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Blackpool Council admissions policy 2025 to 2026

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Community, voluntary controlled schools and academies (where the academy has adopted the council's admission policy)

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Scope of the policy

This policy applies to those Blackpool community and voluntary controlled schools for which Blackpool Council is the admissions authority, and for the Blackpool academies that have adopted this policy.

The governing boards of voluntary aided schools and trusts of academies in Blackpool are responsible for setting their own admissions criteria and for determining the allocation of school places in accordance with their published admission policy.

Legal framework

Blackpool Council has formulated its admission policy for 2026 to 2027, and for subsequent years, subject to any review, as it relates to Blackpool community, voluntary controlled schools and some academies. We have agreed this in accordance with the following provisions:

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education and Inspections Act 2006. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008. The Schools Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012. The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012. The School Admissions (Appeals) (England) Regulations 2012. In addition, the School Admissions Codes 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2021.

Co-ordinated admission arrangements

In accordance with the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2006, Blackpool has co-ordinated schemes for primary and secondary admissions. Blackpool also co-ordinate cross border requests with Lancashire County Council and other local authorities if required. This is for annual intakes each September (primary reception intakes and secondary year 7).

Admission to nursery class

This policy does not apply to requests for nursery and early years placements - including nursery provision delivered in schools or co-located children's centres.

Where schools have a maintained nursery facility, they must publish separate admission arrangements for entry to the nursery.

The headteacher and governing board manage admissions to a maintained nursery on behalf of the local authority. Admissions are made with reference to criteria that give due priority to looked after (or previously Looked After) children, children with specific educational, social or medical reasons for admission.

Where schools have a nursery attached as part of a children's centre, they must publish the admission arrangements for entry to the nursery.

Where schools or academies have a private or voluntary provider nursery facility, that provider should publish its own admission arrangements for entry to the nursery.

Attendance in any nursery class that is attached to a primary school or academy does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education (into a reception class). Likewise, schools cannot insist that children attend any nursery class in order to guarantee admission to that school's reception class. Schools may sometimes give priority to children in their nursery, but parents are advised to check individual admission policies (this does not often happen).

Admission details for other pre-school settings, including those for nursery aged children, is available from the Blackpool Family Information Service, telephone 0800 092 2332.

Starting primary school

The Education Act 1996 states that every child is legally required to attend primary school from the start of term following his or her fifth birthday. All children are however entitled to a primary school place in the September following a fourth birthday.

Children can access a place in a school reception class from the beginning of the autumn term 2026 if they were born on or between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022.

Deferred entry

Parents may defer primary admission by up to two school terms. Parents must agree a start date with the school or academy. Schools and academies must ensure that the council's school admission team know about the agreed deferrals. Schools and academies will reserve reception places where they have agreed deferrals with start dates within a child's reception year. In these cases children must start school no later than the first day of the final term within their reception year.

If a child has a fifth birthday during the summer term (1 April to 31 August) and parents/carers wish to defer entry until the following September, they can opt to do so and to miss the reception year. We will not reserve a place in these circumstances. Parents would have to apply for a Year 1 place (for the September after the child's fifth birthday). There is provision for parents to apply for a full year deferral with a retained reception start. This is by agreement with individual admission authorities. Further information is available on the council's website - see summer born guidance.

Infant class sizes

The Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/1973) as amended by SI 2006/3409 prescribed that infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher. (The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 introduces certain exceptions relating to children of multiple births and children of UK service personnel).

Factors not taken into account in Blackpool's admission policy

The council's admission policy does not include catchment areas or feeder schools. These may be factors in some other school or academy policies - please check individual documents.

Applying for a school

Blackpool residents should apply for places using the council's online application (or obtain a paper form). Lancashire residents and those living in other areas must apply via their own local authority.

[Blackpool families can make applications on the Blackpool Council website.](#)

Paper applications are available on request from Blackpool primary schools/academies or school admissions team - schoolaccess@blackpool.gov.uk

Submission of a late application (after the relevant national statutory closing date) will often reduce the chance of a place at a preferred school.

All-through school

Unity Academy and Armfield Academy are 'All-through' schools. Pupils already in Year 6 at each Academy at the time of secondary application, are already on roll at the academy, so are guaranteed a place in Year 7. Should parents wish to express preferences for other secondary options they can do so within the requirements of the admission arrangements.

