



The Federation of Abbey Schools

Admissions Arrangements

Academic Year 2025/2026

Admissions Policy

Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

Darlington has operated a coordinated admission arrangement since 2005. Co-ordinated schemes are intended to simplify the admission process for parents whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism that ensures that, as far as is practical, every child living in a local authority area who has applied in the normal admissions round receives only one offer of a school place on the same day.

Co-ordinated schemes do not affect the rights and duties of the governing bodies of voluntary aided and academy schools to set and apply their own admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria. Admission authorities do not have to determine the same or similar oversubscription criteria but must ensure that their own admission arrangements are compatible with, and do not undermine, the coordinated scheme for their area.

Delegation has been given to the Local Authority to apply the oversubscription criteria and to allocate and refuse places accordingly.

The Federation of Abbey Schools admission criteria complies with this arrangement.

Admission at the Normal Point of Entry

The Federation of Abbey Schools, as the Admissions Authority will consider all preferences against the oversubscription criteria as set out below. In determining admissions, priority will be given to those applications where the Primary School Application (PSA) is received by the published deadline. Applications received after the deadline ('late' applications) will then be considered.

Admissions Oversubscription Criteria

If there are more applications than the number of places available, then the school is deemed to be oversubscribed. When stating a preference, parents are entitled to state a reason for doing so. However, the only criteria used to allocate places are those detailed below.

After the admission of children with special educational needs where the school is named on the EHCP, and where the number of applicants is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below, in the following order:

Priority 1 Looked After, Previously Looked After Children & Internationally Adopted previously Looked After Children

Looked after children and previously looked after but immediately after becoming looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangement order or special guardianship order. Children who appear to The Federation of Abbey Schools to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (see not 1 & 2)

Priority 2 Medical Reasons

Children with exceptional medical factors directly relating to school placement. Applications under this criterion should be supported by written evidence from a professional practitioner (see note 3)

- Priority 3 Family Links**
- Either (a) Children who have a brother or sister already attending the school and who are expected to be on the roll at the time of admission (see note 4)
- Or (b) In the case of associated schools a family link would exist if a brother or sister would be expected to be on roll of either school at the time of admission.

- Priority 4 Associated Area for the Federation of Abbey Schools**
- The following area has been deemed by the Academy's Governing Body to be an associated area for over-subscription criteria to the Federation of Abbey Schools:-

Pupils living within the area of Blackwell in the Borough of Darlington, please contact the school for a copy of the map.

- Priority 5 Distance (Urban Wards of Darlington Borough Council)**
- Children who live nearest the school measured from the front door of the home address (including flats) (see note 5) to the main school gate, by the shortest walking route. This will be based on the home address of the child (see note 6)

Notes

1. Looked after children

- A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their Social Services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989)
- An adoption order is an order made under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- A child arrangement order is an order outlining the arrangements as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989.
- A special guardianship order is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians (Section 14A Children Act 1989).
- A previously looked after child is a child who immediately moved on from that status after becoming subject to an adoption, child arrangement order or special guardianship order.

2. State Care Outside of England

Children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings.

3. Medical Criterion

If a parent states a preference for the school and indicates their reason for doing so is 'medical', then they are required to send a supporting letter from a professional practitioner. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons why the Abbey school is the most suitable school and the difficulties it would cause if their child had to travel to another school. Permission from parents must be given to share this information.

4. Family Links

Children have a family link if:

- They are half or full brother or sister;
- They are adoptive brother or sister;
- They are a foster brother or sister;
- Their carers' are married/co-habiting and children live together in the same household;
- They are children of the same household (e.g. carers have special guardianship/child arrangements order)

5. Measurements

For applications which require a measurement to be undertaken to apply the oversubscription criteria or to determine a tie-break situation, the Local Authority will measure the distance using a Geographical Information System (GIS) this ensures consistency for all measurements. The measurement will take the shortest walking route judged to be safe (*lighting at regular intervals and paved/tarmacked). However, for some applications the authority recognises that the shortest route may not be a safe* route to walk in its entirety but may be a combination of both the shortest safest* walking route and a road route which will determine the basis of the measurement. The Local Authority accepts there may be exceptions and will treat each case on its merits.

