

When & how do I apply for a School place?

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**APPLYING FOR A PRIMARY
OR SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACE**

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS 2026-2027

Sefton Council 

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INTRODUCTION from the Assistant Director of Children’s Services (Education Excellence)

Dear Parent/Carer

We have prepared this guide to provide you with a wide range of information and advice to help you when it is time for you to complete and submit your application for a school place for your child.

Sefton Council is determined to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background and we work in partnership with schools, children, young people, and their families to help achieve this.

For further information about the schools themselves, the number of places available, the admissions criteria and how places have been allocated previously for each school, please read the accompanying guide ‘Sefton Primary & Secondary Schools Admissions Information 2026-2027’ which is available to view and download from www.sefton.gov.uk/startingschool.

We would recommend that you name three schools on your application and that you use Sefton’s online Citizen Portal system to apply for your child’s school place. The Citizen Portal is easy, quick, convenient, and secure. You can register for an account easily by confirming your email address or use the same Sefton Citizen Portal account you may have set up previously for other children. Go to www.sefton.gov.uk/startingschool and follow the instructions within the Citizen Portal to register and apply.

If you need further information about a school to help you decide which three schools you would like to apply for, the schools’ individual website is a great place to start. The school website should contain information about open days/evenings. Many schools now offer virtual tours via their website. If you want to arrange a personal visit to a school, please contact the school directly. The contact details for all schools within Sefton are available in the accompanying guide stated above and are also available on Sefton’s website by using the ‘Find a school’ link under the Schools and Learning option at www.sefton.gov.uk.

You can access Ofsted reports and School performance data by using the Government’s ‘Find and Compare Schools in England Service’ at: www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk

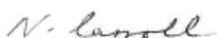
I hope you will find this parent guide and the School Admissions Information Guide useful. If you have any questions or need any more information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact Sefton School Admissions Team (contact details can be found on page 4).

Sefton residents should complete an online application via the Sefton website (Citizen Portal), please see further details on the next page. You can name any school on your application whether the school is within the Sefton area or outside of Sefton.

If you live outside of the Sefton area, please contact your home local authority for more information and advice on how to apply, even if you wish to apply for a Sefton school(s). Contact details for neighbouring Local Authorities can be found on page 15 of this guide.

A checklist for applicants is available on page 36. Please consider these points carefully before submitting your application for a school place.

Yours sincerely



**Nadine Carroll, Assistant Director of Children’s Services, Education Excellence
September 2025**

Applying for a school place

WE RECOMMEND THAT PARENTS/CARERS READ THIS GUIDE CAREFULLY TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS PROCESS. TAKE A LOOK AT THE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON PAGES 24-26 AND THE CHECKLIST ON PAGE 36.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE ACCOMPANYING GUIDE 'SEFTON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS INFORMATION 2026-2027' WHICH PROVIDES YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT EACH SCHOOL WITHIN SEFTON, INCLUDING CONTACT DETAILS, INDIVIDUAL ADMISSIONS CRITERIA, PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBERS, AND PREVIOUS ADMISSIONS PATTERNS. YOU CAN THEN SUBMIT AN APPLICATION ONLINE.

How do I apply online?

- Go to www.sefton.gov.uk/startingschool and under the 'Do it online' section, follow the link to the **Citizen Portal**. Follow the on-screen instructions. The Portal is quick and easy to use.
- If you have not used Sefton's Citizen Portal before, **you must first register by confirming your email address and setting up a password**, (in exactly the same way as many other websites). **Please keep a note of your password, you will need this again to log into the Citizen Portal on National Offer Day to view the school place offer.**
- If you have used Sefton's Citizen Portal before please check your details are still correct, including your home address, by selecting 'My Account' on the homepage **before** you start a new application.
- If you do not have internet access, a paper application is available upon request – see contact details below.

Why you should apply online on Sefton's Citizen Portal

- It's convenient – the Citizen Portal is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Your application will be recorded automatically, and you can start an application and finish it later.
- You can make changes at any time up until the **national closing date(s)**. Once you have submitted (or re-submitted) an application, you will receive a confirmation email.
- The system is secure and confidential.
- You will be able to log into the Citizen Portal on national offer day to view the school place offer. You will not have to wait a few days to receive the offer letter through the post.

The national closing dates for admission applications are:

STARTING SECONDARY SCHOOL IN YEAR 7, SEPTEMBER 2026: **31 OCTOBER 2025**

STARTING PRIMARY SCHOOL IN RECEPTION YEAR, SEPTEMBER 2026: **15 JANUARY 2026**

Accessible Information

Sefton Council is now using 'Recite Me' software to help residents with accessibility issues customise its website to meet their needs. By turning on Recite Me, visitors to the council's website www.sefton.gov.uk can use the service to read website pages out loud in different voices and languages, increase and decrease the size of the text and change the font style including into a dyslexic-friendly font. We have endeavoured to make this guide accessible for screen reading software, however if you have any difficulties please contact us.

Contact Details - Sefton School Admissions Team

Email: admissions@sefton.gov.uk Postal address: School Support Services, School Admissions Team, 3rd Floor Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle, L20 3NJ. Telephone: 0151 934 3590.

SECTION A Coordinated Secondary Admissions Scheme – September 2026

Transferring from primary to secondary school (Year 7)

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

<p>1 September 2025</p>	<p>You can access all the required information and apply for a secondary school place online via Sefton's Citizen Portal from this date. *</p> <p>www.sefton.gov.uk/startingschool</p>
<p>31 October 2025</p>	<p>National closing date for receipt of secondary applications. Parents/carers must ensure an application has been submitted by this date.</p>
<p>9 January 2026</p>	<p>FINAL DATE for receipt of changes to existing applications including confirmed house moves and changes of preference for inclusion on 2 March national offer day. No changes can be made to existing applications after this date.</p> <p>See page 13 for information about moving to a new home.</p>
<p>2 March 2026</p>	<p>National offer day</p> <p>Parents/carers who applied online can log into the Citizen Portal to view their school place offer. Where applicable, emails containing a school place offer are also sent to applicants.</p> <p>For applicants who did not apply via the Citizen Portal, an offer letter will be posted by Sefton local authority on this day.</p>
<p>From 3 March 2026</p>	<p>Processing begins of any late applications and late changes of preference received on or after 10 January 2026 (in date order of receipt).</p>
<p>27 March 2026</p>	<p>FINAL DATE for appeals to be submitted for offers made on national offer day.</p>
<p>Summer Term 2026</p>	<p>Independent appeal hearings take place.</p> <p>All appeals received by 27 March will be heard no later than 15 June.</p>

***NOTE: If you do not live in Sefton you must apply for a school place through your home local authority even if you wish to name a school within Sefton as a preference. See page 15 of this guide for further information.**

Coordinated Primary Admissions Scheme – September 2026

Starting primary school for the first time (Reception year)

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

1 September 2025	<p>You can access all the required information and apply for a primary school place online via Sefton's Citizen Portal from this date. *</p> <p>www.sefton.gov.uk/startingschool</p>
15 January 2026	<p>National closing date for receipt of primary applications. Parents must ensure an application has been submitted by this date.</p>
20 February 2026	<p>FINAL DATE to receive changes to applications including confirmed house moves and changes of preference for inclusion on 16 April national offer day. No changes can be made to existing applications after this date.</p> <p>See page 13 for information about moving to a new home.</p>
16 April 2026	<p>National offer day</p> <p>Parents/carers who applied online can log into the Citizen Portal to view their school place offer. Where applicable, emails containing a school place offer are also sent to applicants.</p> <p>For applicants who did not apply via the Citizen Portal, an offer letter will be posted by Sefton local authority on this day.</p>
From 17 April 2026	<p>Processing begins of any late applications and late changes of preference received on or after 21 February 2026 (in date order of receipt).</p>
15 May 2026	<p>FINAL DATE for appeals to be submitted for offers made on national offer day.</p>
Summer Term 2026	<p>Independent appeal hearings take place.</p> <p>All appeals received by 15 May will be heard no later than 17 July.</p>

***NOTE: If you do not live in Sefton you must apply for a school place through your home local authority even if you wish to name a school within Sefton as a preference. See page 15 of this guide for further information.**

Key Information

Starting Secondary School

Children transfer from primary to secondary schools in the September following their eleventh birthday. Children whose birthdays fall on/between **1 September 2014, and 31 August 2015** will start secondary school in September 2026. Children who are born on dates outside of this period can only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Starting Primary School

Children start primary school in the September following their fourth birthday. Children whose birthdays fall on/between **1 September 2021, and 31 August 2022** can start primary school in September 2026. In Sefton, all schools provide for the admission of children in the September following their fourth birthday. This is the ordinary school starting age, and most parents/carers are happy for their child to start school at this point. By law, a child is not required to start full time education until the child has reached compulsory school age.

Compulsory School Age

Most children will thrive if they are admitted into reception class aged 4. However, some parents/carers may be concerned that their child is not ready for school at that age. Sefton encourages all parents/carers who may be considering delaying their child's admission until they reach compulsory school age, to visit the schools they wish to apply for. The school can explain the provision on offer in reception class and how it is tailored to meet the needs of the youngest children, and any other support that may be available for their child.

A child **MUST** start full time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on either 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their **fifth** birthday, whichever comes first. If a child's birthday is on one of those dates the child reaches compulsory school age on that date. For example:

- If a child reaches compulsory school age on or by **31 December**, they must start full-time education at the beginning of the Spring Term in **January**.
- If a child reaches compulsory school age on or by **31 March**, they must start full-time education at the beginning of the Summer Term in **April**.
- If a child reaches compulsory school age on or by **31 August**, they must start full-time education at the beginning of the Autumn Term in **September**.