Allocation of places

Blackpool Council operates equal preference admission arrangements and this is a national statutory requirement.

There are national statutory closing dates for primary and secondary applications (new intakes each September). Blackpool Council will monitor and co-ordinate the process for allocating places within the requirements of the school admissions code (September 2021 - plus subsequent updates) and associated legislation. The council will allocate places for all community and voluntary controlled schools (and academies, which adopt these arrangements). We will aim to allocate in accordance with parental preference for as many applications as possible.

There is a statutory limitation contained in Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which states that a local authority need not comply with parental preference, "if compliance with the preference would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources".

Where demand for a school exceeds the available places (there are more applications than available places) we will allocate places objectively using only the determined oversubscription criteria (or that of individual academies which have adopted these arrangements).

Published admission numbers

The published admission number (PAN) indicates the number of pupils offered places in the normal year of entry (reception and year 7).

When setting the PAN, the local authority has due regard to the available space within the school as defined by the school's net capacity.

Where any school or academy is oversubscribed (has more applications than available places), only the relevant determined admission arrangements must be used to allocate the available places.

Academy trusts and governing boards of voluntary aided schools, academies and free schools in Blackpool are responsible for setting their own admission arrangements including PANs.

Children with an education, health and care plan

When a child has an education, health and care plan that names a particular school, all admission authorities must admit the child as required by Schedule 27, Section 324 of the Education Act 1996. This applies whether they have available places or not (the council will strive to confirm offers in time for statutory offer dates in the majority of cases).

Equal preference scheme

All councils and admission authorities are required to have equal preference scheme for school admissions. The Department for Education (DfE) considers that these maximise meeting parental preferences.

Applicants are entitled to express preferences, in priority order, for three schools, and to give reasons for their preference.

We will consider all preferences equally. If we are able to offer more than one school or academy place, then we will confirm only a single offer per child. This will be for the school or academy that the applicant(s) ranked highest.

The council will make a single offer of a place in accordance with its co-ordinated admission scheme. The council will make the offer on or by the national statutory offer date (1 March for secondary, 16 April for primary).

Expressing a preference does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an offer of their highest ranked school/academy. Furthermore, some applicants may not receive an offer of a place at any of their preferred options.

Oversubscription criteria

The school or academy published admission number (PAN) determines the number of available places.

Where there are more preferences for a particular school than there are places available, the council will use the determined oversubscription criteria to allocate places at that particular school or academy.

In the event of the admission number being reached within any one of the oversubscription criteria in the order listed below, the distance criteria will be used as a 'tie breaker'. In the event of equal distance, a random allocation will be used to determine who takes priority for a place.

If we are unable to offer a place any one of the preferred schools or academies, we will then offer a place at the nearest community school with an available place, or at the nearest academy that is able to offer a place.

After we have confirmed initial offers, parents can add a child's name to any school or academy waiting list. We will be advise you about any vacancies which then arise. Any offers from a waiting list are still in accordance with the determined admission arrangements for that school or academy.

The over subscription criteria is applied in the following order:

Looked after children

Blackpool Council gives the highest priority to Looked After Children (LAC), as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education (Admission of LAC) (England) Regulations 2006.

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that Authority, as defined in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of application and allocation.

Under legislation, children who leave public care through adoption, a residence order or special guardianship order, will have the same priority although they are no longer looked after by the state.

Also children who were previously in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care as they have been adopted. These are children who were looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious group or another provider of care whose sole purposed is to benefit society. Parents and carers will be expected to provide evidence of previous looked after status.

Medical/Social/Welfare reasons

Children for whom the council accepts that there are exceptional medical social or welfare reasons associated with the child and/or family. These must be directly relevant to the school or academy.

Only exceptional reasons which are directly relevant to a particular school are considered. If you feel that there are exceptional medical, social or welfare reasons associated with your child and/or family which support admission to a particular school you must indicate that this is the case on your application.

All applications will be considered but supporting professional evidence will be required to demonstrate exceptional or compelling reasons why only a specific school can cater for a particular child's needs. This must set out the reasons and the level of risk to the child or family. In addition, why the school in question is the only suitable school. It should identify difficulties associated with the child attending an alternative school.

Please note that all schools and academies are able to make provision for special educational needs. All can also manage common

conditions e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes.

