason. The County Council will judge each case on its merits but will only usually accept a change of preference where there has been a significant change of circumstances (such as a house move*) thus making the original preferences no longer practical. Parents will be required to put their reasons for changing their preferences in writing, and in all cases, supporting evidence will be required. If the change of preference is agreed, a decision will be sent on 2 March 2026 provided the request was received by 31 January 2026. Such applicants will be advised that they have the right of appeal if the revised preference cannot be met.

* In the case of house moves, proof of ownership or tenancy on an East Sussex property (such as exchange of contracts or signed tenancy agreement of one year) is required if an address is to be used for the purpose of allocating a school place. If an applicant cannot provide evidence, the application cannot be accepted.

2. There is no right of appeal where the LA does not accept the change of preference.

No application form received by 31 January 2026

No secondary transfer places will be allocated unless a completed application form has been received.

Applications received on or after 2 March 2026

1. Only preferences stated on the LA application form will be valid. If the preference is for an 'own admission authority' school, the County Council will pass details to the school for a decision. The school must then advise the County Council within fourteen days as to whether a place can be allocated so the County Council can formally advise the parent of the decision. Where the preference is for a community or voluntary controlled school, the County Council will determine the outcome. If there are no places available at one of

the preferred schools a place will be allocated at the nearest school with a place available (if the identified school is its own admissions authority the County Council will ask the school whether a place can be allocated). We will aim to process late applications within 20 school days. Any refused preference will carry the right of appeal.

2. Where the preference is for a school in a neighbouring authority, details will be passed to that authority for a decision to be made. Any authority refusing an application should advise the LA of the decision so the LA can consider allocating an alternative school.
3. The Co-ordinated Scheme will end on 31st August each year. Applications received after this date will be processed as in-year applications.

Appeals

1. Parents must be allowed at least twenty school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and submit their written appeal. The appeal must be against a refused preference, thus if a parent puts on the appeal form a school which did not feature as a preference on the original application form an appeal will not be arranged.
2. Parents submitting an appeal will be entitled to at least ten school days' notice of the date of the appeal. Papers relevant to the appeal will be sent seven working days before the hearing. Appeals must be heard within forty school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. Appeals for late applications will be included with those being heard for the same admission round wherever possible. If this is not possible, they must be heard within thirty school days of the appeal being lodged.
3. The LA must be advised of the outcome of all appeals.

Waiting lists

1. The LA will operate waiting lists for community and voluntary controlled schools so that it is clear as to which child will be offered any place which becomes vacant. Such waiting lists will be operational after the closing date for appeals to be lodged. The waiting list must reflect the admissions criteria.

The LA must be notified by admissions authorities of any places that are subsequently allocated from the waiting list. Until co-ordination ends, it remains for the LA to offer places to parents when places become available and are allocated from the waiting list whether the admissions authority is the LA or not.

2. Waiting lists will operate until the end of Term 2, 2026 for Year 7 admissions.

Applications for children to be educated out of chronological year group

The School Admissions Code 2021 specifies that parents applying for a school place have a right to request that their child be educated outside their chronological age group. It further specifies that the admission authority for the school in question should make a decision as to whether to agree this 'on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned'. The admission authority is required to take into account various factors including the views of the Headteacher.

The County Council, having sought all relevant advice, will work on the assumption that it is in the best interests of children to continue to be educated out of year group if that has been the case for the child hitherto, where they have been in a school which follows the National Curriculum, unless there are clear reasons why this is inappropriate.

Where parents submit applications for their children to be educated out of year group where this has not happened before, or where they have come from provision that does not follow the National Curriculum (e.g. private provision or overseas) the County Council will make a decision in the best interests of the child in consultation with the Headteacher of the relevant school as in the case of summer-born children applying at reception entry (see primary scheme).

These arrangements will apply to schools where the County Council is the admission authority- schools in the co-ordinated scheme which are their own admission authority are encouraged to work in the same way but the decision is for each admission authority to make in these cases.