Deferred Entry to School

For children who are below compulsory school age and once a school place has been offered as part of the main primary admissions round, parents/carers may if they wish, agree with the school a pattern of part time attendance or a deferred start until later in the school year. **These arrangements MUST be discussed and agreed with the headteacher of the school concerned.**

Parents/carers **must** make an application for a school place in the usual way, and within the published timescales. This will ensure that a school place is allocated and held for the child until they start school. A child whose start date is deferred, **must** start school **no later than the beginning of the summer term** of the school year for which the offer of the school place was made. In these cases, the child would still move up to Year 1 with their normal age group in the following September.

Admission of primary age children outside of their normal (chronological) age group

You can view Sefton's full policy for the admission of children starting primary school outside of their normal age group on the Sefton website at: www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionspolicyandreports. You can also access an advice guide for parents/carers and an 'Admission Outside of Normal Age Group request form' from www.sefton.gov.uk/applyoutsidenormalagegroup.

It is expected that all children will start primary school in the school year that they turn 5. The government has however set out specific arrangements for 'summer born children' – see below. Please note this **does NOT apply to children with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP)**. If a summer born child has an EHCP and a parent would like them to be admitted into school at age 5, and start in reception, this must be discussed with the designated local authority SEN Team as part of the EHCP process.

Summer Born Children (dates of birth on/between 1 April and 31 August)

Parents/carers of 'summer born children' can if they wish, make a decision that their child will not start school until the September **after their fifth birthday**, a full year after they could have first started school. The DfE supports the rights of parents/carers to make this decision but does not believe it should become the norm for summer born children to begin reception at age 5. A request for admission outside of the normal age group is separate from an application for a school place. Parents/carers **must** still make an application for a school place in their child's normal age group, at the usual time.

Parents/carers of a summer born child should submit a request for '**admission outside the normal age group**' at the same time as making their application for a school place in their child's normal age group. In making such a request a parent is asking an admission authority to decide on which age group the child should be admitted to when they do start school, (in the September after their fifth birthday) i.e.: Reception or Year 1. You can find further advice for parents/carers & an admission outside of normal age group request form at www.sefton.gov.uk/applyoutsidenormalagegroup.

Admission Authorities are not required to automatically agree for a child to be placed outside of their normal age group and may decide that a school place can only be offered in the normal age group. Parents/carers **do not** have a right to an appeal if they have been offered a place and it is not in their preferred year group. They may however make a complaint about the admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside of their normal age group.

Other children (not summer born) & admission outside of normal age group

Parents/carers do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group, but they may make a request for this to happen. Current guidance from the Department for Education states that "the government would agree that, in general, children should be educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate. **Children should only be educated outside of their normal age group in very limited circumstances**".

Where a parent/carer is thinking about delaying their child's admission to reception class, perhaps because the child may have a developmental/learning difficulty or disability, the parent/carer should read the guidance published on the Sefton council website and talk to the schools they wish to apply for. This should include the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and any other professional(s) who may be involved with their child. This will allow parents/carers the opportunity to discuss the schools approach in helping children with special educational needs or disabilities.

Parents/Carers must make an application for **admission outside the normal age group** and also apply for a primary school place in the main admission round at the same time and within the published time scales. If a parent/carer has evidence from professionals involved with their child's care or treatment, it would be helpful for this to be submitted as part of the request to admit outside of the normal age group. You can find further advice for parents & an admission outside of normal age group request form, at www.sefton.gov.uk/applyoutsidenormalagegroup.

Decision making panel for primary admission requests outside of normal age group

In Sefton we have a set up a panel of education professionals, which may include Early Years, SEN Inclusion, an Admissions Officer and other professionals (to give advice when appropriate), who will consider each request for a child to be admitted outside of their age group. The decision will be based on individual circumstances and what is considered to be in each child's best interests. This will include taking into account:

- The parents/carers views.
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development. This will involve requesting information from the early years setting the child is currently attending. *
- Any professional involvement with the child including any medical professional where relevant.
- Whether they may naturally have been in a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.
- The potential impact on a child of being admitted into their normal age group and missing a year of their education as a consequence.
- The opinion of the Headteacher of the school(s) named as a preference on the request form. If a request is received late (after national offer day), the opinion of the Headteacher of the school that has already been offered to the child.
- If the child has already been educated outside of the normal age group and is transferring to a new school.

* Parents/carers will be required as part of the admission outside of normal age group request form, to give consent for the School Admissions Team to contact the child's current nursery for a report on their child's progress.

Before making a request for admission outside of the normal age group

Parent(s)/carer(s) should consider the following:

A child ceases to be of statutory school age on the last Friday of June in the school year in which they become 16 years of age. If a child is educated outside of the normal age group (i.e. is in year 10 when this date is reached) the child will no longer be of compulsory school age during the school year in which most children will be taking their GCSE examinations. In addition, all children are now required to continue in education, training or employment until they reach their 18th birthday. This could potentially mean that a child could legally leave school once the statutory leaving age is attained without completing year 11 or sitting their GCSEs.

For primary admissions outside of normal age group, please visit the Sefton website to read the full policy and an advice guide for parents/carers.

Twins/multiple births (primary & secondary schools)

Twins or children from multiple births will be considered in the same way as all other applicants having the admissions criteria applied to each application. In circumstances where one of the siblings has been allocated the **last** remaining place at a school the other sibling(s) will also be admitted. If the children are of infant age, they will be admitted as excepted children so that infant class size legislation is not breached. This will be applied to all admission applications, including In Year admissions during the academic year.

Arrangements for children with Special Educational Needs

In accordance with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice it is anticipated that the majority of pupils with special educational needs will be able to have their needs met within their local mainstream school. In addition to this, within Sefton, some mainstream schools have specialist SEN Units or resourced provision for pupils with additional needs.

There are also a number of special schools that cater for pupils with more complex needs. An Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment, in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, would need to be carried out for a child likely to require a specialist SEN Unit, resourced provision or special school placement. The views of parents/carers and the child or young person are considered during the assessment. Information can be found online at www.seftondirectory.co.uk/localoffer.

All Sefton maintained and academy schools will meet their legal obligation to admit a pupil who has an Education, Health and Social Care Plan where the school is named in the plan.

You can also get further information from the SEN & Inclusion Service, Assessment, Resource and Provision Planning Team, Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle, L20 3NJ.

Email: special.needs@sefton.gov.uk Telephone: 0151 934 2347.

Information is also available online: www.seftondirectory.co.uk/localoffer.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

are a free, confidential and impartial service offering information, advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. In Sefton this service is delivered by the national charity – **KIDS**. Their experienced team of local advisers can provide advice directly to young people aged 16 to 25 years with SEND. They aim to empower parents, children and young people to participate in any decision-making processes and assist you to make informed decisions. They can provide information and advice on all matters relating to SEND.

Contact SENDIASS by email: seftonsendiass@kids.org.uk or telephone: 0151 433 7442 or

Online at: <https://www.kids.org.uk/sendias-home>.

Where to view the admissions criteria & get further information about Sefton Schools

The contact details and admissions criteria for all Sefton schools, along with links to individual school websites are included in the '**Sefton Primary & Secondary Schools Admissions Information 2026-2027**' guide which is available to view at www.sefton.gov.uk/startingschool. The guide also includes information for Sefton local authority nursery schools, school sixth form provision, and admissions for Year 10 entry at other education establishments.

If you need further information relating to a particular school, the school's individual website is a great place to start. If you want to arrange a visit to a school, please contact the school directly. Contact details for individual schools are also available by using the 'Find a school' link under the Schools and Learning option at www.sefton.gov.uk.

Additional information is also available from the following sources:

You can access Ofsted reports and School performance data by using the Government's 'Find and Compare Schools in England Service' at: www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk.

Sefton local authority's coordination of admission arrangements

The Education Act 2002 requires all local authorities to have a coordinated admissions scheme which includes all schools within the local authority area. This will ensure that every parent will receive one offer of a school place on the same day (**2 March** national offer date for **secondary schools** and **16 April** national offer date for **primary schools**). The local authority coordinates the admission arrangements using an admissions application process whereby parents can express three preferences for schools, in their preferred order, and reasons for those preferences if they wish.

Copies of the 2026 Coordinated Admission Schemes for Sefton schools are available on the Sefton website www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionspolicyandreports.

Making your preferences and completing your application for a school place

Make sure you read the accompanying guide ‘**Sefton Primary & Secondary Schools Admissions Information 2026-2027**’ which will give you:

1. Information about each school within Sefton.
2. The admissions criteria for each school, which will be used if there are more applications than places available.
3. How many places have been offered at each school, under each admission criterion, in previous years.

Submit your admissions application online via Sefton’s Citizen Portal

A link to the Citizen Portal is available under the ‘do it online’ option at www.sefton.gov.uk/startingschool. The online system is quick and easy to use, there is no risk of your application being lost in the post. If necessary, you can change your application up to the closing date. However, in order to ensure your application is received by Sefton, you must resubmit it each time you make a change. You will receive confirmation via email that your application has been started or changed.

When applying you MUST submit your application before the closing date. The portal will not be available for use once the closing date has passed. You must choose ‘submit now’ for your application to be received by the local authority.

On national offer day if you applied via the Citizen Portal you will be able to log into the portal to view your school place offer. You will also be sent an automated email showing the school place offer, unless you specifically request a letter instead (letters are posted on national offer day). In order to receive your offer via email, please ensure your email address is a **personal** email address, and it is up to date.

The online application method is recommended for all applicants. If necessary, a paper application form can be provided upon request. Please contact the School Admissions Team to request this. If you submit a paper application form to a primary school, please **ensure you receive an official receipt from the school**. Otherwise, you must return your completed paper application form to Sefton School Admissions Team by the deadlines shown on pages 5 and 6.

