

Apply for Secondary School **September** **2026**

Your choice for secondary education

A guide for parents with children
transferring to secondary school



Your choice for secondary education

Who should apply?

If your child was born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015, you need to apply for a secondary school place starting September 2026.

When?

Apply before 31 October 2025. Offer day is Monday 2 March 2026.

How to apply

- Apply online: www.eadmissions.org.uk
- List up to six schools in any London local authority.
- Include local schools near your home.
- You must list the schools in the order you prefer, with your favourite school listed first. All preferences are considered equally.
- Your preference order is not disclosed to schools. Make sure you are aware of schools that require a supplementary information form to be completed in addition to your eAdmissions online/paper-based application.
- It is a good idea to list your nearest schools. If you do not apply for any of the schools close to you, there is a risk that, if you do not secure a place at one of your preferences, local schools may already be full and your child could end up having to travel further away to get to school.

When to start your application

Apply online: www.eadmissions.org.uk

The Pan London eAdmissions site opens on 1 September 2025.

Act now!

Read this guide carefully and get more information online at:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/schooladmission

Welcome

The City of London Corporation (City of London) has a very proud and long history of providing excellent educational services to children of all ages.

We are committed to ensuring that every child in the City of London gets the best start in life and receives the right support to reach their full potential.

Moving on to secondary school is an exciting time for your child. It represents an important milestone in their education journey and is a gateway to future opportunities.

This booklet has been produced to make the admissions process easy to understand. In it you will find helpful information on the school admissions process, the guidance you need to consider and key dates you need to be aware of to make a successful application.

The City of London is committed to delivering exceptional education, and cultural and creative learning skills, which link to the world of work through its 'Family of Schools'. Being part of the Family of Schools provides many benefits, including access to enrichment events across the year to inspire pupils and provide memorable experiences.



Pupils also benefit from cultural learning programmes delivered by the City of London's cultural institutions, including the Barbican, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Museum of London and London Symphony Orchestra.

To ensure that all children living in the City have access to the City of London's Family of Schools, we have arrangements with three of the City of London's sponsored academies to make a number of places available to City of London children.

This means that your child has the option of applying to City of London Academy Islington, City of London Academy (Southwark) and The City Academy, Hackney, regardless of the area of the City of London in which you live. They provide children with exceptional facilities, excellent learning opportunities and highly professional staff.

We will do all we can to guide you through the process, and the Education and Early Years Service is available to support you with your application if you need it.

I wish your child every success and happiness in their education, as they start this exciting new stage of their education.

Judith Finlay CBE

Executive Director of the Department of Community and Children's Services

Important dates

Monday 1 September 2025	Online applications open
September/October 2025	Open days and evenings at secondary schools
Friday 31 October 2025	Closing date for on-time applications
Friday 12 December 2025	Last date to explain why your application was late; request changes to your application submitted on-time or provide evidence of a change of address
Monday 2 March 2026	National Offer Day
Monday 16 March 2026	Last date to respond to your offer
September 2026	Children start secondary school

Starting secondary school in 2026

If your child was born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015, they are expected to start secondary school in September 2026.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

All secondary schools have written policies (SEND policy and SEND information report) outlining how they support pupils who have been identified as having SEND. Most children with SEND can successfully attend mainstream schools with additional support. You will be able to see the school's SEND policy and SEND information report on its website, or you can contact the school you are interested in to request a copy.



If your child has SEND, but does not yet have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, you must apply for a secondary school place by completing an online application form. See page 7 for details. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) at your child's primary school will work with the SENCo at the secondary school to make sure the move from primary to secondary school goes as smoothly as possible.

Children with an EHC plan

If your child has an EHC plan, you do not need to complete an online secondary school application. The City of London's Education and Early Years Service will support you with the process. It will help you to identify and apply to schools appropriate to your child's needs. Once a school has been agreed, it will be named on your child's EHC plan.

If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs or would like more information, please contact the Education and Early Years Service on 020 7332 1002.

