Somerset Council

Somerset Local Authority Co-ordinated Secondary Admission Scheme

Starting at a secondary or upper school in September 2028.

1. This scheme applies to:

Applications for all Somerset secondary and upper schools including Voluntary Controlled (VC), Community (C), Voluntary Aided (VA), Foundation (F), Academy (A) and Free Schools (FS).

2. This scheme explains:

Important information concerning the process for applying for a school place in year 7 of a secondary school or year 9 of an upper school in September 2028. This scheme should be read in conjunction with the admission arrangements published by admission authorities.

Please refer to the glossary for a description of all technical terms used throughout this document.

3. Useful Contacts:

The 'Somerset Admissions and Entitlements Team'
schooladmissions@somerset.gov.uk
www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions
Customer Contact – 0300 123 2224

Somerset Direct Roads & Transport Team
Roads&Transport@somerset.gov.uk
0300 123 2224

4. Useful links:

Office of the Schools Adjudicator:
http://www.education.gov.uk/schoolsadjudicator/

Department for Education: http://www.education.gov.uk/
School Admissions Code;

Education and Skills Funding Agency:
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency

5. Co-ordination Procedure

The Local Authority (LA) is the admission authority for all voluntary controlled (VC) and community (C) Schools, The governing body is the admissions authority for foundation (F) or voluntary aided (VA) schools. The Trust is the admissions authority for free schools (FS) or academies (A).

All LAs are required to operate a scheme of co-ordination. This involves LAs exchanging applications with other admission authorities and with other LAs where the school applied for is not in the home authority area. It is the home LAs responsibility to notify the applicant of the outcome.

From September 2028, Somerset LA will make available a composite prospectus 'A guide for parents'. This sets out the secondary admission application process and information, including the admission arrangements for all schools and academies in Somerset.

The composite prospectus is available on the Somerset County Council website at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions. Parents are responsible for ensuring they access this information in appropriate time to make a school place application by the published deadline.

For children resident in Somerset applications must be made to Somerset Local Authority regardless of the location of the preferred school. All applications are co-ordinated by the Somerset Local Authority up to and including 31 August 2028. Details of how to apply on the portal are available on the Somerset school admissions website. Applications can be made on the portal or using a paper application form. By applying on the portal, the applicant will receive an email acknowledgment and outcome. Where an applicant chooses to apply using a paper application form, outcomes will be sent by second class post. It is advisable to confirm receipt as the Local Authority accepts no responsibility for application forms that are not delivered.

Applications for secondary phase admission cannot be made directly to a school. Applications received by Somerset LA in error from parents living outside of Somerset will not be processed. If possible the parent will be informed so they can apply to their home authority.

Applicants can express up to three preferences for schools, regardless of location and may provide reasons for these preferences. Additional information may need to be provided if an application is to be considered under a certain criteria. This may be supporting evidence, such as a Baptism Certificate, and/or a supplementary information form (SIF). Applicants should check with the relevant school to see if the additional information should be submitted to the school or the Local Authority. The

responsibility of the applicant to inform Somerset LA of any changes to information submitted in the application e.g changes to home address, siblings etc.

Applications must be received by 31 October 2027 in order to be considered as 'on-time'. Applications received after this deadline will be treated as 'late applications' and cannot be administered until all 'on time' applications have been dealt with, by which time places at the preferred school(s) may no longer be available. It is not for the LA to prove that the form was received on-time, the burden of proof will fall to the parent.

There is an exemption period closing date of 3 December 2027 for proof of a change of address or supporting information to be received by the Local Authority.

Where applications are received between the published closing date and the published exemption period closing date, and there are exceptional reasons for the application being received late (providing there is clear evidence to support the reason) the application will be considered with 'on-time' applications. Not being aware of the closing deadline would not be classified as exceptional circumstances. The circumstance must be proved 'exceptional' for example the case of a child in care who has moved foster placement. Supporting evidence may be requested by the LA. The decision whether to accept the application as 'on time' will be taken by the Admissions & Entitlements Service Manager.

