

Starting school in September 2026

Information for parents/carers

Please note: Attendance at a nursery which is attached to a school does not guarantee admission

Was your child born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022?

If so, you can expect that they will start school in the Reception year group from September 2026. This leaflet explains what you must do if you want to ensure that your child will have a place in a Reception class.

What do I need to do?

1. Please read the “Starting school in Westmorland and Furness - September 2026” booklet carefully before making an application. This booklet gives you all the detailed information you need to help you apply for a Reception school place. It is available on the council's website at westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk or, if you need a hard copy, by contacting the School Admissions and Appeals Team.

2. Complete the online application form. This can be found on the council's website at westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk and will be available from 3 September 2025. This form asks you to express a preference for three **different** schools. More information about infant and primary schools within the local authority area of Westmorland and Furness can be found in the booklet.

**The closing date to apply for a
Reception place is
15 January 2026**

The advantages of applying online are:

- Your application will be acknowledged by email.
- We will send an email to you to tell you which school your child has been offered in the morning of 16 April 2026, **before** the letters are sent out to those who applied on a paper form.

If you are unable to apply online, you can download a form (SA1) from our website at westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk, ask your preferred school for a form or contact the School Admissions and Appeals Team and we will send a form to you. Please return your completed form to your child's preferred school.

Types of schools and their policies

There are different types of school: community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation, free schools and academies. Westmorland and Furness Council coordinates admissions for September Reception places at all of these schools.

Each school has an **admissions policy**. This states the number of pupils that will be admitted to each school. It also includes the criteria that will be used to decide which pupils should be admitted if the school is oversubscribed. **Admissions policies are not the same for all schools.** The Local Authority (LA) decides the admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled schools. For other schools the governing body/academy trust decides the admissions policy and arrangements.

Copies of these policies can be found on the council's website, or the school's website, and summaries can be found in the booklet. **The LA is not responsible for allocation decisions made by voluntary aided, foundation and free schools and academies.**



Frequently asked questions

Where can I find out more detailed information about the schools I am considering?

A list of schools is available on the council's website. Each school may produce a prospectus which may help you to decide your three preferences. Most schools also hold open evenings. You may want to contact your preferred schools about these events.

Prospectuses are usually available on schools' own websites and the Ofsted Reports for all schools are available at [ofsted.gov.uk](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk). You can also find out information about an individual school's performance at [westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

I am not sure which is my catchment school. How do I find out?

If you need to find out which catchment area you live in, please contact the School Admissions and Appeals Team who will be able to tell you (contact details opposite). Please note that we cannot guarantee a place at a school even if you live within the catchment area. **Please see the booklet for more information about catchment areas.**

What do I need to do if my child has special educational needs?

If your child has an Educational Health Care Plan the school application and placement process will be dealt with by the Special Education Needs Team for your area. **Please see the 'further help and advice' section of the booklet for more information.**

What about home to school transport?

A summary of the home to school transport policy is included in the booklet.

Where can I find out more about free school meals or uniform grants?

All children in Reception to Year 2 receive free school meals, therefore you do not need to apply. If however you are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits listed on [westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk) you may also be eligible for a School Clothing Grant. You can complete an application form online.

Where can I find more information about school admissions?

Westmorland and Furness Council's School Admissions and Appeals Team can be contacted on: **0300 303 8144** or by emailing school.admissions@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk.

You can find a copy of the booklet "**Starting School in Westmorland and Furness - September 2026**" and other useful information at: [westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

Remember
the closing date:
15 January 2026

Important information:

- **Get your application in on time.** If it is received after **15 January 2026**, it will not be considered with the applications received before the deadline unless there are exceptional circumstances that you confirm with us by 9 February 2026. It will be dealt with **after** all applications that were made on time have been allocated places. This could severely reduce the chances of you securing a place at one of your preference schools. More information about late applications can be found in the booklet.
- **Put three different preferences of school.** Try to make sure they are realistic. If you only name one school, or name schools that could potentially be oversubscribed or are a long way from where you live, and you cannot be allocated a place at any of these schools, the LA will allocate a place at either your catchment school or, if this is oversubscribed, the nearest school with a place available. This will only happen **AFTER** all other applications have been processed.
- If a school that you are naming as a preference requires additional information, such as a copy of a baptismal certificate, make sure this is sent to the school by **15 January 2026**.