

Southampton City Council

Coordinated Scheme for Entry into Reception Year at Infant and Primary Schools for the 2026/27 Academic Year

This scheme details the coordinated admission arrangements for Reception Year entry into infant and primary schools in Southampton in September 2025, in accordance with the School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008 and the School Admissions Code (2021).

This scheme details the mechanisms for the process of 'mainround' admission into Reception Year, including the process of application, offering of school places and the provision for late applications. It is enacted to ensure that all on-time applicants receive an offer of one school place on the National Offer Day of 16th April 2026.

The scheme incorporates all state-funded schools within the Southampton City Council boundary, including foundation/trust schools and academies who may be their own admission authorities.

This scheme has been separated into the following sections:

1. Data Capture
2. Application Process
3. Closing Date
4. Processing of On-Time Applications
5. Outcome of Applications
6. Data to Schools
7. Late Applications

1. Data Capture

In July 2025, the Admissions Team at Southampton City Council will compile a list of children who will be eligible for a school place in September 2026. This will be completed by identifying those children who are registered at Early Years settings across the city and expanded by data from the Southampton City Primary Care Trust (SCPCT).

While applying for a school place and seeking information on this process is ultimately the responsibility of parents and carers, Southampton City Council recognise that this can be a complex process, especially for first-time parents, and seek to support wherever possible. To that end, between July and October 2025, the Admissions Team will send out information to all families identified in the data capture to inform them of the school application process, as well as working with Early Years settings and schools to offer opportunities for support.

2. Application Process

Individual school admissions policies will be published on the schools' websites from 15th March 2025. A composite prospectus, compiling the policies of all schools within the

Southampton City Council boundary will be published on the Council website no later than 12th September 2025. A hard copy of this composite prospectus is available upon request.

Parents must apply for a school place via the Local Authority for the area where they live, even if they wish to apply for schools within another Local Authority (i.e. Southampton City Council residents must apply to Southampton City Council, even if they are applying to schools within the Hampshire County Council boundary).

Applications are made, with limited exception, online via the Southampton City Council Citizen's Portal. Parents must register an account to use the system. The Citizen's Portal is provided by Capita PLC and any system downtime for maintenance is outside of the control of Southampton City Council but will naturally avoid closing and offer dates.

Online applications for Reception places will open on 1st September 2025.

3. Closing Date

The national closing date for Reception Year applications is 15th January 2026. Applications can be submitted until 23:59 on this date.

4. Processing of On-Time Applications

As per the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021, Southampton City Council operates an 'equal preference' system, meaning that all preferences expressed on an application are treated as applications to those schools and processed at the same time.

If an application cites a preference for an own admission authority school that completes its own ranking, this information will be sent to the school by 22nd February 2026 so that this ranking can be completed.

Rank lists from own admission authority schools will be returned to Southampton City Council by 12th March 2026.

All applications will be validated by either the own-ranking schools or Southampton City Council to ensure that all information relevant to ranking applications is correct and appropriately recorded.

When all applications are ranked for schools, offers will be determined. In the event that an applicant is eligible for more than one school place, the place will be offered to the higher preference cited in the application.

If an applicant is not eligible for a place at any of their preference schools, they will be allocated a place at their catchment school or, should this school be full, at the nearest school to their home address with available places. This distance will be determined using the method outlined in the admissions policy of the relevant school.

5. Outcome of Applications

All on-time applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application on 16th April 2026. This will either be by a notification via the Citizen’s Portal or in writing (either in hard copy or via email).

Parents/carers will be asked to formally accept or refuse the offer made to them. If a parent/carer refuses the offer made to them, the Admissions Team will seek to clarify how the child will be otherwise educated.

If a school place is offered anywhere other than at the first preference school, the parent/carers will have the right to appeal the refusal of a place. Information about this process will accompany the offer letter.

6. Data to Schools

Lists of allocated pupils will be provided to schools on 16th April 2026. Further updated lists will be provided regularly between this date and September 2026 as changes are made to the allocation lists.

7. Late Applications

All applications received after 23:59 on 15th January 2026 will be considered late applications and will not be processed until after the on-time applications.

Late applications are made, with limited exception, via a form on the Southampton City Council website.

Offers will be made to late applicants on a rolling basis after 16th April 2026.

Scheme Timeline:

July 2025	The Admissions Team will compile a list of pupils eligible for a Reception place in September 2026.
July-October 2025	Information will be sent to parent/carers of the above.
1 September 2025	Online applications open.
15 January 2026	Closing date for applications.
22 February 2026	Applications sent to own admission authority schools completing their own rankings and other Local Authorities.
12 March 2026	Own-ranking schools return their rank lists to the Local Authority.
16 April 2026	National Offer Day.