



MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Determined

Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme

2026/2027

Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2026/27

1.0 General Principles

1.1 Under this scheme the LA is responsible for co-ordinating the admission of all children to Manchester schools and academies. This scheme meets the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under The School Admission (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Manchester City Council.

1.2 This responsibility will cover admission to Manchester primary and secondary schools, which have community, voluntary controlled (VC), voluntary aided (VA), foundation status, academies and free schools.

1.3 Admission to independent schools or maintained special schools are not covered by this scheme.

1.4 This scheme covers applications from parent/carers for their children to start:

- In reception in September (Primary Admissions Round)
- In year 7 in September (Secondary Admissions Round)
- In reception to year 11 at any other time during the academic year (In Year)

1.5 As the co-ordinating body, the LA will receive applications for school/academy places from parent/carers resident in Manchester and inform them of the outcome.

1.6 As the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools in Manchester the LA is responsible for determining their admission arrangements. Within the admission arrangements are the oversubscription criteria. These criteria are used to determine which applicants will be allocated a place where there are more applications than places available. The admission arrangements can be found in the document titled: “Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2026/2027.”

1.7 For voluntary aided schools, foundation schools, academies and free schools, the Governing Body of the school or academy is the Admission Authority. As such it will be for the Governing Body to determine their admission arrangements. These types of school/academy are referred to as Own Admissions Authority (OAA) schools and academies. Within the admission arrangements are the oversubscription criteria. This set of criteria is used to determine which applicants will be allocated a place where there are more applications than places available. Admission Authorities are required to determine their admission arrangements by 28 February 2025 and publish/send to LA by 15 March 2025.

1.8 For admission as part of the Primary or Secondary admission round, places will normally only be offered up to the published admission number, which applies to the normal year of entry. A child cannot be refused admission to the normal year of entry on the grounds of prejudice to the provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources unless the published admission number has been reached.

1.9 For In Year admissions it is expected that the admission number will continue to be applied. However, if circumstances at the school/academy have changed since the year of entry, a place may be refused even if the admission number has not been reached.

1.10 Parent/carer's resident in Manchester who apply for a school/academy in another authority will be required to apply to Manchester LA. Parent/carers must apply to their home LA regardless of which LA their preferred school/academy is in. Parents/carers who wish to express a preference for a school/academy located outside Manchester will be advised that they should check the admission arrangements of the school/academy with the relevant local authority.

1.11 Applications for admission to the Sixth Form of a Manchester school/academy will be dealt with by the school/academy, not by the LA. If an applicant is refused admission to a sixth form they will be advised of their right of appeal by the school/academy. Arrangements will then be made for an appeal hearing.

2.0 Preferences

2.1 When applying for a school/academy place parent/carers will be invited to express six preferences on the online application form. Parent/carers will be expected to state their preferences in priority order. Additional preferences can be made if the parent/carer requires.

2.2 Parent/carers will be provided with the opportunity to give reasons for their preferences and can, if appropriate, provide any additional documents in support of their preferences.

2.3 The LA will operate an equal preference scheme. All applications will be considered against the published oversubscription criteria, but without any reference to the parent/carer's priority order. If a child can be offered a place at more than one school/academy, the LA will refer to the parent/carer's priority order of preferences, and will offer a place at the school/academy that is the highest preference.

3.0 Own Admission Authority Schools (VA, Foundation and Free) and Academies.

3.1 Some OAA schools and academies may require information in addition to that on the SAF. In such cases a supplementary form will be available from the school/academy and the LA. The supplementary information form must be returned to the school/academy. Some schools/academies, if they are oversubscribed, may also ask for proof of religious commitment in writing from the appropriate religious leader.

3.2 When a parent or carer has submitted their application on the SAF but has not also submitted a supplementary information form (where relevant), the admission authority must nevertheless consider the application in accordance with legal requirements (Section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). In circumstances where a supplementary form has been received the admission authority must be proactive in ensuring that there is an application, in order for the preference to be considered.

3.3 In circumstances where a supplementary form has not been completed the application will be assessed on the basis of the information submitted to the governing body on the LA's SAF.

4.0 Primary Admission Round - Application Process

4.1 The Primary Admission Round is for children starting in Reception for the first time. For the 2026/2027 academic year the round will include children born between 01/09/2021 – 31/08/2022.

4.2 Parent/carers who have a nursery place at a Manchester school or Academy must complete a SAF (Standard Application Form) and should not assume that they will automatically get a place in the reception class at that school/academy.