The County Council will continue to advise all parents whose request for admission out of year group is agreed of the potential difficulties this could cause later on, and continue to require parents to agree that they have understood this and take responsibility for this decision before the child is admitted to school in East Sussex (although admission should not be held up if the parent refuses to sign- in this case it would need to be clearly documented that the parent had been advised of the risks but had refused or otherwise failed to sign the disclaimer).

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East Sussex County Council Co-ordinated scheme for in-year admissions in 2025-26

Contents

Introduction	1
In-year admissions scheme 2025-26	2
Application process	2
Notifying parents of the outcome of their applications	3
Refusing an application to a school where places exist in the child's year group.	3
Admission to school outside the child's normal age group.....	4
School offered	5
Appeals	5
Waiting lists.....	5

Introduction

The School Admissions Code 2021 requires that Local Authorities co-ordinate in-year admissions to schools for which they are the admission authority (Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools). Own Admission Authority (OAA) schools and Academies may opt in to the scheme.

In-year admissions are those relating to children whose parents are seeking admission outside the normal timescale, which means after the first day of the first term of reception, year 3 (of a junior school) or year 7.

Admissions to years 12 and 13 of those community schools with sixth forms are not co-ordinated by the Local Authority and do not form part of this scheme.

OAA schools and Academies may also require Supplementary Information forms to be completed to enable applications to be ranked in order of admission priorities, but an application will be valid even if this is not done.

OAA schools and Academies opting into the scheme may additionally request in year management of applications and waiting lists as a traded service via the webshop.

Fee-paying schools will not be included in this scheme.

Applications are received throughout the year and therefore no timetable applies to this scheme. Decision outcomes will be issued to parents within ten school days, or as soon as possible thereafter.

This scheme will be administered by the Admissions and Transport Service of East Sussex County Council.

In-year admissions scheme 2025-26

Application process

1. Parents or carers may name up to three preferences on the application and all preferences expressed by parents will be treated equally. This means that each preference will be measured against the published oversubscription criteria only, without reference to the order stated by the parent. Only one school place will be offered, and this will be the highest possible preference expressed by the parent that can be agreed.
2. Details of current applications will be shared with schools electronically via SAM and schools are asked to confirm within two school days whether a place is available in the relevant year group. If the Admissions and Transport Service already has this information it will offer or refuse the place ahead of this timescale unless by prior agreement with the school.
3. OAA schools or Academies are then asked to confirm within a further three school days whether the available place can be offered to the applicant.
4. To make a valid application for a school participating in the scheme, parents or carers must complete an in-year application via the parent portal or the form supplied by East Sussex County Council. The East Sussex in-year application form is available in paper form on request or applications can be made online through the East Sussex Council website.

5. OAA schools or Academies may require additional information to apply their oversubscription criteria and will provide a supplementary information form on the school's website. Where the parent or carer fails to complete the supplementary form, the admission authority will rank the application according to the information given on the application form only. Where the parent or carer completes the supplementary form but fails to complete the LA application form, this will not constitute a valid application.
6. Completed supplementary information forms will be returned to the individual schools, and not the Admissions and Transport Service.

Notifying parents of the outcome of their applications

1. The Admissions and Transport Service will notify parents and carers of the outcome of their applications, where the County Council is the admission authority.
2. OAA schools and Academies must notify all applicants of the outcome of their application within fifteen school days, giving reasons and appeal rights in writing if the application is unsuccessful.
3. If it is not possible to offer a place at any of the preferred schools, the Admissions and Transport Service will notify the parents of this and suggest the child remain in their current provision, if feasible, or offer the nearest available school place if not, assuming the child lives in East Sussex. Where the child qualifies for inclusion in the Fair Access Protocol, this will be invoked to place the child in a suitable school.

Refusing an application to a school where places exist in the child's year group

1. An admission authority may only refuse an application in a year group where places exist if the child's behaviour is challenging as defined in the Code, and the preferred school has a disproportionate number of challenging pupils already on roll. The County Council will only do this in exceptional circumstances and parents will still have the right of appeal.