6. Home Address

The home address is used when applying under criteria 4 and 5 of the admissions policy. This means that when a parent states their school preference's they must give the home address at the time of application. Parents must not give the address of childminders or other family members who may share in the care of their child. For parents who may have more than one property, reference should only be made to the property in which they and the child(ren) mainly reside (Monday to Friday).

Similarly, where parents are separated and the child lives for periods with both, then the home address will be where the child mainly resides Monday to Friday or where a court has determined it should be. If the main address has changed temporarily, for example where a parent resides with extended family during a period of sickness or takes up temporary accommodation due to building works/renovation, then the home address remains that at which the parent was resident before the period of temporary residence began. However, if the property has been sold (exchanged contracts) and the family have moved into temporary accommodation, then parents will be required to provide evidence of their situation and a decision will be made based upon the evidence provided.

Tie-Break

In the event of a tie-break in any criteria, distance will be the deciding factor. The Authority will carry out a thorough investigation, which may involve an Officer walking the route using a *pedometer* as distance will be the deciding factor.

Multiple Births

For multiple births where only 1 place remains, infant classes will be allowed to exceed the statutory limit where the 31st child is a twin or from multiple births. The 'excepted' pupil will be allowed for the time in Key Stage 1 or until the class numbers fall back to current class size limit.

Consideration of late applications

If a parent believes that there are exceptional/individual circumstances which prevented submission of an application form by the stated deadline, e.g. families who have moved into the area after the closing date or if they are a single parent and have been ill for some time or have been dealing with the death of a close relative, then they must provide clear evidence for the LA.

The Authority will then consider each application on an individual basis subject to verification. If the Authority decides that the reason given is unacceptable then the application will be considered after the applications received by the deadline and the decision of the LA will be final. These applications will be considered up to and including the stated deadline in January in the Guide for Parents. Further applications received after the January date will only be considered once the process for allocating places has been applied to those applications received by the deadline.

Offer Day

Darlington Borough Council will inform parents of the offer of a school place on 16 April of the year of entry (or the next working day to this date).

Appeals Process

If requested, appeal papers will be issued to a parent who has been unsuccessful in their application to gain a place at their preferred school(s) as stated on the application form.

Waiting Lists

A child's position on a waiting list(s) will be determined by the oversubscription criteria. If a parent wishes for their child's name to be added to the waiting list, then they must complete the 'options' form attached to the refusal/offer letter issued in April of the relevant year of entry, if stated as a preference. Names can be added to a waiting list at any time. When pupil numbers fall below the published admission number, children will be admitted from the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

The Federation of Abbey Schools does not consider the length of time a child's name has been on the waiting list, nor whether the application was received by the closing date or thereafter. Vacancies often arise at short notice and those on the waiting list should be prepared to accept a place as soon as it occurs. Places will not be held for later consideration. After the point of entry in September, normal transfers/in-year admission arrangements will operate and the school will maintain a waiting list for the remainder of the academic year.

Admission of Children outside of their normal age group and deferred entry

If a parent seeks a place in a year group outside of their normal age group, they should complete an application form and attach a covering letter along with any accompanying documentation that details the circumstances behind their request, for example if their child has missed a significant amount of time due to ill health or they believe their child to be gifted and talented. This should be forwarded to the Head Teacher. Once a decision has the parent(s) will be informed in writing of the decision and setting out the reasons for such.

Parents of summer born children can also make a request to apply for their child to start school in the next academic year after they reach five and should follow the same process but should start the process in the September of the year prior to the year of entry.

Admission of children below compulsory school age

Schools within Darlington Local Authority have a single point of entry in September each year for pupils starting school in Reception. However, children may attend part time or parents can defer the date their child is admitted until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the academic year of entry.

In-Year Applications Forms

Families who move into the area who require a place(s) at a Darlington school must contact the Schools Admissions Section at the Town Hall. Parents will be sent an In-year Application Form (IYAF) out and directed to the Council's website for a copy of the Guide for Parents (paper copies are also available on request). Should a place be available at a school requested by a parent, a meeting with the Head Teacher must take place before a start date is agreed.

Should however a parent request a place at a school that has no places available, then they will be informed about the appeals process and the availability of alternative school places within the Borough of Darlington.