SEND Local Offer

Information about the provision and services that are available for children and young people with SEND (0–25 years) can be found on the City of London's SEND Local Offer website. The SEND Local Offer sets out information about services and provision both inside and outside the City. Please visit the Family Information Service website for full details:

www.fis.cityoflondon.gov.uk/send-local-offer

How to choose a school — things to consider

Get started

Our advice is: don't wait! Give yourself as much time as possible to explore and consider your options so that you can apply to schools that best fit your child's needs and aspirations and whose selection criteria are favourable to you.

Finding a school

If you do not know the schools in your area, a good place to start is by looking at your local authority's secondary school guide or those of surrounding local authorities. They contain general information about the local schools. You can find schools near your home online at:

<http://map.lgfl.org.uk/eAdmissions/>

Alternatively, you can visit the Department for Education's website:

www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables

This website provides a comprehensive list of schools across England, and it also allows you to access performance tables that give information on pupils' results at each school.

Each school's information page provides a link to its Ofsted report. An Ofsted report details a school's strengths and weaknesses in terms of teaching staff and leadership, alongside its status at the time of its last inspection. Schools are currently inspected every four years.

Once you have come up with a shortlist of schools, find out more about each one by reading its:

- prospectus: detailed information about the school and its leaders, teachers, courses, facilities and philosophy
- admissions policy: information about admissions criteria should the school receive more applications than it has places available (if it is oversubscribed).

You will find prospectuses and admissions policies on each school's website or you can contact them directly to request copies.

Get a complete picture

Prospectuses, league tables and Ofsted reports alone will not give you a complete picture of a school. Therefore, we advise you to visit the school for a closer look at its location, facilities and surroundings. This will give you a taste of its educational environment. You may also be able to arrange to speak with teachers, administrative staff and, if possible, pupils. Most schools hold open days or open evenings. Attending these along with your child will give you a better feel for the school. Information about open days is available in the local authority's school admissions prospectus or by contacting the school.



Look at the admissions criteria

On your application form, you should list all the schools you want to apply to in order of preference. Some schools receive more applications than they have places to offer. So, you should always look at the admissions criteria for each of your preferred schools and consider whether you meet them.

How to choose a school — before you apply

Are your preferences realistic?

Consider how likely it is that your child will be offered a place at your preferred schools. Read the admissions criteria for each school and figure out which criteria apply to your child.

Do you live close enough to get a place?

The distance from home to school of the last child offered a place at any school from previous years (i.e. the cut-off distance) should be available via each local authority's school admissions booklet. Remember that although this information can be used to give you an idea of how likely it is that you will be offered a place, the cut-off distance will change every year. We can never guarantee any child will be offered a place at any school.

How will your child travel to school?

It is very important that your child arrives on time to school each day. A long journey at peak times could make it difficult and may not be the best choice for your child. London has a great network of buses, London Overground and rail links, making it easy to get to any of our local schools.



Does the school's curriculum match your child's interests and talents?

While all state-run schools follow the national curriculum, others focus on certain disciplines such as music, maths, science or athletics.

Does the school have extended services such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and after-school activities?

Are there supervised activities for pupils outside normal school hours, if parents and carers are at work?

What facilities does the school offer?

Are the buildings, classrooms and grounds well equipped and maintained?

What do other parents think about the school?

Find out about the experiences of parents with children at the schools you are interested in.

Which school does your child prefer?

Now is the time to get their opinion. This could be a tie-breaker. Ask them where they would like to go. Starting secondary school can be unsettling, especially if it is in a different part of the city from their primary school and none of their friends are going there. But remember that the right school for your friend's child may not be the right school for your child.

You can always contact us!

It is important to do your research and make up your own mind about the schools to which you apply. The School Admissions Team can provide impartial, expert advice about how likely you are to be offered a place at City schools.

t: 020 7332 1002

e: eeyservice@cityoflondon.gov.uk

How to apply — the process

You must apply through the local authority where your child lives, regardless of where the school is located. Do not list independent fee-paying schools, as you need to apply to them directly.