2. Any such cases will be referred for placement via the Fair Access Protocol, where the child is unplaced. The protocol may place the child in the preferred school even though a place has initially been refused.
3. This provision cannot be used in the normal year of entry, so that it is not possible to refuse a place (if there is one available) in reception, year 3 (of a junior school) or year 7 at any point during the school year.

Admission to school outside the child's normal age group

1. In England and Wales, children are entitled to attend school from the September following their fourth birthday. However, formal education is not compulsory until the child is five. The vast majority of children start in reception as soon as they are entitled to and remain with the same age group until they leave school at the age of sixteen, or eighteen if they continue in the sixth form provision.
2. It is recognised that this arrangement will not suit every child and there is flexibility within every admission authority's arrangements to allow children to be admitted to the year below their chronological age, or, more exceptionally, to the year above.
3. Parents who believe it to be in their child's best interests to be placed out of year group, are asked to complete a request form available on request from the Admissions and Transport Service to enable the County Council to reach a decision on whether or not the child should be offered a place out of year group.
4. For schools where the County Council is the admission authority, this will normally be agreed where the child has applied to move from another school in England and Wales which follows the National Curriculum and has been educated out of year group up until the point of applying for an East Sussex school.
5. Where this is not the case, the County Council may need more information to enable a decision to be reached.

6. If an admission authority offers a place at the preferred school, but not in the preferred year group, there is no right of appeal against this decision.

School offered

1. Where a place is offered, schools should return a notification of the start date via SAM to confirm that the place has been accepted.
2. If the place is not accepted within ten school days, schools must contact the parent or carer to establish whether or not the place is still required. If the parent or carer declines, or cannot be contacted, the current school should be contacted to establish whether the child is still on roll.
3. If the child is still on roll and the parent no longer requires the place, a SAM notification should be issued to this effect.
4. If the child is not still on roll, a CME referral must be made if efforts to contact the family are unsuccessful. A SAM notification should be issued to advise and the place held for the child until the CME procedure is completed.

Appeals

1. Parents and carers will be informed of their statutory right of appeal when they receive the outcome of their applications. Parents can appeal for any preference expressed but not allocated, even if it was a lower preference than the one offered.
2. Parents will be allowed at least 20 school days from the date of the notification to submit an appeal via East Sussex County Council's School Appeals Team.
3. Links to the East Sussex County Council's School Appeals online process will be included in the notification. Appeal details for OAA schools and academies will be available on the individual school or Academy's website.

Waiting lists

1. Waiting lists for all East Sussex schools where the County Council is the admission authority will be held by the County Council.

2. OAA schools and academies will be responsible for maintaining their own waiting list in accordance with their published oversubscription criteria.
3. The County Council requires parents and carers to renew their waiting list application after every two terms (at Christmas, Easter and for the new academic year). Parents and carers not doing so are assumed no longer to require the place.

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In Year Admissions arrangements 2025-26 for Community and Controlled schools

1. About in year admissions

1.1 School places must be allocated according to admissions legislation, including the School Admissions Code issued by the Secretary of State. The aim of the Code is to ensure places are allocated and offered in a consistent, open and fair way.

1.2 Admission arrangements are subject to consultation with various bodies including parents, schools and neighbouring local authorities. The arrangements are then formally set and published by the County Council each year.

1.3 In-Year Admissions are those relating to children whose parents are seeking admission to a school outside the normal timescale, defined as those requesting admission to school after the first day of the first term on which children in that age group are normally expected to start at the school.

1.4 In East Sussex, the normal timescale applies in Reception, year 7, and in the case of junior schools, year 3.

1.5 Admissions to years 12 and 13 of those community schools with sixth forms are delegated to the individual schools as they will have academic entry requirements.

2. Applying for places

2.1 Parents can name up to three preferred schools via the online admissions portal or the in year application form supplied by the County Council. This is available from 1 June 2025.

2.2 Parents are asked to specify the reason for wishing to move school, and the name of the current school, to enable the County Council to establish whether or not the child is currently unplaced, or qualifies for inclusion in the Fair Access Protocol.