Somerset LA must exchange application information with other admission authorities and LAs where the preferred school is not a Somerset school. This exchange of information will take place by the dates indicated in the 2028 secondary admissions timetable – see section 6.

Admission authorities are responsible for applying their published admission arrangements. If there are more applications received than places available at a particular school, the admission authority must apply their oversubscription criteria to decide which children can be allocated a place within the Published Admission Number. Where the admission authority is not the LA, admission authorities must provide the LA with a list of proposed allocations ranked according to over-subscription criteria.

Where applicants have expressed a preference for more than one school, the LA must offer a place on behalf of the admission authority at the highest preference school, at which a place is available. A national process known as 'Equal Preference with Ranking' must be used to determine this.

Decisions in connection with applications received by the deadline will be notified to applicants on the National Offer Day of 1 March 2028 (or next working day if this falls on a weekend or bank holiday).

Where it is not possible to offer a place at one or more of the applicant's preferred schools, the LA will provide refusal information with details of how to appeal against the admission authority decision. Appeals are heard by an independent appeal panel whose decision is binding.

Decisions for late applications received by 17 March 2028 will be notified to applicants on 2 May 2028 by email. Applications received after 17 March 2028 will be processed in strict date order of receipt. If more applications are received on the same day than there are places available at a particular school, the oversubscription criteria will be applied to decide which children can be allocated a place.

Any change of preference submitted online or by paper application on or before the published deadline date will over-ride any previous applications.

After the outcome date, if a change of preference is received and can be met, the previously offered place will be automatically withdrawn.

If a secondary or upper school place for September 2028 is offered and an in-year place at an alternative school from September 2028 is subsequently applied for and offered, the previously allocated secondary or upper school place will be automatically withdrawn.

6. Coordination Timetable for secondary admission applications

Starting at a Secondary school or an upper school in September 2028

Date	Action	Action By
September 2027	Composite prospectus made available. Portal opens for applications.	Local Authority (LA)
23 October – 31 October 2027	Half Term	
31 October 2027	Closing date for secondary phase applications.	Parents/carers
By 12 November 2027	Details of applications from residents in other LA areas and/or for schools in other LAs to be sent to those LAs for information.	Local Authority (LA)
By 19 November 2027	Details of applications to be sent to Schools/Academies that do not use the LA admissions service	
3 December 2027	Exemption Period Closing Date.	
18 December 2027 – 3 January 2028	Christmas Holiday	
7th January 2028	School/Academy using the LA admission service to have confirmed sign off of fully ranked list.	Local Authority (LA)

By 7 February 2028	Initial exchange of information with other LAs and Admission Authorities, confirming offers and refusals to be made.	LAs/Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools, Free schools, Academies
By 14 February 2028	Somerset to send final outcomes for other Local Authority residents applying for Somerset schools.	Local Authority (LA)
12 February 2028 – 20 February 2028	Half Term	
by 23 February 2028	The LA will notify Somerset schools which children have been offered places at their schools.	Local Authority (LA)
1 March 2028	Outcome date – outcomes sent out by email and 2nd class post.	Local Authority (LA)
17 March 2028	Closing date for second round secondary phase applications (late applications and changes of preference).	Parents/carers
1 April 2028 – 17 April 2028	Easter Holiday	
28 March 2028	Closing date for receipt of appeal applications from on-time applications. We cannot guarantee that appeals received after this date will be heard in the first round of appeals.	Parents/carers
2 May 2028	Second round outcome date	Local Authority (LA)

Within 40 days of the first deadline for lodging appeals	Appeal hearings for ‘on time’ applications will be completed.	LAs/Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools, Free schools, Academies
1 September 2028	Date from which requests for school places will be considered under the In Year Admissions Policy.	

