

## **Admission arrangements for secondary community schools 2026-27**

Bolton Council<sup>1</sup> is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools in Bolton, and therefore is responsible for setting and applying the admission arrangements for those schools. These arrangements do not apply to academies, free schools or voluntary aided schools in Bolton. Those schools will have their own admission arrangements and parents should consult each individual school's website for further information on admission arrangements.

Each school has a published admission number (PAN). This is the number of places which must be offered in each relevant age group, in this instance, reception class. The following schools are covered by this policy:

Ladybridge High School	PAN 210
Turton School	PAN 270
Westhoughton High School	PAN 270

Bolton's SENDAS team is responsible for identifying schools and placing all children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). All children whose EHCP names the school must be admitted. If a child is awarded an EHCP after the application has been processed, the allocated school will be reviewed by the SENDAS team and in some cases, the school offered may be named on the EHCP.

### **Oversubscription criteria**

If the school is oversubscribed the following criteria will be applied to all applications in priority order.

1. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those who appear to the admission authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Parents/carers of previously looked after children will be required to provide evidence of the relevant order. (For further information, please see note below 'Looked after and previously looked after children'.)

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to in this document as the 'local authority'

2. Children for whom there is a child protection plan or has been within a 12-month period. Parents will be asked to indicate this on the application form and provide the child's social worker details so this can be confirmed.

3. Children who will have a brother or sister in years 7 to 11 of the preferred school at the time of admission. This includes full, step, half, foster and adopted brothers, sisters and any child identifying as non-binary living as part of that family unit, living at the same address as the pupil seeking admission.

4. Children who suffer from some medical condition or disability, which makes it, better for them to attend that school rather than another. Places will only be offered under this criterion if the child has a certified medical condition with strong professional supporting evidence confirming that existing exceptional problems with the child's health would be seriously exacerbated if a place were not made at the preferred school. Medical evidence **must** be provided by the closing date for applications, 31 October 2025. Parents applying under this criterion must provide a letter from the child's GP/Consultant setting out the reasons why the school is the most suitable school and details of the child's medical condition. This evidence must name the school at which admission is sought. (For further information, please see note below: 'Medical needs').

5. (Turton High School applications only) All children for whom Turton High School is their nearest school offering a secondary education excluding any faith-based school or academy which is part of a faith academy trust. This will be determined by straight line distance which measures from the address point of the home property to the designated main entrance to the school.

6. Distance from school (Where you live) - Children who live nearest the school will be offered places first. Under this category, the remaining places will be offered to children who live nearest to the preferred school. The distance will be measured in miles in a straight line which measures from the address point of the home property to the designated main entrance to the school by the local authority's distance measuring software

### **Tiebreaker**

If categories two to six are oversubscribed, distance (as set out in category six) will be used as the 'tie-breaker' to decide between the remaining cases. If after measuring distances, it is still not possible to decide on the child/ren to be offered admission (for example two children living in the same block of flats or in the same house) the local authority's system of a random draw will determine which of

the children can be offered a place. The draw will take place at the local authority's offices and the name(s) will be drawn by a local authority officer who is independent of the admissions process.

### **Looked after children and previously looked after children**

The School Admissions Code 2021 states that all admission authorities must give highest priority to this group of children and provides the following definition:

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

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order). Further references to previously looked after children means such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

- A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.
- Children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 and children who were adopted under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians)

Parents of previously looked after children should provide a copy of the relevant order to the School Admissions team. This can be submitted via email to [admissions@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@bolton.gov.uk). A copy of the order will be kept for the period of the application.

### **Medical needs**

The evidence provided will be considered and the allocation of any such place will be decided on the basis of that written evidence. Where it is agreed that a particular school is necessary or the child's medical condition will be seriously exacerbated, the application will then be considered under oversubscription criterion 4.

If it is decided that the medical evidence does not demonstrate that the child's medical condition will be seriously exacerbated if not allocated a place at the named school, then the application will be considered in line with the other oversubscription criteria.