2.3 Unless the parent specifies otherwise, in year admissions will be assumed to be for the child's chronological age group. See section 5 for admissions out of year group.

2.4 If any of the preferred schools are own admission authority schools, the application will be securely shared with the school to enable the admission authority to make a decision on the application.

2.5 If vacancies exist in the child's year group at more than one of the preferred schools, a place will be offered at the highest preference possible and parents will be advised of this by the relevant admission authority.

2.6 If there is competition for any available places, the following priorities will be used by the County Council as admission authority to decide which children should be admitted: 1) Looked after children and previously looked after children; 2) Children who will have a brother or sister at the school at the time of admission and who live at the same address within the pre-defined community area; 3) Children of staff; 4) Other children living within a pre-defined community area; 5) Children who will have a brother or sister at the school at the time of admission and who live at the same address outside the pre-defined community area; 6) Other children.

2.7 Children living in the priority areas for Denton Primary School and for Harbour Primary School, whose sibling joined one of these schools before 1 September 2022 will continue to be considered under priority 2 for the school their sibling attends. Likewise, children living in the Brodricklands and Hamlands Farm estates whose siblings joined Polegate School, Willingdon Primary School or Willingdon Community School prior to 1 September 2024 will continue to be considered under priority 2 for the school their sibling attends.

2.8 Tie breaker: In the event of oversubscription within any criterion, place allocation will be decided by prioritising applications based on home to school distance measured in a straight line, with priority given to those whose homes are closest to the school. The County Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) measures from the child's home to the school using validated address point data as start and end points.

2.9 Own admission authority schools may have different admission priorities, and parents should check with those schools whether further information is needed to decide who should be offered any available places (usually a 'Supplementary Information Form' (SIF)).

2.10 If a place is available in the child's year group at any or all of the preferred schools, the County Council will issue a decision to the parent offering a place at the highest preference school with a place, and explaining what the parent needs to do to accept the place offered.

3. If there are no places available in any of the preferred schools

3.1 The County Council will refuse the application and offer the parent the right of appeal, and inform the parent of waiting list arrangements if applicable.

3.2 If the child lives outside East Sussex, the County Council will not offer an alternative school.

3.3 If the child is currently attending a school within a reasonable daily travelling distance, the County Council will suggest that the child remains at the current school.

3.4 If the child is not able to continue to attend the current school due to distance following a house move, or has never attended school in the UK, the County Council will allocate a place at the nearest alternative school with a place available.

3.5 If the child was previously on roll at a state-funded school in East Sussex, but has been withdrawn from that school to electively home educate, the County Council will offer a place at the previous school, if possible.

3.6 If the child is unplaced and vulnerable, the East Sussex Fair Access Protocol may be used to place the child.

3.7 If the child is unplaced and there are no places available within a reasonable travelling distance, the County Council will arrange for the child to be placed at a school within a reasonable distance. This will not necessarily be the preferred school, but will normally be the school which serves the child's home address. Children placed in this way will have priority over children on the waiting list, as will Looked After Children and children with Education, Health and Care plans naming the school in question.

4. Refusing an application to a school where places exist in the child's year group:

4.1 An admission authority may only refuse an application in a year group where places exist if the child's behaviour is challenging as defined in the Code and the preferred school has a disproportionate number of challenging pupils already on roll. The County Council will only do this in exceptional circumstances and parents will still have the right of appeal.

4.2 The County Council will refer any such cases for placement via the Fair Access Protocol, where the child is unplaced.

4.3 This does not apply in the normal intake year, as admission authorities are legally obliged to admit up to PAN in the intake year.

5. Admission to school outside the child's normal age group:

5.1 In England and Wales, children are entitled to attend school from the September following their fourth birthday. However, formal education is not compulsory until the child is five. Most children start in reception as soon as they are entitled to and

remain with the same age group until they leave school at the age of sixteen, or eighteen if they continue in the sixth form provision.

5.2 It is recognised that this arrangement will not suit every child and there is flexibility within every admission authority's arrangements to allow children to be admitted to the year below their chronological age, or, more exceptionally, to the year above.