1. To make an application online, please visit the eAdmissions website: **www.eadmissions.org.uk**. If you are unable to apply online, please contact the City of London School Admissions Team at **eeyservice@cityoflondon.gov.uk**
2. You can apply to any school located in any borough, up to a maximum of six schools. We highly recommend that you apply to as many schools as you can, as this will increase your chances of getting one of your preferred schools.
3. List the schools in the order you prefer, with your favourite school listed first. Your preference order is not disclosed to schools. Make sure you are aware of schools that require a supplementary information form (SIF) to be completed in addition to your eAdmissions online/ paper-based application.
4. It is a good idea to list your nearest schools. If you do not apply for any of the schools close to you, there is a risk that, if you do not secure a place at one of your preferences, local schools may already be full and your child could end up having to travel further away to get to school.

There is also an option to apply to City of London Academy Islington, City of London Academy (Southwark) and The City Academy, Hackney, where there are priority places available to City families.

As part of the admissions process, some schools may require your child to sit a fair banding test (see below). Your child must sit this test, otherwise your chances of obtaining a school place are greatly reduced. If you have questions about test arrangements, please check relevant school websites or contact the school(s) directly.

What is a SIF and why is it needed?

A SIF provides additional information that some schools use to allocate places when they are oversubscribed (they have received more applications than they have places to offer).

To find out if your chosen schools require a SIF, you can either contact them directly or, if you apply online, the eAdmissions website will tell you. You must send the completed SIF directly to the school and not to the City of London. Choosing not to complete the SIF could reduce your chances of getting a place at that school if it is oversubscribed. Most voluntary-aided schools and foundation schools and some academies require a SIF.

Fair banding tests

There is no passing or failing these tests. Pupils are tested and grouped into 'bands' according to their abilities. The school will then offer places to an equal number of pupils in each band.

Remember: The deadline for applications is
31 October 2025

How to apply — the criteria

Applying under sibling criteria

If your child has a brother or sister attending any of your preferred schools at the time of admission in September 2026, you should complete the box marked 'Sibling details' alongside the relevant school.

Applying under exceptional reasons

If you are making an application based on medical, social, religious, philosophical or educational reasons, you must complete the 'Reasons for preference' box on the application form.

You must also explain in writing why your child must attend a specific school, and a professional practitioner, such as a doctor or educational psychologist, must support your reasons and provide relevant evidence. The City of London School Admissions Team must receive this by the application deadline.

Oversubscription criteria – an example

The list below indicates the order by which schools that are oversubscribed will prioritise applicants:

1. Children looked after by the local authority
2. Children whose siblings attend the school
3. Distance to school from the child's home address.

Admissions authority

For foundation schools, voluntary-aided schools, academies and free schools, the admissions authority, which makes the decision regarding admissions applications, is the school's governing body. For all other schools, this is the local authority.

Proof of home address

Your address details will be checked by the City of London Council Tax Team. You will be asked to provide additional supporting documentation if the Council Tax Team is unable to verify your details. It is important that you give accurate information on your application form, as this can affect the outcome of your application.

You are also required to provide proof of the child's residence. The document must not be older than one year and should be either uploaded to the eAdmissions system or sent electronically to the City of London School Admissions Team. This can be in the form of a Child Tax Credit notification, letter from the NHS or any other document that has your child's name and address.

For more information on the City of London address verification policy, please visit:
<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/education-and-learning/schools/starting-school>

Note: The offer of a school place can be withdrawn if the information supplied is knowingly incorrect. An admissions authority can also take legal action against anyone who has knowingly given false information to get a school place for their child.

Your child's home address

If you are separated from your child's other parent and your child lives partly with you and partly with the other parent, you should state the address where your child lives most of the time.

How to apply — the allocation

If you have an equal shared care arrangement, state the address of the parent claiming child benefit, receiving tax credits linked to the child or whose address is registered at the child's GP. If you are making an online application, you can upload documents to your eAdmissions account. You can email original copies to the City of London School Admissions Team.

Note: You cannot submit more than one application for your child. Only one address can be used for school admission purposes. The final decision to process an application will rest with the City of London School Admissions Team.

What happens after you have submitted your form?

All London local authorities, and some local authorities bordering London, are part of the Pan London eAdmissions System. The scheme coordinates applications across local authority borders.