Medical evidence must be submitted to the school admissions team by 31 October 2025. Evidence received after this date will be considered, but only for priority placement on the waiting list after the initial allocation of places.

This criterion can only consider the child's medical needs. No consideration will be given to parent's medical needs.

### **Priority for Twins/Multiple births**

Where a single place remains at a school and the application being considered is for twins (etc.) the Council will allocate above the admission number to accommodate each child.

### **The child's home address**

The child's home address is considered to be the child's parent/carer(s) place of residence, that is to say, where they are normally and regularly living.

If you have shared parental responsibility, we advise that both parents agree on the school preferences before applying, only one application can be processed. Where a child spends an equal amount of time with both parent's the address used will be the registered address i.e., the address that child benefit is paid to, or in the absence of this the address held by the child's GP. Failure to reach an agreement may result in your application being suspended until both parents can reach a mutually acceptable decision about their school preferences. Where an agreement cannot on school preferences and their order by the child's parents, it may be necessary for them to obtain further legal advice.

If a child is resident with friends or relatives for reasons other than guardianship, the friend or relative's address will not be considered.

We may ask to see evidence of your home address (photocopies are acceptable). This may include:

- proof of where you are registered for council tax
- Utility bill
- wage/ salary slip
- proof of your child tax credits

Any evidence you provide must show that the parent or main carer lives at this address. We may seek evidence by other means if the parent/carer is unable to provide sufficient proof of their residence.

If your address changes temporarily (for example, if you go to live with a relative or there is another reason for temporary vacation of the permanent residence) you cannot use this temporary address for the purposes of your application.

### **Change of address**

Any permanent change in address must be notified in writing or by email to the Admissions Team as soon as possible. It will not be possible to make any changes to the home address for allocation purposes after 30 November as school offers will be in process. However, please still inform the admissions team of changes of address after this date so that offer information can be sent to the correct address.

Change of address received after the 30 November will be applied to the application after the national offer day (1 March, or next working day where this falls on a non-working day) and children will be ranked on the waiting list based on the address where they are now living.

### **Withdrawing offers**

A place may only be withdrawn if it has been offered in error, the parent has not responded to the place within a reasonable period of time, or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. Where the allocation has been withdrawn due to an error or confirmed fraudulent or intentionally misleading information, the application will be reconsidered, and the usual statutory right of appeal will be made available if a place is subsequently refused.

#### **Place offered in error:**

Where it has been identified that the local authority has made an administrative error in the processing of an application for a school place, and it is established that another child has been disadvantaged by this error the place may be withdrawn. If it is established no other child has been disadvantaged, the allocation will remain.

Applicants are responsible for the accuracy of the information which they submit. The local authority takes no responsibility for incorrect information submitted as part of the application (i.e. failure to mention a sibling(s) or provide supporting evidence).

#### **Response within a reasonable time:**

Where a parent has not responded to the offer, the local authority will contact parents to confirm their acceptance. Where telephone contact is unsuccessful, an email will be sent to the registered email address providing parents an additional 5 working days to respond. In the absence of an email address, a letter will be sent to the home. This communication will explain that if no response to the offer is received, the offer may be withdrawn.

Fraudulent or intentionally misleading application:

The local authority will investigate any application where there are doubts about the information provided. In these cases, parents will be required to provide evidence that the information submitted as part of the application was accurate. If the parent does not provide the information or is unable to, the local authority will seek to obtain confirmation of the information from other local government departments, including schools.

Where an offer of a place is found to be based on fraudulent or intentionally misleading information provided on the application (e.g. if the wrong address is given), and this effectively denied a place to a child with higher priority for the place at the school, the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

If you suspect that someone has given false information to get a school place, please contact the school admissions team.

**Please note that the local authority will take strong action and the place offered will be withdrawn, if any false or misleading information is given, including an address which is not the child's home address as defined above.**

### **Waiting list policy**

Children who are not offered a secondary place for the September intake at their preferred school will be placed on the school's waiting list. The waiting list will be maintained only for the statutory period (until 31 December). Should any places become available they will be allocated in accordance with the local authority's published admission criteria on page 1 of this policy.