5.3 Parents who believe it to be in their child's best interests to be placed out of year group, are asked to complete a request form available from the Admissions & Transport Service to enable the County Council to reach a decision on whether or not the child should be offered a place out of year group.

5.4 For schools where the County Council is the admission authority, this will normally be agreed where the child has applied to move from another school in England and Wales which follows the National Curriculum and has been educated out of year group up until the point of applying for an East Sussex school.

5.5 Where this is not the case, the County Council may need more information to enable a decision to be reached.

5.6 If an admission authority offers a place at the preferred school, but not in the preferred year group, there is no right of appeal against this decision.

6. Withdrawing the offer of a place

6.1 If the County Council offers a place but the parent cannot be contacted, or does not wish to accept the place within a reasonable timescale, the place may be withdrawn.

6.2 A place may also be withdrawn if it has been offered based on incorrect information, if it is reasonable to do so. The County Council will not do this if the child is already attending the school.

6.3 If a place is withdrawn due to incorrect information, the County Council will reconsider the application based on the correct information, and offer a place or appeal rights if the place should instead have been offered to another child.

7. Appeals

7.1 If an admission authority is unable to offer a place in the preferred school, parents have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel.

7.2 In East Sussex County Council, School Admission Appeals are convened and clerked by the Democratic Services team, which is independent of the Admissions and Transport Service.

7.3 When a parent notifies East Sussex County Council of their wish to appeal, Democratic Services will notify the Admissions and Transport service, check that the decision to refuse a place has been notified to the parent, and acknowledge receipt of the appeal.

7.4 The parent and Admissions and Transport Service will be notified of the arrangements for the appeal to be heard in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Appeal Code issued by the Secretary of State.

7.5 Independent appeal panels' decisions are binding on the admission authority and the parent, and if the appeal is successful, the school will contact the parent to arrange a start date.

8. Waiting lists

8.1 Admission authorities are not obliged to hold a waiting list for places which become available after the end of term 2 in the 'relevant age group'.

8.2 Where waiting lists are held, these must be in accordance with the published admission priorities.

8.3 Admission authorities must offer places which become available in accordance with their admission priorities.

8.4 The County Council will maintain waiting lists and offer places on behalf of schools.

8.5 Children admitted on appeal, through the Fair Access Protocol, the EHCP process and as Looked After Children (or previously looked after children) will take priority over children on the waiting list, and will normally be admitted whether a place is available or not.

8.6 Where a school has admitted a child or children over numbers, places will not be offered from the waiting list in the year group in question until the number of children on roll has reduced below the published admission number, or the revised admission number if the school has agreed one with the County Council.

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Report to:	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability
Date of meeting:	7 October 2024
By:	Director of Children's Services
Title:	Household Support Fund 2024
Purpose:	To note the proposed use of the Household Support Fund for 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 and agree the development of a scheme to distribute grant funding as set out in this report

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the proposed plan for the use of funding from the Household Support Fund to provide support to households with children in East Sussex as set out in this report; and**
 - 2) Delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to implement the plan, in collaboration with the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.**
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1 Background

1.1 On 2 September 2024 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Treasury announced that the Household Support Fund (HSF/the Fund) would be extended for a further 6 months, from 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025, with a further £421m of funding across England. Full details were received on 25 September, and guidance and conditions are expected to closely mirror previous rounds of HSF and the national amount is the same as it was for the first 6 months of 2024-25.

1.2 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) will be allocated £3,896,783.88 for the 6-month extension period, and payments will be made in 2 instalments in arrears after the submission of a Delivery Plan and an interim Management Information (MI) return and the final MI return at the end of the grant period to the DWP.

1.3 The new guidance and conditions, received on 25 September, will be reviewed and arrangements will be made to ensure any new features are accommodated.