- When you make your application, we ask you to name up to three schools you would like your child to attend. You should list these in the order you most prefer – these are your preferences.
- **We strongly advise you to name more than one school.** This is so the local authority can consider other preferences which may be acceptable to you if it is not possible to offer your highest preferred school and may prevent you missing out on a place at a more local school if we are unable to offer you a place at your highest preferred school(s).
- If you name only one school on your application and it cannot be offered to you, Sefton cannot automatically consider you for any other schools in your area and you will be allocated a place at the **nearest qualifying school to your home address with a place still available** after other preferences have been processed. This may be a school further away from your home.
- We can only offer places at any school up to the school’s individual published admission number (PAN). You can view the published number for all schools in the accompanying Schools Information Guide.
- Please do not repeat the name of one school on your application as this will not improve your chances of getting a place. Neither will naming only one school three times.

- If you live in Sefton and we cannot offer your child a place at any of your preferred schools, we will allocate your child a place at the nearest qualifying school to your home address with a place available. In the case of Catholic children, if there are places available, it will be the qualifying Catholic school, which serves the parish in which you reside.
- If you live outside of Sefton and we cannot offer your child a place at any of your preferred Sefton schools, your own (home) local authority will be responsible for allocating your child a school place in your local area.
- If you reside in Sefton and do not apply on time, we may not be able to offer your child a place at your preferred school(s).

Faith Schools – Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

In addition to the local authority's application form, Voluntary Aided and Academy faith schools will require parents to complete a **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)**, which should be obtained from, and returned directly to the school. Completion of a SIF is necessary for applicants applying for church schools so that their application can be considered fully against the relevant admission criteria. Church schools may also require sight of a baptism certificate to authenticate any statements made.

- It should be noted that completion of a SIF does not constitute a valid admissions application on its own. The applicant must also name the school as a preference on the local authority's application form and submit this to the local authority in the normal way. **It is very important that you do both.** If you only complete the local authority application, your application cannot be fully considered by the relevant faith school.
- To obtain a SIF you should contact the school(s) you are applying for directly. The completed form should also be returned directly to the school(s) of your choice. Alternatively, you may be able to download a form from the relevant school's website.
- The school's governing body uses the information on the supplementary information form to apply their admissions criteria. The information you give on the form helps the governors to assess under which criterion your application will be considered, e.g., baptised Catholic living in a parish.

Home Address (residents in England) *

Sefton local authority can only process applications from **one permanent home address**. This must be the address where the parent(s)/carer(s) with legal responsibility lives with the child. The address given on the application form should be your child's **current** home address. This applies even if you might be moving to a new address, at a later date (see moving to a new home on page 13). You will be given an opportunity to provide details of proposed address changes. The address of relatives, childminders, businesses, or proposed addresses will **NOT BE ACCEPTED**.

The local authority may require evidence of the home address stated on the application form. Applicants will be contacted on an individual basis if evidence of a home address is required. **Applicants who do not respond to requests for further information should be aware that the local authority will NOT consider a request for a school place from an unconfirmed address**, which could result in you not being offered a place at your preferred school.

For the purposes of allocating a school place, and establishing **one** permanent home address, it is required that the child and applicant are residing at the stated address, and not purely own or be renting the property, whilst still living elsewhere.

The School Admissions Code allows admission authorities to withdraw a place offered to a child if it is found that fraudulent or potentially misleading information has been provided in order to obtain a school place.

Where a child lives with parents who have shared responsibility*

It is recognised that important decisions such as which schools to apply for should be made if possible jointly between parents, however, if parents are unable to agree lines of communication between themselves on issues involving their child, they may wish to seek independent legal advice and explore other options. These might include referring the matter to non-court dispute resolution, such as mediation, or to the family court for adjudication. **In all cases and in the best interests of their child, the local authority requires parents to resolve matters between themselves (taking legal advice if necessary) BEFORE submitting any application for a school place.**

The local authority has an **obligation** to process an application that has been signed and submitted by a parent/carer stating that they have parental responsibility. The local authority can only process ONE application form per child, which should be completed by the parent/carer who the child lives with. If your child lives at a different address from you with another parent/carer from Monday to Friday, you will need to provide a copy of the Parental Responsibility or Child Arrangements Order with your application.

In cases where parent(s)/carers(s) are separated and both have retained joint responsibility, the parent with whom the child primarily resides should complete the application form. The home address used will be that which is directed by the court, or the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week. If the child's time is split equally between two homes, the address of the parent who receives the child benefit will normally be used. Where parent(s)/carer(s) submit two separate application forms and do not reach an agreement regarding school preferences, the local authority reserves the right to determine which application should be accepted and which application will be discarded.

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY WILL NOT INTERVENE AND CANNOT RELEASE ANY INFORMATION, WHERE DISPUTES OR DISAGREEMENTS ARISE BETWEEN PARENT(S)/CARER(S) IN RELATION TO ANY PROPOSED OR SUBMITTED APPLICATION FOR A SCHOOL PLACE.

Private fostering arrangements

If a child is living with you and you do not have parental responsibility for the child and are not a close relative, (a close relative is a step parent by marriage, grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle) and you have or will be, caring for the child for more than 28 days, can you please indicate this on your application. This type of arrangement is called 'private fostering', and the local authority has a legal responsibility to recognise, support and monitor any child in their area who is being 'privately fostered'.

Moving to a new home (residents in England) *

If you are intending to move to a new home during the application period(s), you must still apply from your child's **current home address** before the national closing date. Changes of address will be **considered** if sufficient evidence of a house move is received prior to the national closing date or by the deadline for changes to existing applications (see pages 5 & 6).

You must be **resident** at the new address (and provide satisfactory evidence) by the published deadline for changes, in order for this to be considered for inclusion as part of the initial allocation of school places on national offer day. New addresses **will not** be considered without a solicitor's letter confirming that contracts have been exchanged and signed on the property or evidence of a long-term tenancy of at least 6 months, together with evidence that parent(s)/carer(s) are residing at the new property.

The evidence of house purchase (exchange of contracts) or long-term tenancy, and independent evidence which confirms **residency** at the new address, **must** be received by the local authority and by the deadline for changes, (shown on pages 5 & 6) for that address to be considered as part of the initial allocation of school places on national offer day. Evidence of the disposal of a previous property may also be requested where there is any uncertainty or dispute in establishing **one** permanent home address for the purposes of allocating a school place.

For house moves taking place, or evidence that is received **after** the deadline for changes (shown on pages 5 & 6), applications will be considered on an individual basis and will only be dealt with **after** national offer day along with any other requests in the date order they are received.

Crown Servants/Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces) *

For children of UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces) or crown servants returning from overseas, the local authority will accept the posting or return address and allocate a school place (where there is a place available) in advance of the family arriving in the area, provided that the application is accompanied by an official letter from the Ministry of Defence confirming a relocation date and address. All applications are still considered using the admissions criteria for the individual school(s) listed as a preference.

Applications from families living outside of England*

Foreign nationals who do not normally reside in England but wish to apply for a state-funded school place must check that their children have an immigration status which permits them to enter the UK and to access a state-funded school. Further information is available from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children>

UK or Irish Nationals who are resident overseas and are planning to move or return to England so that the child will be living in Sefton when they start school, should provide a proposed address and moving date as part of their application. Evidence will be required for the purposes of establishing a home address as shown on page 12.

If you are not **resident** in England by the published deadline date for changes (see pages 5 & 6) the **overseas address will be used as the home address when considering your application for a school place**. You should keep the local authority informed of any changes to your circumstances as this may affect how your application is considered. Applications from overseas residents may need to be considered on an individual basis.

*** The local authority (or admissions authority) reserves the right in all cases where it is necessary to confirm or challenge information provided on an application form, to undertake all necessary investigations and request appropriate evidence of a child's permanent home address, as fit the individual circumstances. This is so a home address can be confirmed from which the application will be considered.**

Places in schools outside of Sefton

Most pupils who live in Sefton will usually want to go to a school within Sefton. However, you may apply for a place for your child at a school outside Sefton. If you wish to apply for a school outside Sefton, you must include the school on your Sefton admission application form as a preference. Sefton will send your application details to the local authority where the schools are located, for them to process it in line with their co-ordinated admission arrangements.

If you have expressed preferences for schools in more than one local authority area, those authorities will co-ordinate the results once the decisions have been made. If more than one local authority can offer a place, the highest preferred school on the individual admission application will be offered. Wherever possible, within the timescales before the national offer days, authorities making a lower offer will withdraw their place. If you want to appeal for a higher preferred school, which has not been offered, you may do so.

You should contact the School Admissions Team of the appropriate local authority for more details. Contact details for neighbouring Local Authorities are shown on the next page. Other local authorities may have different timetables for processing applications. It is important to check carefully how their procedures may affect you. If your child is given a place in a school outside of Sefton, we will not necessarily pay their travelling costs. See Section C, 'Home to School Transport Eligibility and Arrangements'.