As children are added to the waiting list, the list will be re-ranked in accordance with the published admission criteria. This means that children can move both up and down the waiting list.

After 31 December, if a parent wishes their child to continue to be considered for a school place, they will need to reapply for a place using the procedure for in-year admissions.

Looked after children, previously looked after children and children who come under the Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

### **Right of appeal**

If a child is refused a place at a preferred school, they will have the right of appeal for that school. Parents must give their grounds of appeal in writing and will be given at least 20 school days to submit these to the local authority. Further information can be found about appeals on the local authority's website ([www.bolton.gov.uk/admissions/school-admission-appeals](http://www.bolton.gov.uk/admissions/school-admission-appeals)).

Where a parent makes a second application for the year group prompted by the closure of a waiting list, they will only be offered the right of appeal if no appeal for that school has already been considered for the child's current year group.

A second right of appeal may be allowed where there has been a significant or material change in circumstances since the first appeal hearing. The local authority considers this to be in one of three circumstances:

1. where the oversubscription criteria under which the child's application is considered has changed
2. where a child changes address and the distance to the current/allocated school would be unreasonable (using the definition of reasonable as defined at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/admissions/moving-school-year/4> )
3. Where the condition, means, needs or circumstances of the child have changed, and this change materially affects the child. In this instance, this change was not foreseen or could not have been contemplated at the time of the original appeal.

In each instance, the local authority would only consider allowing a second right of appeal if the parent had not already presented the change of circumstances to the panel as part of their case at their first appeal.

### **Admission out of normal age group**

Parents may seek a place for their child (at any age) outside of their normal age group, for example if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. All such requests should be made to the school admissions team in writing (please email: [admissions@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@bolton.gov.uk)) giving reasons for the request. In all instances, the request should be made at the time of application. For children moving from primary to secondary school, this should be done at the time the child would usually be expected to apply for a secondary place based on their date of birth.

Parents may wish to submit additional information with their request, such as information about their child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of the medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

The request will be considered in conjunction with the school and the parent, and the admission authority for the school (the local authority) will decide on whether the child should be offered admission out of the normal age group. The decision will consider the circumstances of each case and will be made in the best interests of the child concerned, in accordance with the requirements of

the School Admissions Code (2021). The decision, and the reasons for it, will be communicated to the parent in writing.

The child will be considered for admission into the agreed year group. Parents have a statutory right of appeal against the refusal of a place at a school which they have applied for. Where a child is offered a place at a school but not in the year group preferred, there will be no right of appeal.

### **In year admissions**

In-year admissions are for children wanting to move school during the year or for children moving into the area during the school year. The local authority co-ordinates all in-year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools. An application is an in-year application if it is for the admission of a child to the relevant age group (reception) but it is submitted on or after the first day of the first term of the admission year, or if it is for admission of a child to an age group other than a relevant age group (for example, a change of school during the school year)

An application should be made online at [www.bolton.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.bolton.gov.uk/admissions). The local authority will respond to your application within 15 school days. Where a place cannot be offered at your preferred school, you will be offered a place at the next nearest school to your home address with a place available.

Where a child remains unplaced and is unable to secure a school place through the in-year admissions process, the child will be referred into Bolton's fair access process. This may take up to an additional 20 school days to finalise your child's place.

Further information on in year admissions is available at:

<https://www.bolton.gov.uk/admissions/moving-school-year>

### **Fair Access Protocol**

The protocol may be used to place key groups of vulnerable and/or hard to place children where they are having difficulty in securing a school place in year. The children will only be used for children that meet the prescribed categories set out in paragraph 3.17 of the School Admissions Code, 2021.

The Fair Access Protocol will not be used in place of the usual in-year admissions process. A parent can make an application at any time and is entitled to have their preferences met wherever possible, as well as the opportunity to appeal a decision when a place is not offered.

If a child is placed through the fair access protocol, the parent will retain the right of appeal for any preferred school their child has been refused a place at.