2 Supporting information.

2.1 In previous rounds, East Sussex has distributed HSF through a variety of partners, including District and Borough Councils and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, and all partners have been able to use all their allocated amounts to reach eligible beneficiaries. This approach is in line with HSF guidance to date. Therefore, it is proposed to continue to allocate funding for Household Support Fund in the following ways:

- Food vouchers (Huggg vouchers) for 2–19 year-olds eligible for Free School Meals, to cover the school holiday periods.
- Children's Services teams that provide support to vulnerable families and children administering funding directly to these to meet identified needs.
- Allocations to VCSEs to target individuals, including pensioners, and disabled people at risk of food and fuel poverty.
- Allocations to each of the 5 District and Borough Councils (D&Bs) to administer funding to households, including pensioners, who are known to be eligible and in need.

- Allocation to Food Banks and Food Partnerships to distribute to those in need.
- Allocation to the ESCC Warmer Homes programme.

2.2 The systems set up through previous Household Support Funds to distribute the funding are working well so it is proposed to continue to use these systems.

2.3 Over the recent years the cost-of-living pressures have grown and are now affecting people and families previously unaffected; this has meant that many HSF partners are seeing an increase in the people requesting or requiring support.

2.4 The HSF has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) which helps ensure people protected under the Equality Act are not disadvantaged and that all groups can access the Fund if they meet eligibility requirements. This will be reviewed in the light of new guidance.

3. Proposal

3.1 Distributing the grant to the same partners that East Sussex worked with last time (as set out in 2.1) and maintaining this approach will ensure continuity in the allocation of support to the full range of beneficiary groups and will facilitate swift and effective administration of the Fund.

3.2 The proposal this year is to build on previous successful delivery of the Fund.

3.3 The allocation of Hugg vouchers will mirror the need for the holiday period that falls in the 6-month period of this round of HSF. This includes:

- October half-term – one week at £15 per week per eligible family
- Christmas holiday – total of £50 for the two weeks per eligible family
- February half term – one week at £15 per week per eligible family

This support goes direct to families in need with limited administration costs.

3.4 In order to ensure the remainder of the Fund is allocated after careful consideration of the new guidance, resident need and in consultation with delivery partners, it is recommended that delegating decision making on the details of final allocations to the Director of Children’s Services.

Allocations Table - (1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025)

Partner	Amount (£)	Note
Free School Meal eligible pupils Hugg food vouchers (19,400 pupils)	£1,552,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October half-term - £15 • Christmas holiday - £50 • February half-term - £15 £80 in total
Children's Services Teams	£300,000	Families in need
Delivery partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and Borough Councils • Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) • Food Banks and Food Partnerships 	£2,044,784	Detailed breakdown to be decided with further consideration of new guidance
Total	£3,896,784	

4. Risks

- 4.1 The main risk with the delivery of the HSF is the ability of the Council to distribute all the funding in line with the DWP Guidance, especially given the short timescale for this extension. This risk is mitigated by using the existing schemes, partners and processes to administer the funding.
- 4.2 Any other risks identified will be picked up through the Household Support Fund Steering Group who oversee the detailed plan for implementation and will continually monitor the new extension period.
- 4.3 As a national scheme, there is increased scrutiny over the Council's decisions on how this funding has been allocated. To mitigate this risk, a communications plan will be developed that sets out the key messages and the timing of these messages, in line with HSF communication guidelines which are part of the guidance.
- 4.4 Utilising VCSE and other delivery partners to implement the scheme adds considerable value in terms of local community knowledge and an ability to engage with residents who may not be in contact with statutory services.
- 4.5 The proposed allocation of funds considers the increased financial pressures on all households and partner organisations over the Winter period, with all partners reporting a level of need that exceeds demand. ESCC will ensure best use of HSF by reviewing the exact allocations with partners in line with updated guidance documents and in consultation with delivery partners.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The announcement of an extension to the HSF scheme provides an opportunity to support households with children, households with pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households within East Sussex who are experiencing financial challenges and will be welcomed by partners.
- 5.2 The Lead Member is therefore recommended to approve the proposed plan for the use of the Household Support Fund in East Sussex for the extension as set out in this report.
- 5.3 The Lead Member is recommended to delegate to the Director Children's Services the authority to implement the plan.

CAROLYN FAIR

Director of Children's Services

Contact

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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