Pupils who live outside Sefton and want to go to a school in Sefton

If you live outside Sefton and you want to apply for a place at a Sefton school, you must complete an online application via your **home local authority's website** (or the paper form supplied by your own local authority). You should name the Sefton school you wish your child to attend on the form as one of your preferences and return the form to your own local authority. Your application should be forwarded to Sefton by your home local authority, as part of an agreed co-ordinated admissions process. **Your home local authority will notify you of the offer of the school place on national offer day.**

Contact details for School Admission Teams in neighbouring local authorities

Knowsley www.knowsley.gov.uk

School Admissions, Education Improvement Team
PO Box 21, Municipal Buildings
Archway Road, Huyton
Liverpool, L36 9YU
Tel: 0151 443 5142 / 5143 / 3372 / 3373
Email: schooladmissions@knowsley.gov.uk

Lancashire www.lancashire.gov.uk

South Area Education Office
PO Box 100, Pupil Access Team,
County Hall
Fishergate Hill, Preston
PR1 0LD
Tel: 01772 532109
Email: SouthAdmissions@lancashire.gov.uk

Liverpool www.liverpool.gov.uk

Children & Young People's Service, Pupil Admissions Team
Cunard Building, Water Street
Liverpool, L3 1AH
Tel: 0151 233 3006
Email: admissions@liverpool.gov.uk

St Helens www.sthelens.gov.uk

Admissions Section
Atlas House, Corporation Street
St Helens, WA9 1LD
Tel: 01744 671030 / 671035 / 671027
Email: schooladmissions@sthelens.gov.uk

Wirral www.wirral.gov.uk

Children & Young Peoples Department, Mainstream Admissions, Delivery Services
PO Box 290
Brighton Street
Wallasey CH27 9FQ
Tel: 0151 606 2000
Email: Schooladmissions@wirral.gov.uk

Admission Authorities for Sefton Schools

The table below sets out who is the admissions authority for each type of school within Sefton and indicates who is responsible for arranging an admission appeal hearing against the refusal of a school place.

Type of School	Who is the admission authority?	To whom do I send the request for an appeal hearing if a place has been refused?
Community & Voluntary Controlled Church of England	Local authority	Local authority
Catholic Voluntary Aided & Catholic Academies (Primary & Secondary)	School governing body	Liverpool Archdiocese http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/department/education
Church of England Voluntary Aided	School governing body	Chair of Governors c/o the school
Secondary Academies (non-faith)	School governing body	Local authority
St Michael's Church of England Academy	School governing body	For Year 7 entry - Sept 2026 Go to school website to access appeal form: www.stmichaelshigh.com For In Year/School Transfer applications Local authority (see below)
Church of England Primary Academies (except for St Andrew's)	School governing body	Chair of Governors c/o the school
Primary Academies (non-faith) & St Andrew's Maghull CE Primary	School governing body	Local authority

Please note:

St Michael's Church of England Academy

For Year 7 entry into the school in September 2026, the school will administer the appeals for pupils transferring from primary school. You can access the appeal form via the school's website or by contacting the school directly.

For In Year and school transfer admission appeals for all other year groups (and Year 7 once the academic year has begun), the local authority will administer the appeals. You should submit your appeal using the local authority appeal form which is available online. Please see further details on page 21 of this guide.

SECTION B

How Sefton processes your application

Sefton Administers an Equal Preference Scheme

All preferences expressed for a Sefton school on the admission application will be considered **equally**. This means that your child will be considered for a place at each school named on your application using the individual admissions criteria for that school irrespective of whether it is your 1st, 2nd or 3rd preference. Your application is then ranked against the admissions criteria for each school.

Examples of how equal preferences work, and how a child is ranked using the admissions criteria:

Primary School Example:

Preference 1: School A – 30 places

Child's rank 25

Preference 2: School B – 60 places

Child's rank 34

Preference 3: School C – 30 places

Child's rank 12

Child Allocated School A

This child is eligible for all three schools. In this case, the child would be offered School A, because it is the highest of the three preferences.

If you are allocated your highest preferred school, all other lower preferences are disregarded as you can only be offered one place.

If you name only one school on your application form and it cannot be offered to you, Sefton cannot automatically consider you for any other schools in your area as you have not named them. You will be allocated a place at the nearest qualifying school to your home address with a place still available after other preferences have been considered first. This may be a school that is further away from your home.

How Sefton works out which school to offer your child

Using the co-ordinated equal preference arrangements, each school you list on your application is considered as a separate application.

- The local authority uses a specialist computer system that allows the Admissions Team to apply the admissions criteria to all applications naming community, voluntary controlled, and some academy schools, for whom the local authority administers their admission arrangements.
- The computer system also allows the local authority to administer the admissions criteria that have been applied by the governing body of faith schools and some academies, who are their **own admissions authority**.
- The computer system co-ordinates this information for each school you have listed on your application form to ensure that each child is only offered one place.
- If we can offer your child a place at more than one of the schools you listed, we will offer you the one that was **highest on your application form**.
- We will repeat these steps until every child has been offered a place at the highest possible school.

- If we can only offer your child one of the schools listed on your application, that is where we will offer your child a place.
- If we cannot offer you any of the schools you listed, we will allocate your child a place at the nearest qualifying school with a place still available.
- If a school has more places available than the number of applications received, all children would be offered a place at that school.
- In rare circumstances where only one place remains and multiple applications are measured to be of an equal distance from the school, random allocation will be used to determine which child can be offered the place. This process is conducted in a public setting, with names placed in a box and drawn randomly by a senior LA manager. The outcome is appropriately recorded.

Making Changes to Applications/Late Applications/Waiting Lists

Please refer to pages 5 & 6 for any dates or deadlines that are referred to in the following paragraphs.

Changes of Preference

All parent(s)/carer(s) are expected to submit their school preference application for primary & secondary admissions by the **published closing date**. However, there are sometimes reasons why a change of preference might be requested including where a house move takes place.

If you are submitting a change of preference due to a house move into Sefton or within the area, we will consider your new preferences if we receive your request together with the required proof that you have moved and are residing at the new address by the deadline for changes. You may also be asked to provide evidence and that the previous property has been relinquished.

If you have not moved house but wish to change your preferences from your original application for another reason, you should submit that change request indicating your reasons. Any such change will be considered as long as it is received by the deadline for changes.

Late Applications

If parents/carers apply after the national closing dates, the local authority may still be able to consider the application providing we receive the application before the deadlines for changes.

For families moving into the area after the national closing dates, their application will still be considered if it is received before the deadline for changes with proof that the removal has taken place (for further details see page 13).

For late applications or late changes that are received **after** the deadline for changes **but before national offer dates**, they will be processed after the allocation of places has been completed (for either the primary or secondary offer days) and in the date order they are received by Sefton local authority.

For late applications or late changes that are received **after the national offer dates**, they will be processed in the date order they are received by Sefton local authority. All late applications and late changes will have the school admissions criteria applied to them in the normal way. The processing period for these applications will be dependent on the number of late applications or changes received.

Any late applications naming a school which are their own admission authority (usually this means voluntary aided faith schools and some faith academy schools) that are received after the closing dates, will be forwarded to the school stating that the application has been received late. The individual admission authority must then decide how it wants to respond to the application and inform the local authority.

Waiting Lists

If you have not been successful in obtaining a place at a Sefton school you expressed as a higher preference than the school you are offered on national offer day, your child's name will **automatically** be placed on the waiting list for schools.

For ALL SCHOOLS a waiting list **must** (by law*) be held and maintained in priority order, using the school's admissions criteria. A waiting list cannot be ordered based on the date an application was submitted. Waiting lists are subject to change at any time as other applications are added, removed or due to other changes of a child's circumstances. **Therefore, a child can move up or down on a waiting list.**
*As stated in the School Admissions Code 2021.

If a place becomes available, the place will be offered to the next child on the list. Waiting lists will be kept until the end of the autumn term 2026 (December 2026). **Inclusion on a school's waiting list does NOT guarantee that a place will eventually become available.**

After 1 September 2026 if a place becomes available, the applicant at the top of the waiting list will be contacted and offered a place. If the place is not accepted within 7 days, the child will be removed from the waiting list and the place offered to the next child on the waiting list.

Secondary School waiting lists

Those Sefton schools for whom the local authority administers their admission appeals, (see page 16), a child will initially only be placed on the waiting list until the deadline for submitting appeals which is 27 March 2026.

For these schools and children who are refused a place on national offer day in March, only those children for whom an appeal has been submitted, by the appeals deadline, will remain on the waiting list. If you do not submit an appeal, you will not be included on the waiting list after 27 March 2026.

The governing body of faith schools & St Michael's CE Academy will maintain a waiting list for their schools. Further details around the waiting lists for these schools are available from the individual school.

Primary School waiting lists

Your child's name will automatically be placed on the waiting list whether you submit an appeal or not. This is implemented in Sefton and is different than secondary schools as there are limited rights at appeal for parents of infant age children due to infant class size legislation.

The governing body of a voluntary aided faith school (including some faith academy schools) may maintain a waiting list for their school. Further details are available from the individual school.

School Place Offers - How will you let me know which school my child has been offered?

The offer of a school place will be issued to Sefton residents on the national offer dates set out below (if you applied by the published closing date).

IMPORTANT: If you live outside of the Sefton area, your home local authority will inform you of the school place being offered, even if you have applied for a place at a Sefton school.

<p>SECONDARY SCHOOLS</p> <p>If you applied online for a secondary school place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can view the school offered by logging into your Citizen Portal account on national offer day - 2 March 2026. An email will be sent on national offer day, informing you of the school place that we have been able to offer your child (if you have given us an email address and ticked that you want to receive your offer by email). The email will include details of how to submit an appeal, if applicable.
<p>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</p> <p>If you applied online for a primary school place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can view the school offered by logging into your Citizen Portal account on national offer day - 16 April 2026. An email will be sent on national offer day, informing you of the school place that we have been able to offer your child (if you have given us an email address and ticked that you want to receive your offer by email). The email will include details of how to submit an appeal, if applicable.
<p>If you did not apply via the Citizen Portal (or elected not to receive an offer by email) for either a secondary or primary school place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An offer letter will be posted on national offer day (see dates above), informing you of the school place we have been able to offer your child. In normal circumstances you should receive this letter within 2 days. The letter will include details of how to submit an appeal if applicable.