4.3 The LA will collect address information on the incoming Reception cohort from the Health Authority and its own databases. This will be used to send application information to relevant parents.

4.4 All parent/carers will be asked to make their application on the SAF. The SAF will be available on-line and in hard copy. Letters informing parents of the need to apply for

a Reception place will be posted to the home address of all known Manchester children by 18 August 2025.

4.5 Parents will be asked to apply online. Copies of the composite prospectus will be available on Manchester Children's Services website. A paper form and a hardcopy of the composite prospectus will be available on request. Parent/carers will be sent an acknowledgement if their application is received online.

4.6 The closing date for applications will be 15 January 2026 at 11:59pm. Online applications must be completed and submitted by the closing date. Any paper applications should be received in the admissions Service Office before 15 January 2026 at 5:00pm. An application will be considered as on time where it is clear that it was posted to arrive on time i.e. post marked.

5.0 Primary Admission Round - Processing Applications

5.1 The LA will forward relevant information from SAFs by 23 January 2026 to other local authorities where Manchester residents have expressed a preference for a maintained school or academy in their area. On this date other LAs will send details of preferences for Manchester schools or academies that have been expressed by their residents.

5.2 The LA shall forward relevant information from SAFs by 09 February 2026 to the OAA schools and academies in Manchester where parent/carers have expressed a preference for them. Preference ranking for individual applicants will not be shared with admission authorities as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.

5.3 Manchester's OAA schools and academies will inform the LA by 27 February 2026 of the priority ranking of all applicants according to their admission arrangements.

6.0 Primary Admission Round - Determining Offers

6.1 Once the LA has received the OAA returns it will process the allocation of places for all Manchester primary schools and academies, offering applicants the highest possible preference.

6.2 By 6 March 2026 the LA will inform other local authorities of offers to be made to children resident within their boundaries and request details of offers they will be making to Manchester residents. This information will continue to be exchanged until 20 March 2026.

6.3 Where a preference cannot be offered to a Manchester resident the LA will:

- Offer a place at the nearest suitable school/academy, where places are available in accordance with paragraph 2.11 of the School Admissions Code 2021;
- Place the applicant on the waiting list, where held, for the preferred schools/academies; and
- Provide advice and information parent/carers about the process and the options available to them.

6.4 Waiting lists will be held in criteria order using the oversubscription criteria in the school/academy's admission arrangements. Waiting lists are not operated on a "first come, first served" basis. The amount of time an applicant is on a waiting list will not affect their position on it. All schools/academies are required to maintain a waiting list for the Autumn term in accordance with paragraph 2.14 of the School Admissions Code (2021). Further details on operation of waiting lists can be found in the school/academy's admission arrangements.

7.0 Primary Admission Round - Notifying Parent/Carers of Decisions

7.1 The LA will send parents/carers resident in Manchester a letter on 16 April 2026 confirming offers of places for all children who start reception in September. All Manchester school/academies will be informed on 16 April 2026 of the children offered a place. School/academies must not contact parents about the outcome of their applications until after these offers have been received. Only the local authority can

make an official offer as stated in The School Admission Code 2021 Section2, Point 2.10.

7.2 The LA will make offers for September entry in reception for all school/academies. A parent has a right to defer the uptake of a reception place until a child is of statutory school age. A child becomes of statutory school age the term after their fifth birthday. Deferral of a school/academy place should be arranged directly with the Headteacher/Principal and confirmed in writing. The requirement for a school/academy to arrange for and hold a deferred place can be found in paragraph 2.17 of the School Admissions Code 2021.

7.3 Parent/carers will be required to accept or decline the place offered by 27 April 2026.

8.0 Primary Admission Round - Changes to Preferences

8.1 Preferences can be changed up until the closing date. Any such changes must be confirmed in writing. Preferences can only be changed after the closing date in exceptional circumstances and parent/carers should explain the circumstances in writing when informing the LA of their change of preference. It may not be possible to make changes to preferences for other LA schools or Manchester's OAA school/academies after 23 January 2026. This is the date when application information is exchanged with other LA's.

9.0 Primary Admission Round - Late Applications

9.1 The closing date for applications will be 15 January 2026. Any SAFs received after the closing date will be processed as late applications. This means an offer of a school/academy place will be made after all on time applicants have been processed. Late applications for Manchester school/academies may result in parents/carers not being offered a place at their preferred school/academy.

9.2 The LA will only process applications received after the deadline date as on time applications if there is a good reason for late submission. Such applications are valid late applications. A valid late application will include situations where children move into Manchester after the closing date. Late applications with reasons for late

submission will only be considered up to the 23 January 2026. This is the date when application information is exchanged with other LA's.

