



Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley

Education Improvement Team

Consultation in respect of proposed 2026/27 school nursery class admission arrangements for community primary schools and primary academies adopting the local authority admission arrangements

Context

- 1.1 Knowsley Local Authority is the admission authority for community primary schools within the authority area. The Local Authority is thus responsible for the arrangements for admission to nursery classes for the following community primary schools:

Eastcroft Park	Evelyn	Knowsley Village
Malvern	Millbrook	Northwood
Park Brow	Prescot*	Ravenscroft
Roby Park	Stockbridge Village	Westvale

**Prescot Primary School is in the process of converting to Academy status as part of the Rowan Learning Multi Academy Trust. It is expected the school will retain the admission arrangements set out in this document following conversion.*

- 1.2 Individual Academy Trusts are the admission authority for their associated academy school/s within the Knowsley local authority area. Knowsley local authority work collaboratively with Academy Trusts who operate in the Knowsley area. The following Academy Trusts adopt the admission arrangements of Knowsley local authority for their associated primary schools with nursery classes:

Multi Academy Trust	Primary Academy	
Dean Trust	Blacklow Brow	Park View
Heath Family Trust	Halshead	
Rowan Learning Trust	Plantation	
Vantage Trust	Knowsley Lane	Willow Tree

2 General arrangements

- 2.1 All children, irrespective of need, have a statutory entitlement to an Early Years Foundation Stage education from the beginning of the term following their third birthday.

Child's 3 rd birthday	Term of admission
1 April - 31 August	following Autumn (September)
1 September – 31 December	following Spring (January)
1 January – 31 March	following Summer (April)

- 2.2 Free Early Years education provision in a school nursery class for the school year 2026/27 is currently expected to be 15 hours per week.¹
- 2.3 Typically, schools operate five morning and five afternoon sessions of three hours each per week. Schools will seek to accommodate parent/carer preferences for either morning or afternoon places, and some offer flexible places or extended childcare hours, but this may not always be possible and cannot be guaranteed. Session times should be discussed directly with the individual school.
- 2.4 Each Knowsley school nursery class has an agreed number of places. Parents/carers should note that places may have been allocated to three-year-olds in the preceding year. Where these children are still of nursery age and are continuing to attend, this will reduce the number of places available for allocation.
- 2.5 The Governing Bodies of Community Primary Schools and Academies adopting the Local Authority arrangements will undertake the administration of the termly admission application procedures for nursery classes. Only applications for children of the relevant age range will be considered each term. No allocations will be undertaken, or places offered, before the relevant closing dates stated in this document.
- 2.6 Where there are more applications than places available for any one term of entry, the nursery oversubscription criteria will be applied. The oversubscription criteria for community primary schools and those academies adopting the arrangements are stated in this document. Any requirements for formal home to school distance measuring will be undertaken by the Local Authority School Admissions Team.
- 2.7 Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan that names a particular school as provision, the child will be admitted with priority over other applicants and available places will reduce accordingly.
- 2.8 Applicants who have a disability will be considered no less favourably than other candidates in the allocation of places. Schools may make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage.
- 2.9 There is no statutory right of appeal if a nursery place cannot be allocated. Schools may hold waiting lists for those children who cannot initially be offered a place. The waiting list will be ordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.
- 2.10 The offer of a school nursery place does not guarantee transfer to the reception class of that school or give priority for a place in the reception class of that school.

¹ Some applicants may also be entitled to the extended childcare offer for their three and four-year olds. The additional hours can be taken flexibly throughout the year and can be split across more than one childcare provider, including childminders, pre-schools, day nurseries and school nursery classes.

- 2.11 When a place is offered, the school will confirm a start date. This will normally be the beginning of the term following the third birthday. If parents/carers do not require the place they should inform the school immediately in writing.

3 Application procedures

- 3.1 Parents/carers seeking to place their child in the nursery class of a community primary school or listed academy should complete the School Nursery Application Form at the appropriate time. The application is produced by the Local Authority and will be available from each school, the Local Authority School Admissions Service or can be downloaded from the Knowsley Council website.
- 3.2 Some schools may keep a contact list of parents/carers who have expressed an interest in applying for a nursery place. This is not a requirement or part of the formal application process and no information other than contact details and the child's name and date of birth should be taken. Schools keeping an interested list may use contact information to notify parents/carers when it is the appropriate time to make a formal application, but the responsibility for making an application at the appropriate time remains that of the parent/carer. Parents/carers must make a formal application during the correct period; for entry to nursery at any time during the 2026/27 school year, the application should be made no earlier than the beginning of the school year preceding entry (i.e. September 2025).
- 3.3 Applications are welcomed from Knowsley residents and those who live outside the borough. In all cases, the relevant Knowsley application form should be completed.
- 3.4 Parents/carers can apply for a place in more than one nursery – one application must be completed and returned directly to each individual school. Where an offer is made but is no longer required, parents/carers should inform the school without delay to ensure places can be reallocated.
- 3.5 An application form should contain accurate information. Any offer of a place is subject to a birth certificate and proof of address subsequently being provided to the school, confirming the information provided on the form. The address given must be the official home residency for the child. Where it is found that false information has been provided to obtain a place that would not have been offered if the correct information had been provided, the place may be withdrawn.
- 3.6 Applications will be considered on a termly basis. All applications received by the relevant closing date will be considered together after that date and the oversubscription criteria will be applied if necessary.