Please note: The Admissions Team cannot provide details of school place offers by telephone or via email, before letters/emails have been received by parents.

Accepting/Declining an offer of a school place

Admission Appeals Information – starting at secondary school in Year 7

<p>Accept the school place you have been offered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You DO NOT need to confirm your acceptance of the place allocated at a Sefton school. Sefton will automatically consider the place as being accepted. If you are offered a school outside of Sefton, you must check if you need to accept the place with the relevant local authority where the school is located.
<p>Decline the school place you have been offered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you wish to decline the school place you have been offered you should contact the Admissions Team, via email, and provide details of what alternative arrangements you have made for your child's education. You should NOT decline the place offered if you are going to appeal for a place at another school, until that appeal has been heard.
<p>Find out if there is another school with places</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can contact the Admissions Team for details of other schools with available places at this time. Please note however, that any request received for an alternative school will be dealt with in line with the procedure for processing late applications and changes of preference, outlined on page 18.
<p>Return any appeal form by the appeal deadline date(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless you have been offered a place at your highest preferred school you will be informed of your right of appeal. Please see the important dates to remember on pages 5 & 6.

September 2026

Academy Schools - excluding Catholic schools

If you are refused a place at any of your preferred school(s), by law you have the right to appeal against that decision.

For residents of Sefton, who have been refused a place at a **Sefton school**, you will receive information with the school place offer, explaining the appeals process. All the information you need about how to appeal for a school place is also available on the school admission appeals webpage at www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionappeals.

If you wish to appeal for a school **outside of Sefton**, you should contact the relevant local authority where the school is located. Contact details for neighbouring local authorities can be found on page 15 of this guide.

If you do not reside within Sefton, and wish to appeal for a Sefton school, please go to Sefton's school admission appeals webpage at www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionappeals for information about how to appeal for each different type of school within Sefton.

Appeals are heard by an independent appeal panel. In all cases you should submit your appeal to the appropriate admission authority. Please refer to the table on page 16 which shows each admission authority responsible for arranging an appeal hearing for different types of schools. **Please note the specific arrangements in respect of St Michael's Church of England Academy.**

Parents have at least 20 school days* from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful for any of their preferred schools, to prepare and submit their written appeal. For school offers made on national offer day (2 March), an appeal **MUST** be submitted **no later than 27 March 2026**. Appeals submitted by this date will be heard by **15 June**. Appeals received after 27 March will be heard within 40 school days* of the appeal deadline stated in the refusal letter or within 30 school days* of the appeal request being received, whichever is the **later date**. *School days refers to Sefton's standard published school term dates.

Please note that appeal hearings DO NOT take place during school holidays.

The local authority is required to publish an admission appeals timetable which can also be found on the school admission appeals webpage at www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionappeals.

To help you make an informed decision as to whether you want to proceed with an appeal for a secondary school place, Sefton publishes the number of successful and unsuccessful appeals heard for all secondary schools for previous academic years. Figures for the academic years 2020 to 2025 are available to view on the school admission appeals webpage www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionappeals.

Catholic High Schools

If the governing body of a Sefton Catholic High School (including catholic academies) has refused your child a place, you do have the right to appeal. For Sefton residents, details of how you can appeal will be included in the offer of a school place. **It is necessary for you to appeal via Liverpool Archdiocese.** You can do this by completing an appeal form online at:

<https://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/department/education/admissions-and-appeals>.

The archdiocese will confirm the date and time of the appeal hearing once it has been arranged.

Admission Appeals Information - starting at primary school in Reception Year September 2026

If you are refused a place at any of your preferred school(s), by law you have the right to appeal against that decision. For residents of Sefton, who have been refused a place at a Sefton school, you will receive information with the school place offer, explaining the appeals process. All the information you need about how to appeal for a school place is also available on the school admission appeals webpage at www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionappeals.

If you wish to appeal for a school **outside of Sefton**, you should contact the relevant local authority where the school is located. Contact details for neighbouring local authorities can be found on page 15 of this guide.

If you do not reside within Sefton, and wish to appeal for a Sefton school, please go to Sefton's school admission appeals webpage at www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionappeals for information about how to appeal for each different type of school within Sefton.

Infant Class Size Appeals

Government legislation requires that any Reception, Year 1, or Year 2 class **should not** contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified schoolteacher. The Authority will refuse admission to any child, except in certain limited circumstances, if admitting the child would take the class over the limit of 30 children. An appeal against such a decision **can only be allowed** if the Appeal Panel is satisfied that either:

- The admission arrangements did not comply with the law or were not correctly and impartially applied, and the child should have been offered a place if the arrangements had been implemented correctly; or
- The decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

In this context, 'reasonable' has the legal meaning of 'not perverse', therefore the threshold for finding that an admission authority's decision to refuse admission was not one that a reasonable authority would have made, is high, and must be:

'Beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker or a decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards, that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it'.

Appeals are heard by an independent appeal panel. For Infant Class Size Appeals, the appeal panel will simply hear the admission authority's explanation as to why a place has been refused followed by your reasons for saying that the appeal should be allowed on one of the grounds referred to above before making their decision.

Parents have at least 20 school days* from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful for any of their preferred schools, to prepare and submit their written appeal. For school offers made on national offer day (16 April), an appeal **MUST** be submitted **no later than 15 May 2026**. Appeals submitted by this date will be heard by **17 July**. Appeals received after 15 May will be heard within 40 school days* of the appeal deadline stated in the refusal letter or within 30 school days* of the appeal request being received, whichever is the **later date**. *School days refers to Sefton's standard published school term dates.

Please note that appeal hearings DO NOT take place during school holidays.

For all Sefton community, voluntary controlled, non-faith academy primary schools and St Andrew's M1aghull CE Primary you should submit your appeal to Sefton local authority.

For ALL **Catholic** Primary schools (including Catholic academies) - **it is necessary for you to appeal via Liverpool Archdiocese**. You can do this by completing an appeal form online at:

<https://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/department/education/admissions-and-appeals>.

The archdiocese will confirm the date and time of the appeal hearing once it has been arranged.

For **Church of England** Voluntary Aided and Academy primary schools (excluding St Andrew's Maghull CE Primary) appeals should be sent to the chairperson of the school's governing body c/o the school in question. You will be notified of the date and time of the appeal hearing by the Clerk to the Independent Appeal Panel once it has been arranged.

To help you make an informed decision as to whether you want to proceed with an appeal for a reception school place, Sefton publishes the number of successful and unsuccessful reception appeals heard for all Sefton primary schools for previous academic years. Figures for the academic years 2020 to 2025 are available to view on the school admission appeals webpage www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionappeals.

If my appeal for a Sefton school is unsuccessful, can I appeal again?

In accordance with national legislation set out in the **School Admissions Appeals Code 2022**, if an admission appeal is refused, you **do NOT** have the right to a second appeal for the same school for the same academic year. Unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority accepts a second application from the appellant because of **'a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school'**. Examples of a significant and material change in circumstances may include:

- a) If a sibling link has been created at the preferred school, which was not there at the time of the appeal hearing.
- b) You have moved house, and the admission authority accepts that you can no longer attend the existing school due to the distance.

You may, of course, also request a further appeal to be heard if there are other significant reasons which you feel should be taken into account and these will be considered. If a request for a further appeal is allowed by the admission authority, a fresh appeal may be heard. However, if a request for a further appeal is denied by the admission authority no further appeal can take place for the same school for the same school year.

As indicated on page 22, any further appeals for **infant age groups**, the appeal panel may only grant an appeal if the admissions authority has either acted unreasonably or made an error in the way places were allocated. This is to ensure that the limits placed on infant class sizes are maintained, in accordance with current legislation.

To request a further appeal, please write to the appropriate body who managed the original appeal, this is usually the admissions authority for the school. You **must** provide supporting evidence to demonstrate what significant, and material change in circumstances has taken place since the previous appeal hearing. Please refer to the table shown on page 16 for further information.

Frequently Asked Questions

If you have any questions, please remember that Sefton Admissions Team are here to help if you are unsure about any aspect of the admissions process. If you need any advice, please contact us (see contact details on page 4). Shown below are some frequently asked questions and answers. It may be helpful for you take a look at these **before** contacting the local authority.

How many schools can I list?

You are advised to list the maximum number of **three schools**. As each school listed counts as a separate application, you are increasing your chances of being offered a place at one of your preferred schools.

In which order should I list the schools?

It is important to list the schools in priority order, with your most preferred school first. If we can offer you a place at more than one of your preferred schools, we will automatically offer you the place at the school you listed higher or highest.

Please note:

- Listing just one school on the application does not improve your chances of getting a place at that school.
- There is no advantage in listing the same school more than once because we can only process one application per child per school, and you are therefore wasting a preference.
- The applications are entered onto a database, which processes the criteria and allocations automatically.
- School staff are not involved with this process and do not influence results.

How do you handle applications from twins or children from multiple births?

Please complete one application form for **each** child. If you apply online the process will be quicker as you will only have to enter parental details once. Where there are twins or children from multiple births, and one of the children has been allocated the **last** remaining place at a school, the other twin or siblings will also be admitted.

My child attends the school nursery, does this mean my child will automatically be admitted to the reception class?

NO, attendance at a primary school's nursery or a co-located early years centre will NOT guarantee a place in the reception class at the school. Each application for a place in reception is assessed against the individual admission criteria for the preferred school(s). The majority of Sefton schools **do not** include attendance at the nursery as part of their admission arrangements. However, some schools do now include nursery attendance within their admission criteria so please check the admission policy for each school.