9.3 Where possible late applicants will be sent an offer letter on 16 April 2026.

9.4 Applications received after the 16 April 2026 will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as possible.

9.5 SAFs for OAA schools and academies, received after the closing date will be passed to the school/academy with a note that it has been received late. It will be for that Admission Authority to decide how it wishes to process the application.

10.0 Secondary Admission Round - Application Process

10.1 The Secondary Admission Round is for children transferring from year 6 to year 7, from Primary to Secondary school. For the 2026/2027 academic year the round will include children born between 01/09/2014 – 31/08/2015.

10.2 The parents/carers of all Y6 children who reside in Manchester will apply for a secondary school/academy place to their home authority. The LA will have records for all children resident in Manchester who attend Manchester primary school/academies. In order to make sure that all children resident in Manchester are informed of the process, the LA will ask neighbouring authorities and independent schools in the area for details of children who attend their school/academies and reside in Manchester. This information will be requested at the end of the Summer Term 2025.

10.3 Applications will be made on a Standard Application Form (SAF). The SAF will be available on-line and as a paper form. Letters informing parents to apply for a year 7 place will be posted to the Primary school of all known year 6 Manchester children by 1 July 2025.

10.4 Parent/carers will be asked to apply online. Copies of the composite prospectus will be available on Manchester's Children's Services website. A paper form and a

hardcopy of the composite prospectus will be available on request. Parent/carers will be sent an acknowledgement once their application is received if applied on line.

10.5 The closing date for applications will be 31 October 2025 at 11:59pm. Online applications must be completed and submitted by the closing date. Any paper applications should be received in the Admissions Service before 31 October 2025, 5:00pm. An application will be considered as on time where it is clear that it was posted to arrive on time i.e. post marked.

11.0 Secondary Admission Round - Processing Applications

11.1 The LA will forward relevant information from SAFs by 07 November 2025 to other local authorities where Manchester residents have expressed a preference for a maintained school/academy in their area. On 07 November 2025 other LAs will send to the LA details of preferences for Manchester school/academies that have been expressed by their residents.

11.2 The LA will forward relevant information from SAFs by 17 November 2025 to OAA schools and academies where parents/carers have expressed a preference for those school/academies. Preference ranking will not be shared with admission authorities as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.

11.3 OAA schools and Academies will inform the LA by 08 December 2025 of the priority ranking of all applicants.

12.0 Secondary Admission Round - Determining Offers

12.1 By 12 January 2026 the LA will inform other local authorities of offers to be made to children resident within their boundaries and request details of offers they will be making to Manchester residents. This information will continue to be exchanged until 30 January 2026.

12.2 Where a preference cannot be offered to a Manchester resident the LA will:

- Offer a place at the nearest suitable school/academy, where places are available in accordance with paragraph 2.12 of the School Admissions Code 2021,
- Place the applicant on the waiting list, where held, for the preferred schools/academies,
- Provide advice and information to parent/carers about the process and the options available to them.

12.3 Waiting lists will be held in criteria order using the oversubscription criteria in the school/academy's admission arrangements. Waiting lists are not operated on a "first come, first served" basis. The amount of time an applicant is on a waiting list will not affect their position on it. All schools/academies are required to maintain a waiting list until 31st December in accordance with paragraph 2.15 of the School Admissions Code (2021). Further details on operation of waiting lists can be found in the school's/academy's admission arrangements.

13.0 Secondary Admission Round - Notifying Parents/Carers of Decisions

13.1 The LA will send parent/carers resident in Manchester a letter on the national offer day, 02 March 2026, confirming offers of places for all children. All Manchester school/academies will be informed on 24 February 2026 of the children offered a place. School/academies must not contact parents about the outcome of their applications until after these offers have been received. Only the local authority can make an official offer as stated in The School Admission Code (2021) , Section 2, Point 2.10.

13.2 Parent/carers will be required to accept or decline the place offered by 16 March 2026.

14.0 Secondary Admission Round - Changes to Preferences

14.1 Preferences can be changed up until the closing date. Any such changes must be confirmed in writing. Preferences can only be changed after the closing date in exceptional circumstances and parent/carers should explain the circumstances in writing when informing the LA of their change of preference. It may not be possible to make changes to preferences for other LA schools or Manchester's OAA school/academies after 07 November 2025. This is the date when application information is exchanged with other LA's.