Only exceptional reasons directly relevant to a particular school will be considered. Admission authorities will only give priority to the child for the preferred school or academy if the submitted evidence unequivocally proves the circumstances and demonstrates why any alternative schools would be unsuitable.

Siblings

Priority will be given to brothers and sisters of children already attending the school at the time of application, and who will be still attending when the school or academy admit the younger child.

This includes full brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters, step brothers and sisters and adopted and foster brothers and sisters who are living within the same family at the same address.

Full brothers and sisters who do not live at the same address will still be given priority as siblings. Half, step, adopted and foster brothers and sisters who do not live at the same address will not be classed as siblings.

Distance

Blackpool Council determines the distance from the applicant's home address to the school with the nearest to a preferred school having priority for a place.

We measure the distance between the applicant's home and school or academy as a straight line between the council Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) address point of the applicant's home address and of the school. The LLPG is a point within the boundary of the property and is usually located at its centre. Distances are measured using the council's geographic information system.

If the council is unable to determine eligibility on distance, for example two or more addresses are equal distance from the school, then a random allocation will determine the offer. In the event of a random allocation is required, somebody independent of the children's services department and of the school or academy would supervise the process. We would invite parents to attend.

Late application

We will not process applications submitted after the statutory closing date at the same time as applications received by the set deadlines. This included those instances where an applicant has registered details on Blackpool's online system and then has not pressed the "submit" button.

Only in exceptional circumstances, and where parents provide appropriate evidence, will those applications received after the closing date (but before offers of places have been finalised) be considered concurrently with those applications received on time. We usually finalise offers around 2 weeks prior to the national statutory offer date.

The circumstances that might justify a late application include, but are not restricted to, the long term illness of a single parent/carer (during the application period), which might have reasonably impinged upon their ability to submit an application on time.

For under subscribed schools it may be possible to consider late applications.

We will refer late applications for Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies to the admission authority who will liaise with the school admissions team.

Change of preference

Applicants may not change their preference after the closing date unless there is a significant reason for doing so. This may be because of a house move. Requests to change preferences must be in writing and with evidence to demonstrate the reasons.

Waiting lists

The school admissions team will establish and maintain a waiting list for each school for which it is the admissions authority, and any Academy, which has delegated this responsibility. We keep waiting list until the end of the autumn term in the admission year (31 December).

After we have confirmed offers, parents may request that their child's name is placed on the waiting list for any school or academy. Parents may request that the child's name is placed on the waiting list for a school or academy that was not an original preference (this includes those who relocate within the area after initial offers and new to area children in the relevant year groups).

If a vacancy occurs, which will take the school below its published admission number (PAN); the place will be offered from the school or

academy waiting (reserve) list in accordance with its admission policy.

The school admissions code requires that the waiting list reflect the priority for admission determined within each school or academy's determined admission policy. Priority is not associated with first come first served or length of time resident within an area. A new applicant, who has a higher priority according to the admission criteria, would be ranked higher than those that have been on the list for some time.

Parents who intend to appeal against the local authority's decision not to offer a place at a preferred school(s) should do so irrespective of having their child's name placed on the waiting list. An independent appeal panel cannot consider a child's position on the waiting list. The independent appeal panel cannot allocate places above a published admission number based on waiting list priority.

Appeal arrangements

Parents have the right to have an appeal for any school or academy where they have applied for a place and have been refused admission. This includes all three initial preferences and any refusals generated by later enquiries.

Applicants can also appeal for a school or academy that was not an original preferred school.

Applicants who intend to appeal for a community or voluntary controlled school must complete a Blackpool Council appeal form - available from school admissions team.

Please also complete this form when appealing for an Academy or Free School that has delegated the responsibilities relating to appeals to the council.

Applicants who wish to appeal for a place in a voluntary aided school/academy, or certain academies, should contact the school/academy direct to request an appeal form. The school admissions team can provide information and advice on the appeal process.

Fraudulent applications

Where we have allocated a place because of inaccurate or misleading information - for example, in relation to a false address -then we can withdraw the original offer. We will investigate any discrepancies which become known in liaison with own admission authorities where required. Where places are withdrawn we will then reconsider the application and confirm a school or academy offer (which may be different to the initial offer). Parents retain their rights of appeal.