Where schools have a nursery class attached, parents/carers should be aware that separate admission arrangements are in place for entry to the school. **Completion of an 'expression of interest' form for a primary school, or a nursery application form or giving any personal details to a nursery, DOES NOT count as any type of admission application for a place in reception year.**

How do you define a sibling? Please see glossary on page 37 for full definition.

My child has an Education, Health and Care Plan: How do I apply?

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan that names a particular school, your child will be admitted to that school. This is a separate process from applying the admissions criteria and is handled by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team. The SEN team will inform the School Admissions Team of the outcome of any decision made.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I let you know my child is looked after or was previously looked after?

You should indicate this on the application and provide the requested further details e.g., the name of the Social Worker involved with the family or the relevant local authority.

How do I confirm that I wish for my child to be considered under the 'Children of Staff' admission criterion (if applicable to the school)?

You **MUST** clearly state this on your application by providing the **name of the school employee**. Were a school's admission criteria includes employment within a **Multi Academy Trust**, please also **name the employee's school base**. If you do not provide the name of the employee/school base on your application form, the local authority may not be able to consider your application under this criterion, for the relevant school. Details are verified by the school or the Multi Academy Trust.

What happens when the number of applications received is less than the school's admission number?

If a school has more places available than the number of applications received, all children who apply would be offered a place at that school.

What happens when the number of applications received exceeds the school's published admission number (the school is oversubscribed)?

Whilst the local authority does all it can to meet parental preferences, it is not always possible to do this. If more parents express a preference for a school than there are places available (i.e. the published admission number), the admission authority will use the school's admissions (oversubscription) criteria to decide which children can be offered a place. **The local authority can only offer places at any school up to the school's individual published admission number.** This includes non-faith academy schools (and St Andrews Maghull CE Primary), for whom the local authority applies the admission criteria on behalf of the individual governing body.

For voluntary aided and faith academy schools, if more parents express a preference for the school than the admission number, the governors of the school will apply the school's admissions (oversubscription) criteria to decide which children can be offered a place and they will let the local authority know their decisions.

What happens if my application is late?

Please read the information on page 18.

What happens if you cannot offer any schools that I list?

If your child cannot be offered a place at any of the schools listed on your application, by law, the local authority must still offer your child a place at another school. Your child will normally be offered a place at the nearest qualifying school with a place available. A qualifying school is the school closest to your home. This could include a faith or a single sex school.

How do I appeal for a school place?

Unless you have been offered a place at your highest preferred school you will be informed of your right of appeal and how to appeal, in the decision email and/or letter with the outcome of your application. Please see pages 21-23 for more detailed information.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do you measure the distance from my home address to the school?

Distance from home to school (proximity) is used within the admission criteria and the tiebreaker clause for all schools in Sefton. Set out below is how Sefton local authority accurately measures a home to school distance.

Sefton local authority uses data from the local land and property gazetteer (LLPG) which is updated annually. A bespoke geographical information system (GIS) called 'Map Info' is used, and also a distance measuring tool known as 'Route Finder'. To measure, Route Finder uses the **shortest road walking route** from the 'property address point' as provided by Ordnance Survey (OS).

The starting point (property address point) connects to the nearest point of the authority's digitised routing network. The digitised routing network is based on the OS MasterMap Highways Network – Roads, and OS MasterMap Highways Network – Paths, supplied by Ordnance Survey. The OS MasterMap Highways Network – Roads, **is the most accurate road dataset available** and is the definitive national road network for Great Britain. The shortest road walking route is not necessarily the most convenient driving route as it may use, in part, a non-drivable route such as a footpath.

The OS MasterMap Highways Network – Paths has been enhanced by the local authority to take into account footpaths **known to the authority at the time of measurement, and that have been assessed and considered safe for use by a child accompanied as necessary by a parent/carer**. Footpaths are considered as safe if they are maintained by the local authority and are properly paved and lit. Any other footpaths will not be regarded as safe without a detailed investigation. Footpaths that **are not suitable** will include those not maintained by the local authority, canal footpaths and any footpath which is not properly paved or lit.

The end point of the shortest road walking route is the **nearest gate at the school**, which is available for use by pupils at the start and end of the school day. The location of gate(s) has been set by the local authority, based on information provided by the school. Some schools have more than one gate available for use by pupils.

The same method of measuring distances (the road network and software) is used for **all pupils** in order for those distances to be compared on an equal footing. It should be noted that this method does NOT determine how a pupil may choose to travel to or from school.

IMPORTANT: Other measuring systems may give different walking distances, **however the authority cannot take a measurement from another system into account**. Publicly available systems that parents/carers may use for comparison, including online maps, GPS trackers and similar applications, often use the free OS Open Roads dataset, which is far less detailed and consequently less accurate. This data will not have an accurate starting point, will not bar unsuitable paths, and will not include accurate positions for the gates of the school being measured to.

If you are refused a place at any of your higher preferred schools and would like a further explanation of the measured route that has been used, please contact the admissions team who can provide you with further details.

Is my child eligible for a travel pass or assistance with the transport costs from home to school?

Home to School Transport arrangements and eligibility criteria are summarised in Section C. Full details of Sefton's Home to School Transport Policy can be found at [Home to School Transport | The Sefton Directory](#) .

SECTION C

Home to School Transport Eligibility and Arrangements

Sefton's general arrangements and policies about transport to and from schools can be found on the website [Home to School Transport | The Sefton Directory](#). A summary of policies and arrangements can be found below.

We make no arrangements for transport to and from independent schools, other than for pupils who we place in non-maintained special schools.

Sefton will meet the travelling expenses of pupils who go to school full time by providing either a Metro/Trio ticket (or equivalent) for **eligible children**.

Statutory regulations (where the local authority must provide transport and travelling expenses) for primary age children who meet the eligibility criteria.

Sefton will meet the travelling expenses of pupils who go to school full time by providing transport or a travel pass for primary school pupils in the following three categories:

- Where a pupil under eight years old is attending the **nearest qualifying school** with places available where the shortest walking distance between home and school is more than **2 miles**.
- Where a pupil is eight years old and over and is attending the **nearest qualifying school** with places available where the shortest walking distance between home and school is more than **3 miles**.
- All primary aged pupils (8 -11 years) who are attending **their nearest qualifying school** with places available where the shortest walking distance between home and school is more than **2 miles** and the family is **in receipt of Free School Meals** or the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Statutory regulations (where the Local authority must provide transport and travelling expenses) for secondary age children who meet the eligibility criteria.

Sefton will meet the travelling expenses of pupils who go to school full time by providing transport or a travel pass for Secondary School pupils in the following three categories:

- Where a pupil is attending **the nearest qualifying school** with places available (including the appropriate denominational school) where the shortest walking distance between home and school is more than **3 miles** and the family is not in receipt of the benefits listed.
- Where a pupil is **in receipt of Free School Meals** or whose parents/carers are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit and they are attending **one of the three qualifying secondary schools** closest to their home, where the shortest walking distance to the school is between **2 and 6 miles** from their home; **OR**
- To the nearest school preferred by their parents/carers on the grounds of religion or belief, and the shortest walking distance to the school is between 2 and 15 miles from their home address.

Qualifying school for transport eligibility

Eligibility for transport is not automatically linked to a school's individual admissions criteria e.g., if a child is admitted to a high school because they attended a feeder school, this does not necessarily mean the child can be considered as eligible for transport.

In general, the qualifying school for transport purposes will be the school closest to your home, if you do not live in a catchment area.

If you live in an identified catchment area for a school (e.g., Meols Cop High School), that school will be considered as your child's qualifying school for the purposes of transport eligibility.

If your child is attending a voluntary aided or voluntary controlled faith school which is of your family's own religious denomination, usually the qualifying school for transport is the one which serves the parish where you live.

In some circumstances, the local authority may ask for additional information e.g., a letter from the appropriate minister of religion. This is because the local authority must establish admission on the grounds of faith, in order to confirm that the school is the qualifying school for transport eligibility.

Once a qualifying school is established, the eligible distance criteria will then be applied.

For families in receipt of Free School Meals or the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, the 3 nearest schools to your home will be considered as your 3 qualifying schools (irrespective of local authority boundaries or faith).

For families in receipt of Free School Meals or the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, who are attending a school on the grounds of faith, the qualifying school will be the closest faith school to where you live (irrespective of local authority boundaries). **Once a qualifying school is established the relevant distance criteria will then be applied.**

If you live in Hightown or Ince Blundell areas

For primary school pupils, transport is provided may by the local authority, without charge, as follows:

- Between Hightown, Ince Blundell and St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Little Crosby.
- Between Ince Blundell, Hightown and the following primary schools: St Jeromes Catholic Primary School, St Lukes CE Primary School and Woodlands Primary School.

For further information please contact the Travel Support Team Travel.support@sefton.gov.uk

If you live in Aintree or Melling Parish/local area of Waddicar

There are currently local agreements for residents of Aintree & Melling parishes and the Waddicar local area, which include criteria for home to school transport with regards to qualifying secondary schools linked to catchment areas and/or the safety of walking routes. In most cases the **statutory distance criteria** are still applied. Please note that residents of these areas (who live outside of the Deyes High School catchment area) are considered as either resident in the **catchment area for Maghull High School (or Maricourt Catholic High School on the grounds of faith)**.

Additional support Sefton local authority provides:

Sefton local authority may also pay travelling expenses in the following circumstances:

- a) If our medical advisers recommend the child goes to a particular school for special medical reasons.**
- b) If a pupil continues attending a school after the family has left the neighbourhood of that school and meets following criteria.**

In most circumstances we will not pay travel expenses if you choose to keep your child at that school. In general, we will only accept the school the child attended before the change of address, as the qualifying school, if a pupil has already started in Year 6 or Years 10 & 11 and meets the statutory distance criteria. This will only apply if the distance or time taken to travel to the school is not regarded by the local authority as excessive and harmful to the pupil. The child must have moved house once they have already started school in Year 6, or Years 10 & 11 (i.e. not moved house during the summer holidays beforehand).