15.0 Secondary Admission Round - Late Applications

15.1 The closing date for applications will be 31 October 2025. Any SAFs received after the closing date will be processed as late applications. This means an offer of a school/academy place will be made after all on time applicants have been processed. Late applications for Manchester school/academies may result in parents/carers not being offered a place at their preferred school/academy.

15.2 The LA will only process applications received after the deadline date as on time applications if there is a good reason for late submission. Such applications are valid late applications. A valid late application will include situations where children move into Manchester after the closing date. Late applications with reasons for late submission will only be considered up to the 07 November 2025. This is the date when application information is exchanged with other LA's.

15.3 Where possible late applicants will be sent an offer letter on 02 March 2026.

15.4 Applications received after the 02 March 2026 will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as possible.

15.5 SAFs for OAA schools and academies, received after the closing date will be passed to the school/academy with a note that it has been received late. It will be for that Admission Authority to decide how it wishes to process the application.

16.0 In-Year Admissions (outside the normal round)

16.1 All in year applications for places at maintained primary schools, secondary schools or academies should be made directly to the LA. The LA will co-ordinate all applications. If an application is made directly to a school/academy they are required to forward the details to the LA.

16.2 All schools/academies are required to update the LA, on a regular basis of any in year allocations, their numbers on roll and their vacancies. This will ensure that all school/academies comply with paragraph 2.27 of the School Admissions Code (2021).

16.3 If there are more vacancies at a school or academy than applicants then all applicants will be offered.

16.4 If there are more applicants than vacancies, the over subscription criteria for the school/academy will be applied by the Admission Authority to decide which applicants are offered a place. Offers will be made up to the school/academy's admission number.

16.5 If a place cannot be offered at the parent/carer's preferred school/academy, the LA will inform them of their right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.

16.6 Where a waiting list is maintained, the applicant's name will be added to it.

For In Year applications, waiting lists will be held for the remainder of the academic year in which the application was made. At the end of the academic year (July 2027), all applicants will be removed from all waiting lists. The only exception to this will be if the applicant has not been offered a place at any school. In this circumstance the applicant will be kept on the waiting list for the next term. Details of the waiting list process will be on the application forms and on the offer letters sent to applicants.

16.7 If a place cannot be offered at a preferenced school/academy, the parent/carer will be offered an alternative place at the closest school/academy with a vacancy. Where the alternative offer will be for an OAA school or Academy the LA will liaise with the school/academy before making the offer. Parents/carers should accept the alternative offer and may also remain on a waiting list and pursue an appeal for their preferred school/academy at the same time.

16.8 A secondary In Year Fair Access Protocol is in place to consider children who are without a school/academy place who meet the In Year Fair Access Criteria. These

children will be admitted above waiting lists. This is in accordance with 3.14 of the School Admissions Code (2021).

16.9 A primary In Year Fair Access Protocol is in place to consider children who are without a school/academy place who meet the In Year Fair Access Criteria. These children will be admitted above waiting lists. This is in accordance with 3.14 of the School Admissions Code (2021).

16.10 The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed that the operation of In Year Fair Access protocols is outside the arrangements of coordinated admissions and as such the statutory duty to comply with parental preference does not apply in those circumstances. Therefore, this scheme does not apply to children who fall under the Authority's 'In Year Fair Access Protocol'; such children will continue to be considered for admission in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Authority's agreed Protocol.

Key dates in the Secondary Admissions Round 2025/2026

Secondary Round

LA sends application information to parents	Tues 1 July 2025
Closing Date for applications	Fri 31 Oct 2025
LA sends applications for other LA school/academies to other LAs	Fri 07 Nov 2025
LA sends applications to each OAA school and Academy	Mon 17 Nov 2025
OAA schools and academies return to the LA ranked lists according to admission arrangements	Mon 08 Dec 2025
First exchange of offers with other LAs	Mon 12 Jan 2026
Final exchange of offers with other LAs	Fri 30 Jan 2026
Offers sent to parents	Mon 02 March 2026

Key dates in the Primary Admissions Round 2026/2027

Primary Round

LA sends application information to parents	Mon 18 Aug 2025
Closing Date for applications	Thurs 15 Jan 2026
LA sends applications for other LA school/academies to other LA	Fri 23 Jan 2026
LA sends applications to each OAA school and Academy	Mon 09 Feb 2026
OAA schools and academies return to the LA ranked lists according to admission arrangements	Fri 27 Feb 2026
First exchange of offers with other LAs	Fri 06 Mar 2026
Final exchange of offers with other LAs	Fri 20 Mar 2026
Offers sent to parents	Thurs 16 Apr 2026