Admission to Blackpool schools after 1 September 2026

In relation to new to area applications and transfer requests the school admission code (september 2021 - and updates) requires local agreement about coordinating new to area applications and transfer requests. Details will be available on the council's website. Please note that Blackpool schools and academies operate a locally agreed first day of the next school term protocol for the majority of transfer requests.

Where any admission authority refuse a request for a school place, they must give you the reason for this and inform you about your right of appeal. These are statutory requirements.

Fair access protocol (FAP)

Blackpool council has a fair access protocol that operates for in-year admission requests (outside of the annual intake process). This aims to ensure that unplaced and vulnerable children, who may present challenging behaviour, receive an offer of a school place or alternative provision as quickly as possible.

Blackpool council's FAP follows the requirements of the school admissions code. We have agreed the local FAP (for secondary and primary) with schools and academies. Details of the FAP are on the council's website.

The FAP allocates places via a monthly meeting and can allocate to year groups in schools and academies, which are already full or oversubscribed.

Blackpool community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided schools and academies

(Details are correct at the time of publication)

Community primary schools

School	Admission number
Kincraig Primary School	30
Layton Primary School	90
Moor Park Primary School	60

Voluntary controlled primary school

School	Admission number
Bispham Endowed Church of England Primary School	60

Voluntary aided primary school

School	Admission number
St John's Church of England Primary School	30
St Nicholas' Church of England Primary School	60

Primary academies

School	Admission number
Anchorsholme Primary Academy (Part of the Blackpool Multi Academy Trust)	90
Armfield Academy- primary phase of Armfield Academy All-Through School (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	60
Baines' Endowed Primary School and Children's Centre, A Church of England Academy (Part of the Cidari Blackburn Diocese Multi Academy Trust)	70
Blackpool Gateway Academy (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	30
Boundary Primary School	60
Christ the King Catholic Academy (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
Devonshire Primary Academy (Part of the Blackpool Multi Academy Trust)	60
Hawes Side Academy *	60

Holy Family Catholic Primary School (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
Marton Primary Academy	30
Mereside Primary School (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	40
Norbreck Primary Academy	90
Revoe Learning Academy (Part of the Blackpool Multi Academy Trust)	60
Roseacre Primary Academy	60
Our Ladys Catholic Primary School (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
Stanley Primary School	90
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
St John Vianney's Catholic Primary School (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	60
St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
Thames Primary Academy	60
Unity Academy Blackpool - primary phase of Unity Academy ** All-Through School (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	30
Waterloo Primary Academy	90
Westcliff Primary School (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	30

Westminster Primary Academy (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	60
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*Blackpool Council have a local agreement with the trustees of Hawes Side Academy to cap the admission number (PAN) at 60 for September 2024 reception intake (and for september 2025 reception intake)

**Blackpool Council have a local agreement with FCAT Trust to cap the published admission number (PAN) at Unity Academy at 30 for September-2025 and September-2024 reception intakes.

*** Blackpool Council as the admission authority for Bispham Endowed CE Primary have agreed to cap the published admission number (PAN) at 30 for September 2025-reception intake (also 30 for Year 5 from September 2025).

The council may confirm other local agreements after publication of this document in order to address varying demand for primary school and academy places across the Blackpool area during a period of decreasing pupil numbers.

Blackpool secondary academies

Secondary academies	Admission number
Armfield Academy- secondary phase of Armfield Academy All-Through School (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	160
Blackpool Aspire Academy (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	180
Highfield Leadership Academy	240
Montgomery Academy (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	250
South Shore Academy (Part of the Cidari Blackburn Diocese Multi Academy Trust)	175
St George's School, A Church of England Academy (Part of the Cidari Blackburn Diocese Multi Academy Trust)	210
St Mary's Catholic Academy (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	210
Unity Academy Blackpool - secondary phase of Unity Academy all-through school (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	120

Blackpool Council expects that there will be high demand for secondary places in September 2026. Some Trusts / Academies may agree to exceed admission number (PAN) to an agreed level at offer date depending on the number and spread of preferences. This will be in agreement with the Council and individual Academy Trusts.

Academies that have adopted this policy

- Anchorsholme Primary Academy

- Boundary Primary School
- Devonshire Primary Academy
- Hawes Side Academy
- Norbreck Primary Academy
- Revoe Learning Academy
- Roseacre Primary Academy
- Stanley Primary School
- Thames Primary Academy
- Waterloo Primary Academy

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