Your child will be considered separately by each school based on their application form. The schools do not know which other schools you have listed or your order of preference.

Late applications

Applications received after the closing date will be deemed 'late applications' and will be considered after those received on time. If there are exceptional reasons why you could not make the deadline, please write to the City of London School Admissions Team and provide supporting evidence.

If you wish to change your school preferences after the closing date, your application will be treated as a late application.

If a school is not oversubscribed, every child that applies will be offered a place.

If a school is oversubscribed, places will be allocated by its admissions authority in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria. The oversubscription criteria are part of a school's admissions policy. Children meeting criteria with a higher priority will be more likely to get a place than those meeting lower-priority criteria. You can get a copy of the policy from each school's admissions authority.

Your child will receive only one offer. If more than one school can offer them a place, the school making the offer will be your child's highest preference and all lower preferences will be withdrawn and released to other children. Therefore, please make sure you put the school you really want first.

The results of your application will be sent to you on National Offer Day, which is 2 March 2026. If you applied online, you will receive an email alert that evening informing you of the outcome of your application telling you where you can view the outcome online.



Myth busters — get the facts!

My child has a right to a place at one of my preferred schools.

Not true! Your child will only be offered a place if they qualify according to the school's admission criteria. If your child does not qualify for any of your preferred schools (e.g. your preferences were unrealistic), they will usually be offered a place at the nearest school to your home with a vacancy remaining after all on-time applicants have been offered places.

I don't need to apply because I have an older child already at the school.

Not true! Everyone must apply for their child even if they have a brother or sister already at the school. Most schools give priority to brothers and sisters but if you don't apply you could miss out on a place.

If I list only one school, then I have to be offered a place.

Not true! Listing only one school does not increase your child's chances of being offered a place. You are strongly advised to include your nearest schools among your preferences.

I live nearer to the school than the last child offered a place under the distance criterion last year so I'm guaranteed a place.

Not true! The home-to-school distance of the last child offered a place will change every year.

Children in my road go to the school so my child will too.

Not always! The number of pupils offered a place under each criterion at each school can change every year. Knowing pupils living near you that go to a certain school does not mean that your child will be offered a place there.

If I apply to a school in another borough, their residents will have priority over me.

Not always! Some admission authorities may give priority to local children, i.e. based on postcode. However, published admissions criteria cannot include the borough of residence. You should read the admission arrangements to see how children are prioritised for a place.

Faith schools are only for children from the specific faith which the school supports.

Faith schools align with whichever faith they support but they welcome children of all faiths and no faith. You do not have to attend a place of worship to be considered for a place.

Getting your results — national offer day

The results of your application will be sent to you on National Offer Day, which is 2 March 2026. If you applied online, you will receive an email alert that evening informing you of the outcome of your application and telling you where you can view the outcome online. The City of London School Admissions Team will send you an email telling you:

- how to accept the place
- what to do if your child was not offered a place at any of their chosen schools
- how to appeal a decision.

Accepting an offer

You can accept the offered school place by:

- completing the online acceptance form via your eAdmissions account
- replying to the offer day email.

Either way, the City of London School Admissions Team must receive your response by 16 March 2026 or your place may be offered to another child.

What if my child has a place at a private or independent school?

If you have accepted a place for your child at a private or independent school, please let the City of London School Admissions Team know in writing as soon as possible so that the state school place can be offered to another child.

How do waiting lists work?

Your child's place on a waiting list is determined by the school's oversubscription criteria, not by how long they have been waiting.

Children meeting higher-priority criteria will be higher on the list than those meeting lower-priority criteria.

Your child's place can move down if children meeting higher criteria than yours join the list.

Late applications are included on the waiting list and are treated in the same way as on-time applications.

Acceptance deadline

If your acceptance is not received by 16 March 2026, your place may be offered to another child.

If you are likely to be away from home between 2 March and 16 March 2026, please let the City of London School Admissions Team know in advance by emailing: eeyservice@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appeal process — how to present your appeal

If you do not receive an offer from your preferred school, you can appeal against the refusal. What you need to do:

- Contact the school you want to make an appeal against as soon as possible. It will provide you with information about its appeal process, e.g. what you will need to do and by when.
- Present your appeal. Your appeal will be heard during May, June and July 2026 by the appeal panel, which is made up of people who have not been involved in any way in the allocation of school places.