Other situations where your child travels further than the statutory distances

We will consider these cases on an individual basis. Evidence of exceptional circumstances may be required before consideration can be given.

Circumstances when a travel pass/transport would not be provided

There is no entitlement to school transport when parents/carers choose to send their child to a school other than the nearest qualifying school (except where the school has been recommended by the local authority medical advisers).

Routes for children living within the statutory walking distances from home to school

This applies to pupils who attend a qualifying school and live less than the statutory walking distances, and whose parents apply for us to pay the cost of transport to school.

When considering whether to pay transport costs, we will consider the age of the pupil and the nature of the route or alternative routes, along which he or she could reasonably be expected to walk to school, accompanied as necessary by a parent or guardian. If we consider that a child cannot use a route on their own, we will take account of whether or not there are any circumstances, which prevents it from being reasonably practical, for the child to be accompanied.

However, we will normally consider a route which involves any of the following features as being suitable for a child to use if he or she is accompanied by a parent or carer.

- 1) Crossing any main road (for example, a dual carriageway or trunk road) where there are one or more of the following:
 - A school crossing patrol.
 - A pelican crossing.
 - A pedestrian crossing.
 - Traffic lights.
 - A pedestrian footbridge.
 - A subway.
 - A police officer, traffic warden or other responsible adult (for example, a parent or teacher).
- 2) As long as the road is maintained by the local authority; all unclassified roads (that is, roads which are not A, B or C roads) are regarded as being safe to cross even if there are none of the facilities named in 1).
- 3) The presence of a pavement in a built-up or rural area.
- 4) The presence of street lighting on a route in a built-up or rural area.
- 5) As long as the area is maintained by the local authority; the use of appropriate passageways which are properly paved and lit.

This policy applies throughout the year as public lighting is altered to meet the changes in daylight hours.

We will not normally consider a route which involves any of the following as suitable for a child to use:

- Any pathway not maintained by the local authority e.g. privately owned land.
- Paths on canal banks for a child of any age.
- Footpaths in rural areas will not be regarded as being safe without detailed investigation.
- A road system on the approach to a motorway.

Application forms and further details

You can access further information and a Travel Pass application form online at: [Home to School Transport | The Sefton Directory](#).

If you need any help or advice, you can contact **Sefton Travel Support Team** by email: Travel.support@sefton.gov.uk.

Postal Address: Travel Support Team, Magdalen House 3rd Floor, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle, L20 3NJ

Travelling arrangements for young people aged 16 and over

The local authority does not provide financial support to pupils attending sixth form or further education provision. Some schools/colleges have support funds available to assist pupils with transport costs. Please contact the school/college directly for more information.

The Local authority does, in some cases provide transport for young people aged over 16 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan or Special Educational Needs. The details for this are included in the Sefton Post 16 Transport Policy Statement at [Home to School Transport | The Sefton Directory](#).

Healthy, sustainable schools

Here in Sefton, we want to create opportunities for everyone to lead healthy, active and independent lives.

Eco Education



Working with schools to encourage them to be more environmentally friendly [School Eco Savers League \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#) the league is part of the wider Eco Savers Programme for schools which is a service designed to assist schools to reduce energy/water/carbon use and money. Via Eco Savers schools can access:

- Support to audit their site to reduce use.
- On site educational workshops and training for staff and pupils.
- Signposting to any funding opportunities and support to apply for these.
- Access to online resources to support the school.



www.southportecocentre.com

Offering environmental education resources, such as the Clean Air Crew curriculum, air quality resource including lesson plans and toolkits to address transport issues, and an educational visit programme to all Sefton schools.



www.cleanaircrew.co.uk

Healthy active travel to school

We want to offer opportunities to walk, scoot and cycle to school as part of a healthy lifestyle and to encourage greater independence. We are encouraging schools to promote walking, wheeling and cycling through the following key initiatives to support schools and families in Sefton.

- Delivering a School Street and School Neighbourhood Pilot and working towards a broader programme across the borough.
- Working with Sefton Young Advisors to help us to understand the barriers young people face on their journey to high school.
- Providing School Crossing Patrols for primary schools who meet the recommended criteria.
- Encouraging schools to participate in walking and cycling incentives such as Walk to School Week & The Big Peddle.
- Cycle training offered to primary and secondary schools.
- Ditch Your Stabilisers sessions offered in school holidays.
- Investing in cycle parking in our schools.
- Investing in our walking, wheeling and cycling routes across the borough.

Resources

School Streets - <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/parking-roads-travel/sefton-school-streets/>

Eco Saver League - [School Eco Savers League \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#)

Eco Savers - [Eco-Savers | Sefton Education](#)

Clean Air Crew - www.cleanaircrew.co.uk

Southport Eco Centre – www.southportecocentre.com

Cycle Training - <https://www.bikeright.co.uk/>

Cycle Network Map - [Cycling in the Liverpool City Region | Merseytravel](#)

Ditch Your Stabilisers - <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/beactive>

Home to School Transport - [Home to School Transport | The Sefton Directory](#)

Buses Serving Schools - <https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/bus/buses-serving-schools/>

Merseytravel's young peoples' tickets - [Young Persons Travel Pass & Concessions | Merseytravel](#)

SECTION D – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Year school admissions and school transfers

The majority of this guide sets out the arrangements for children starting school for the first time (in Reception class) and children transferring from primary to secondary school (in year 7) at the start of the new school year. Applications for admission to a Sefton school **during** the school year, for other age groups, either due to a house move or a school transfer for any other reason are called **In Year School Admissions**.

If you wish to apply for a place at a Sefton school during the academic year, please refer to the **In Year Admissions and School Transfers** webpage where you can access further information and details on how to submit an application www.sefton.gov.uk/inyearadmissions.

House moves requiring a new school place - If you are planning to move into the Sefton area, recently moved in, or moved a significant distance away from your child's current school, you should read the guide 'In Year Admission to Sefton Schools' and if applicable complete the 'A1' admission form. You will be required to provide evidence of the house move/proposed address with your application form. An online application system is planned for the near future. Please check the website for updates and full details of the application process.

School Transfers – If you wish for your child to transfer school for reasons **other than a house move**, you should read the guide 'Sefton School Transfers' and complete a 'T1' In Year transfer form, which is available on the website www.sefton.gov.uk/inyearadmissions.

If you need any help or assistance, please refer to the website www.sefton.gov.uk/inyearadmissions. If you cannot find the information you need on the website, you can contact the **In Year School Admissions Team** at: **Email:** iyadmissions@sefton.gov.uk **Tel:** 0151 934 3590.

Fair Access and School Transfer Protocols

By law, each local authority must have and implement an Admissions Fair Access Protocol. The Fair Access Protocol applies to applications made outside of the normal admissions round (In Year Admissions) and supports **unplaced** and vulnerable children who may have difficulty in securing a school place. From September 2021 the Fair Access Protocol may only be used where reasonable measures have already been taken to secure a school place through the usual In Year Admission procedures.

Sefton also implements a School Transfer Protocol to ensure that no school (including those with places available) is asked to admit a disproportionate number of children transferring schools who may fall under a Fair Access category. You will be informed in writing if your application for a school place has been referred through the Fair Access or School Transfer Protocol, to the relevant panel. The panel meets regularly, which allows a recommendation regarding a school place or relevant education provision, to be made quickly. You will also be informed of the Fair Access/Transfer Panel's decision or recommendation. If the decision of the Panel is not to admit your child to one of your preferred schools, you will still have the right to appeal for a place at the school of your choice.

Please note that there is no legal duty for a local authority or admission authority to comply with parental preference when allocating a school place via the Fair Access/School Transfer Protocol, although parents' views should be considered. The Panel may therefore recommend placement at an alternative school.

For further information and to view '**Sefton In Year Admissions Policy**' which includes both the Fair Access & School Transfer Protocols please go to the Sefton website: www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionspolicyandreports.

In Year admission appeals procedure (during the academic year)

You may apply for a place for your child at any Sefton school, during the academic year (normally because you have moved into the area). If a place cannot be offered at the school(s) of your choice, you have the right to appeal against that refusal to an Independent Appeal Panel. You will receive information with the decision letter, explaining the appeals process. All the information you need about how to appeal for a school place is also available on the school admission appeals webpage at:

www.sefton.gov.uk/schooladmissionappeals

Parents have at least 20 school days* from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful for any of their preferred schools, to prepare and submit their written appeal. *School days refers to Sefton's standard published school term dates. **Please note that appeal hearings DO NOT take place during school holidays.**

In all cases you should submit your appeal to the appropriate admission authority. Please refer to the table on page 16 which shows the admission authority responsible for arranging an appeal hearing for different types of schools. For voluntary aided CE (Church of England) and academy CE primary schools (excluding St Andrew's Maghull CE Primary) appeals should be sent to the chairperson of the school's governing body c/o the school in question.

For **ALL Catholic** schools **it is necessary for you to appeal via Liverpool Archdiocese**, (Schools Department) and you can do this by completing an appeal form online at:

<https://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/department/education/admissions-and-appeals>

What happens if your appeal is not successful?

If your appeal is refused, you **do not** have the right to a second appeal for the same school for the same academic year, unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority accepts a second application from the appellant because of a **significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school**. Examples of a significant and material change in circumstances may include:

- a) If a sibling link has been created at the preferred school, which was not there at the time of the appeal hearing.
- b) You have moved house, and the admission authority accepts that you can no longer attend the existing school due to the distance.