- 3.7 Applications received after the relevant closing date but in time for the allocation will be included where practicable. However, as the exact date of allocation may not be the same in each individual school, there is no guarantee that any application received after the closing date will be included in the initial allocation of places. Applications deemed to be received late and not included in the initial allocation will be considered as soon as possible after the allocation is concluded – where the school nursery class is not oversubscribed, places will be offered to late applicants.
- 3.8 Other applications received on an ad-hoc basis throughout the school year for a child who is of age to take up a nursery class place immediately, will be considered as quickly as possible and typically within 10 school days, with a view to the child being admitted without delay if there is a place available.

Application timetable

Date of admission to nursery	Closing date for applications	Application period
Autumn term (September - December)	10 March (preceding entry)	September - 10 March (preceding entry)
Spring term (January - March)	Last school day before Autumn half term (October preceding entry)	September – last school day before Autumn half term (October preceding entry)
Summer term (April - July)	Last school day before Spring half term (February preceding entry)	September – last school day before Spring half term (February preceding entry)

- 3.9 Parents/carers must inform the school immediately, in writing, of any change of circumstance that may affect their application, for example a change of address.
- 3.10 Individual schools will require proof of child’s date of birth and, where applicable, proof of home address (i.e. if oversubscription has occurred and a distance tie-break has been undertaken within a particular criterion group). Parents/carers who have provided false information which has affected the allocation of places may have their place withdrawn.

Oversubscription criteria for community primary schools (and primary academies adopting local authority nursery class admission arrangements)

Where more applications are received than places available, the oversubscription criteria below will be applied to all eligible applicants (i.e. applicants eligible for entry in the particular term under consideration)

Priority will be given in the following order:

1. Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but immediately became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or a special guardianship order. This includes children who have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care because of being adopted. (See note a)
2. Children aged 4 with a sibling attending the preferred school, and who will still be attending at the time of admission. (See notes b and c)
3. Other children aged 4. (See note b)
4. Children aged 3 with a sibling attending the preferred school, and who will still be attending at the time of admission. (See notes b and c)
5. Other children aged 3. (See note b)

Notes

- a. A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority in England or is being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). Adoption as under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (section 46). Child arrangement orders as defined in the Children and Families Act 2014 (section 12). Special Guardianship Order as defined in the Children Act 1989 (section 14A).
A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.
Parents/carers who wish to have their child considered under criterion 1 must provide documentary evidence of the relevant status at the time of application.
- b. "Children aged 4" is defined as children who will have reached the age of 4 by 31st August at the end of the school year for which they are applying for a nursery place (i.e., they are in the year before admission to reception class).
"Children aged 3" is defined as children who will reach the age of 3 by the end of the summer term in the school year for which they apply for a nursery place (i.e., they are 2 years before admission to reception class).

- c. The sibling must be on the school roll at the time of allocation and expected to remain on roll at the time of admission. This criterion does not include siblings in year 6 at the time of allocation who will have left the school at the point of admission of the applicant child. “Sibling” is defined as full biological siblings and half and step siblings as well as adopted and fostered children and those who are considered as being part of the same individual family unit because of the stipulations of a care or residency arrangement. In all cases, the “sibling” must be resident at the same address on a full-time basis or for the majority of the school week. (The admission authority reserves the right to request evidence to confirm residency).

Tie-break

Where there are more children in any one criterion than places remaining, the following tie-break will be used:

Home to school distance, with the child living closest to the school having priority. The home to school measurement is a radial straight-line measurement using a Geographical Information System (GIS) based on Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) data and the National Grid co-ordinates for the application address and the school. The measurement is from the unique address nodal point of the applicant address to the unique address nodal point of the school and is in miles to three decimal places.

In rare cases, where the geographic tie-break does not assist because more than one applicant lives at the same distance e.g., in a block of flats or the same distance in a different radial direction from school, random selection will be used to determine the allocation of places.

Note - An application can only be considered from one single address. This is the address where the child lives. It may be necessary for the admission authority to carry out checks with to confirm addresses are genuine; applicants may be requested to produce documentary evidence of the application address, such as Council Tax, utility bills or other personally addressed formal correspondence / identification documents.

The address of another relative, friend, childminder or a non-residential business address will not be accepted.