If you intend to make an appeal, you should still accept the school place you have been offered so that your child will have a place if your appeal is unsuccessful. Accepting the place you have been offered will not affect the outcome of your appeal.

The appeal panel's decision is final.

In-year admissions

What are in-year admissions?

In-year admissions are the process of applying to a school at any time outside the normal admissions rounds. Normal admissions rounds are those that take place during September of the year a child starts either primary or secondary school.

You must complete an in-year application if your child:

- is transferring from one secondary school to another
- has been educated at home and now wishes to apply for a school place
- is newly arrived in the UK and is looking for a school place.

What do I need to do?

That depends, as the in-year admissions application process varies. With some schools, you apply directly to the school. With others you will need to complete the local authority's in-year application form. Contact the school directly to find out more.

Is there a closing date for in-year admissions?

No, although we advise you to make your application as soon as possible.

I do not like the school that my child is currently attending and want to change their school. Can I make an in-year admissions application?

Yes, but before you do so, please consider that moving schools can be very unsettling for children, particularly if they are preparing for exams or have difficulty adapting to new situations and surroundings.

Watch the City of London's information video: <https://youtu.be/Toy-RACnI8A>



City of London Academy Islington

1 Prebend Street, London N1 8PQ

t: 020 7226 8611

e: info@cityacademyislington.org.uk

w: www.colai.org.uk

Principal: Mr. Laurie Glees

Ages: 11–19 boys and girls

Year 7 places: 140

Fair banding tests: Yes

Places for children living in the City of London:

Under the academy's oversubscription criteria, there may be up to 10 priority places for City of London children. All candidates are required to participate in the banding test.

Academy banding test and visiting dates:

We advise parents and pupils to check the City of London Academy Islington's website for regular updates on banding test dates and our open morning and evening schedules.

Open mornings: 9-10am

Thursday 2 October 2025

Thursday 9 October 2025

Thursday 16 October 2025

Sessions include a presentation from the Principal and a tour of the academy.

Open evening: 4-7pm

Monday 22 September 2025

City of London Academy Hackney

Homerton Row, London, E9 6EA

t: 020 8525 5440

e: admin@thecityacademy.org

w: www.thecityacademyhackney.org

Principal: Ms. Anna Sarchet

Ages: 11–19 boys and girls

Year 7 places: 180

Fair banding tests: Yes

Places for children living in the City of London:

Under the academy's oversubscription criteria, there may be up to nine priority places for City of London children. All candidates are required to participate in the banding test.

Academy banding test and visiting dates:

We advise parents and pupils to check The City Academy Hackney's website for regular updates on banding test dates and our open morning and evening schedules.

Open mornings: 9-10am

Thursday 9 October 2025

Friday 10 October 2025

Sessions include a presentation from the Principal and a tour of the academy.

Open evening: 4.45-7pm

Wednesday 15 October 2025

City of London Academy (Southwark)

240 Lynton Road, London, SE1 5LA

t: 020 7394 5100

e: info@cityacademy.co.uk

w: www.cityacademy.co.uk

Principal: Mr. Michael Baxter

Ages: 11–19 boys and girls

Year 7 places: 240

Fair banding tests: Yes

Places for children living in the City of London:

Under the academy's oversubscription criteria, there may be up to 30 priority places for City of London children. All candidates are required to participate in the banding test.

Academy banding test and visiting dates:

We advise parents and pupils to check the City of London Academy (Southwark) website for regular updates on banding test dates and our open morning and evening schedules.

Open mornings: 9-10am

Monday 22 September 2025

Tuesday 23 September 2025

Wednesday 24 September 2025

Sessions include a presentation from the Principal and a tour of the academy.

Open evening: 4.30-7.30pm

Thursday 25 September 2025

University technical colleges and studio schools

Children born between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012, and who are currently in Year 9, are eligible to apply for a place at a university technical college (UTC) or a studio school for the September 2026 intake. UTCs and studio schools offer pupils more than the traditional GCSE and A level curriculum. As your child progresses through their secondary education, you may feel they would benefit from a more vocational curriculum offer focused on technical subjects.