You may, of course, also request a further appeal to be heard if there are other significant reasons which you feel should be taken into account and these will be considered. You **must** provide supporting evidence to demonstrate what significant, and material change in circumstances has taken place since the previous appeal hearing. To request a further appeal, please write to the appropriate body who managed the original appeal, this is usually the admission authority for the school. Please refer to the table shown on page 16 for further information. If a request for a further appeal is allowed by the admission authority, a fresh appeal may be heard. However, if a request for a further appeal is denied by the admission authority no further appeal can take place for the same school for the same school year.

School Attendance

Promoting and supporting good attendance at school is essential to learning and attainment. Poor school attendance damages educational achievement and the future progress of children and young people. If you are experiencing any problems with your child attending school, you should contact the school. The school can help you to resolve any issues or difficulties in the first instance. Sometimes, the school may need to involve other services to provide help and support. If this is the case, you need to work with the school to look at your child's difficulties so that they can best consider who may be able to help.

Help with school expenses

School meals

School meals are available to pupils in all our schools. Schools offer a wide choice of meals and other refreshments. You can get more details with regard to menus and costs from individual schools.

Eligibility for free school meals

The eligibility criteria for free school meals are set by the Government and applies to all local authorities. Currently, to qualify for free school meals families must be in receipt of one of the following benefits*:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Universal Credit and have a net household income of less than £7,400 per annum (£616.67 net each month)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also receiving Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of £16,190 or less, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

*In July 2025 the government announced that from the start of the 2026/27 school year, entitlement to free school meals will be extended to all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit. Please go to our website for the latest information.

The guidance relating to the provision of free school meals has recently been updated to include guidance on children receiving education otherwise than at a school (EOTAS) and includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children. You can get more details from the Department for Education website at: [Free school meals \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk).

Free School Meals & Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium takes the form of additional funding allocated to schools based on the number of children **entitled to and registered for** free school meals and children who have been looked after continuously, by the local authority for more than six months. The premium helps support the financial and unique challenges that children from low income households and children in care, may face at school, where they can often struggle to keep up with their peers at both primary and secondary level.

Schools decide how to spend this money since they are best placed to assess what additional provision should be made for the individual pupils within their responsibility. It is therefore important that each school can claim the entire pupil funding for eligible pupils.

If your child is due to start school this year and would be eligible for Free School Meals using the eligibility criteria above, please contact the School Support Services Team who can ensure that the school receives the appropriate funding without the need for parents to contact the school. Your child does not have to take up their free meal entitlement to ensure that the school receives the pupil premium funding.

You can get more details and an application form, from: www.sefton.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

Email: education.benefits@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3263.

Postal address: School Support Services, 3rd Floor Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle, L20 3NJ.

Universal Infant Free School Meals

From September 2014 every child in Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 in state funded schools in England will receive a free school lunch. The government will fund the schools to provide every child in infant classes with a hot, nutritious meal at lunch time. Infant and primary schools in Sefton have planned for all infant class children to access a free meal at lunchtime.

Older children in junior school classes (Years 3-6) will continue to be eligible for Free School Meals using the national eligibility criteria shown on page 34.

Free School Meals for students over the age of 16

The local authority will continue to assess eligibility for Free School Meals for pupils over the age of 16 who are studying in sixth form at schools. To qualify for Free School Meals families must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Universal Credit and have a net household income of less than £7,400 per annum (£616.67 net each month)
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income-related)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit ONLY (provided you are not also receiving Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of £16,190 or less, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Students attending Further Education Colleges may also be entitled to Free Meals, however, eligibility will be assessed directly by the college itself. You should contact the college directly for further advice.

Support Funds for students over the age of 16

Discretionary Support Funds or Bursaries may be available in colleges and school sixth forms to help with learning costs and transport. The funds are ordinarily prioritised for those who face financial hardship. Schools and colleges set their own criteria and manage their own procedures.

Amendments to the information provided in this guide

The information in this guide relates to the school (academic) year 2026-2027. We have done all we can to make sure it is accurate, correct and accessible, at the time of publishing. However, the local authority cannot include in this guide any changes that come into effect during the school year beginning in September 2025. We may need to make changes from time to time, due to circumstances beyond our control.

Application checklist for parents/carers

Please consider ALL these points before submitting your application



<p>I have checked that my home local authority is Sefton before submitting an online application on the Citizen Portal.</p>	
<p>I understand that my child will not automatically transfer from a nursery to a primary school or a primary to secondary school and that I must apply for a school place.</p>	
<p>I have read the guide 'Sefton Primary & Secondary Schools Admissions Information 2026-2027' including the admissions criteria for my preferred schools to see which admission criterion my application will be considered under, such as a feeder primary school or a catchment/parish area which is linked to a particular school.</p>	
<p>I have considered how my child will get to and from my preferred schools and whether I would be eligible to receive travel assistance through the local authority. I have also noted how the local authority measures home to school distance (shortest road walking route).</p>	
<p>I have checked the closing date for my application and understand that all information must be submitted before that date.</p>	
<p>I have registered on the Citizen Portal and created an account. I have kept a note of my password so that I can log into the Citizen Portal on National Offer Day to view the school place offer.</p>	
<p>I have checked that my details are correct in the Citizen Portal including my home address by selecting 'My Account' on the homepage and updated any details as necessary before making an application.</p>	
<p>I have stated three preferences naming the schools in the order I most prefer.</p>	
<p>I have remembered to include any brothers or sisters who are currently attending my preferred school and will still be attending in September 2026.</p>	
<p>Applications for schools which have 'Children of Staff' as part of their admissions criteria I have clearly stated the <u>name of the school employee/school base</u> on my application form, and I understand that if I fail to do so, the Local/Admissions Authority may not be able to consider my application under this criterion, for that particular school.</p>	
<p>I have checked whether I need to complete and return a supplementary information form to provide further information for a faith school that I have named as a preference.</p>	
<p>I have submitted my application by the closing date and received the confirmation email.</p>	

Glossary - Definitions of terms used in this guide

The following terms used throughout this guide are defined as follows, except where individual arrangements spell out a different definition. If you would like further clarification, please contact the School Admissions Team who are always happy to assist. Contact details can be found at the front of this guide.

- **Admissions Authority** – This is the body responsible for deciding which pupils are admitted to a school using the relevant admissions criteria. In community & voluntary controlled schools, this is the local authority (LA). In voluntary aided (VA) and academy schools, this is the governing body. Further information is provided on **page 16** of this guide.
- **Admission number** also called the **Published Admission Number** – This is the maximum number of places available at a school, in each relevant age group that can be offered by the admission authority.
- **Admissions Criteria** – This is the method used to allocate places to pupils for a particular school, if the number of applications is more than the number of places available. Admissions criteria does vary between the different types of schools.
- **Admissions Team** – LA officers who implement the admissions criteria and procedures for community, voluntary controlled and most academy schools. The team also co-ordinates the offers of places as required by the School Admissions Code legislation.
- **Appeal** – If it is not possible to offer a place to a child at a particular school, parents/carers have the right to submit an appeal. An appeal hearing normally takes place some weeks later in front of an independent appeal panel. The panel could decide that a place should be offered above the admission number.
- **Appeal Panel** – An independent body, usually of 3 people, who hear admission appeal cases.
- **Appellant** – The person who has submitted an appeal.
- **Brothers and Sisters or Sibling**– Siblings are brothers and sisters including step-children, foster children and half-brothers and sisters, adopted brothers and sisters or children of the parent(s)/carer(s)'s partner, living in the same family unit at the same address, who attend the school in question, as long as they will be at the school in **September 2026**.
- **Co-ordinated Scheme** – This is where the LA shares and exchanges school applications with neighbouring LA's in order to offer a school place.
- **Community Schools** – Schools which are run by the local authority and the local authority is responsible for admissions to these schools.
- **Distance** – Distance will be measured by the **shortest road walking route**, from the child's home to the nearest school gate. We will measure from the property's address point, to the nearest school gate (**using recognised safe walking routes known to the local authority at the time of measurement**). If two or more applicants meet the distance criteria exactly (e.g. they live in the same block of flats or are exactly the same distance away from the school), the authority will carry out a random allocation to decide which child will be given the place. This will be carried out in a public place with the required names placed in a box. The name will be drawn out randomly by a senior manager from the local authority.

Glossary - Definitions of terms used in this guide

- **Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)** – A small number of children have special educational needs (SEN). In some cases, a formal document is prepared to make special educational provision to meet the needs of the child or young person and to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, and health care. This document is called an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). There are different application and appeal procedures for pupils who have an EHCP.
- **Equal Preference Scheme** – This means that each preference expressed by a parent on their application for a school place will be considered using that school's individual admission criteria.
- **Local authority (LA)** – This refers to the local council in the area in which you live e.g. Sefton. For the purposes of this guide this refers to the team within the appropriate LA that administers school admissions.
- **Looked after Children and previously Looked After Children** - A looked after child is a child who at the time of making an application to a school, is in the care of a local authority 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). This includes children who were previously looked after, (including children who have been in state care outside of England) and ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. 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. Within Sefton looked after children may also be referred to as 'cared for children'.
- **Online admissions** – Using the Citizen Portal on the Sefton website to register, complete and submit an admissions application form. You can also use the portal account to view the school offer on national offer day.
- **Oversubscribed** – If the number of applications received for an individual school is more than the number of places available.
- **Parents/Carers** – A parent or carer is any person who has parental responsibility or care of a child.
- **Published Admission Number** – see admission number.
- **Sibling** – see brothers and sisters or sibling.
- **Supplementary Information Forms (SIF)** – A supplementary information form is the form used to provide faith schools with additional faith information about the child (such as baptism details). This will enable the school's governing body to consider the application under the relevant faith criteria.
- **Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools** – Faith schools linked to a particular church or parish.