7. Glossary of Terms

Academy	Independently managed, all ability schools. Set up by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups in partnership with the Department for Education (DfE) and the LA. Together they fund the land and buildings, with the government covering the running costs.
Admission Arrangements	The overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places including any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered.
Admission Authority	The body responsible for setting and applying a school's admission arrangements. For community or voluntary controlled schools, the LA is the admission authority; for foundation and voluntary aided schools the governing body of the school is the admission authority. For free schools or Academies the Trust is the admissions authority
Catchment Area	A geographical area, from which children may be afforded priority for admission to a particular school. A catchment area is part of a school's admission arrangements and must therefore be consulted upon, determined and published in the same way as other admission arrangements. Catchments can be viewed using this link **http://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-learning-and-schools/choosing-a-school/check-catchment-school1/**
Choice Advice Service	Somerset Choice Advice Service is a free impartial service which supports families with advice and practical support through the school admissions and appeal processes.
Common Application Form (CAF)	The form parents complete and submit to local authorities listing their preferred choices of schools when applying for a school place for their child as part of the local co-ordination scheme during the normal admissions round. Parents must be allowed to express a preference for a minimum of three schools on the relevant common application form as determined by their local authority.
Composite Prospectus	The prospectus that a local authority is required to publish by 12 September in the offer year. This prospectus must include detailed admission arrangements of all maintained schools in the area (including admission numbers and catchment areas).

Co-ordination / Co-ordinated Scheme	All local authorities are required to coordinate primary and secondary admissions for all schools in their area. Outcomes are sent out by the local authority on 1 March (or next working day) for secondary pupils and 16 April (or next working day) for primary pupils.
DfE	Department for Education
Equal Preference with Ranking	The equal preference with ranking allocation system requires the admission authority to consider all preferences received for a particular school (first, second, third, fourth and fifth) equally and, where the school is oversubscribed, apply the oversubscription criteria. Where more than one preference can be met the local authority will offer the highest ranking preference.
Governing Bodies	School governing bodies are bodies corporate responsible for conducting schools with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Governing bodies have three key roles: setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluation.
Home Local Authority	A child's home local authority is the local authority in whose area they live.
In Year Admissions	An application is an 'in-year' application if it is for the admission of a child to a relevant age group and it is submitted on or after the first day of the first school term of the admission year, or it is for the admission of a child to an age group other than a relevant age group.
LA	In this policy, this means Somerset County Council acting in their capacity as Local Authority
Late Application	Applications for the relevant age group received outside the normal round of admissions (e.g. received after the national closing date of 15 January for primary phase applications and 31 October for secondary phase applications**)** but before 1 September when they become in year admissions.
National Offer Day	The day each year on which local authorities are required to send the offer of a school place to all parents of secondary age pupils in their area. For secondary pupils, offers are sent out by the home local authority on 1 March. For primary pupils, this will be on 16 April.
Normal Admissions Round	The period during which parents are invited to express a minimum of three preferences for a place at any state-funded school, in rank order on the common application form provided by their home local authority. This period usually follows publication of the local authority composite prospectus on 12 September, with the deadlines for parental applications of 31 October (for secondary places)

	and 15 January (for primary places), and subsequent offers made to parents on National Offer Day as defined above.
Oversubscription Criteria	This refers to the published criteria that an admission authority applies when a school has more applications than places available in order to decide which children will be allocated a place.
Oversubscription	Where a school has a higher number of applicants than the school's Published Admission Number.
Published Admission Number (PAN)	The number of school places that the admission authority must offer in each relevant age group (see definition below) of a school for which it is admission authority. Published Admission Numbers are part of a school's admission arrangements.
Portal	The online service parents/carers can use to apply for school places.
Preferred School	In this policy, this means a school for which a parent has made an application, otherwise called expressing a preference for a school.
Relevant Age Group	The school entry point to which children are normally admitted e.g. reception in a primary school. Each relevant age group must have admission arrangements, including an admission number. Some schools (for example schools with sixth forms which admit children into the sixth form) have more than one relevant age group.
Schools Adjudicator	A statutory office-holder who is appointed by the Secretary of State for Education, but is independent. The Adjudicator decides on objections to published admission arrangements of all state-funded schools and variations of determined admission arrangements for maintained schools.
Transport Area	Children attending the designated transport area or nearest school to the home address and living over the statutory walking distance from this school will be entitled to transport assistance.