UTCs

UTCs are schools for 14 to 19-year-olds. They have university and employer sponsors and combine practical and academic studies. UTCs specialise in subjects that need modern, technical, industry-standard equipment, such as engineering and construction. These are taught alongside business skills and information and communications technology (ICT).

UTCs are smaller than traditional secondary schools. As well as core academic subjects, UTCs provide one or two technical specialisms, which are linked to the skills gaps within their area. Pupils can study GCSEs, A levels and other relevant qualifications matched to these specialisms.

UTCs usually start at 8.30am and end at 5.00pm. For more information on UTCs and to find a UTC near you, please visit: <https://bakerdearing.org/supporting-utcs/>

Studio schools

Studio schools are also schools for 14 to 19-year-olds that are backed by local businesses and employers. They often have a specialism but focus on equipping young people with a wide range of employability skills and a core of academic qualifications, delivered in a practical and project-based way.

Studio schools usually start at 9.00am and finish at 5.00pm and feel more like a workplace than a school. Studio schools will offer a range of academic and vocational qualifications, including GCSEs in English, maths and science, as well as paid work placements linked directly to employment opportunities in the local area.

You can apply to a UTC or studio school online at www.eadmissions.org.uk or complete a paper application, which you can get by contacting the City of London School Admissions Team.

The deadline for applying for the 2026/27 education year is 31 October 2025. We will send the results of your application during the day of 2 March 2026.

If you applied online, you will receive an email alert that evening informing you of the outcome of your application telling you where you can view the outcome online.

While most UTCs and studio schools have the same application timeline as secondary schools, some may have different timetables in their first year of operation. Please speak to the UTC or studio school directly for further information.

Support for parents and carers

Transport for London (TfL) 11–15 Zip Oyster photocard

Children aged 11–15 can get free and discounted travel on all TfL transport services with a Zip Oyster photocard.

It includes:

- free travel on buses and trams
- child-rate pay-as-you-go fares on the Tube, DLR, London Overground, Elizabeth line (excluding between West Drayton and Reading) and Emirates Cable Car
- 50% off most fares on National Rail services
- 50% off adult-rate tickets on the Uber Boat by Thames Clippers River Bus services.

Help with home-to-school travel costs: City of London Home to School Transport Policy

The City of London may fund free train travel to and from school if these criteria are met:

- Your child lives in the City of London.
- Your child is of secondary school age (11–16 years).
- The school is the nearest suitable one with a vacancy.
- The school is more than three miles from your child's home.

Help for parents/carers on low incomes

The criteria for free home-to-school train travel are slightly different if you are on a low income, live in the City of London and receive certain benefits or tax credits. In this case, your child will be eligible for free train travel if:

- their school is between two and six miles from your home
- their school is one of the nearest three suitable* schools.

* A school the City of London deems to be suitable for the pupil's aptitude and ability.

For more information, please contact the City of London School Admissions Team on eeyservice@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Free school meals

Your child may be eligible for free school meals if you receive one of these benefits:

- Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit where the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income (assessed by HMRC) does not exceed £16,190
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on: this is normally paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit: if you applied on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get).

If you meet these criteria, you can apply for free school meals to the local authority where your child's school is located.

Young people who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or carer, can also get free school meals.

School clothing grants

The school clothing grant is a discretionary payment of £160, made in August each year, to help with the cost of school uniforms and footwear, including PE kits. For this support, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- You and your child must live in the City of London.
- Your child must attend a publicly funded secondary school.
- There is an agreed school uniform.
- You are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits for free school meals.

The grant is paid at the discretion of the City of London. For more information, please contact the School Admissions Team.

If you would like this information in another language or another format, such as Braille, large print or audio, please contact the Family Information Service on 020 7332 1002, or email us at eeyservice@cityoflondon.gov.uk



Family Information Service
Education and Early Years Service
Department of Community and Children's Services
City of London Corporation
PO Box 270
Guildhall
London EC2P 2EJ

