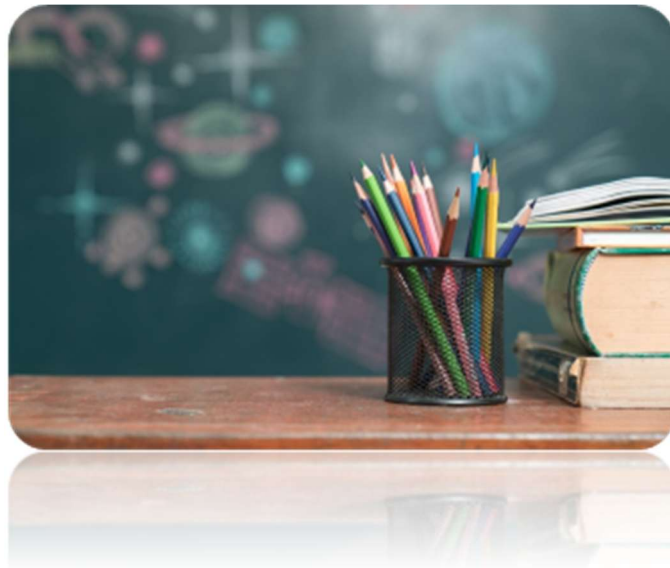


Service Level Agreement 2026-2027

School Admissions and Admission Appeals Service Package Renewal



Service Package Renewal - Academic Year 2026 – 2027

The Service

This Service Level Agreement (“the Agreement”) sets out the School Admissions and School Admission Appeals services to be provided by the Council to subscribing schools for the Academic Year 2026/2027, subject to payment of the applicable subscription fee.

1. Terms of the Subscription Agreement

- 1.1. The Academy Trust appoints the Local Authority (“the LA”) to provide a School Admissions and Admission Appeals Service (“the Services”) for the period 1st September 2026 to 31st August 2027.
- 1.2. The LA agrees to provide the Services in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

2. Academy Responsibilities

The Academy undertakes to:

- 2.1. Provide the LA’s School Admissions and Appeals Teams with all relevant, accurate, and up-to-date information reasonably required, in a timely manner, to enable the LA to carry out its obligations under this Agreement
- 2.2. Support the preparation of appeal cases by responding within the specified timescales to requests for information and by approving the Academy’s final appeal statement prior to submission.*
- 2.3. Comply with all relevant legislation, including the School Admissions Code 2021 and the School Admission Appeals Code 2022.
- 2.4. Comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 2.5. Where the LA requests consideration of a school placement, the Academy must respond within two school days to enable allocations to be made in accordance with paragraph 2.27 of the School Admissions Code 2021.
- 2.6. Notify the LA without delay of any change in circumstances that may affect the Academy’s ability to admit a pupil, including changes to capacity, organisation, or safeguarding considerations.
- 2.7. Following the offer of a place, the Academy must take reasonable steps to contact the parent or carer to agree a start date. Where the parent confirms

*The admission authority must provide a presenting officer to present the decision not to admit the child and to answer detailed questions about the case being heard and about the school” Appeals Code 2022 section 2.12 pg. 14. If an academy uses an experienced presenting officer from an independent organisation to prepare and present cases, it is expected that case information provision is provided directly from the school to the commissioned service.

acceptance, the pupil must be placed on roll from the expected first day of attendance and entered onto both the admissions and attendance registers within five school days, without delay.

3. The Local Authority's Obligations

The School Admissions and Appeals Teams undertake to:

- 3.1. Take all reasonable steps to deliver the services described in this Agreement
- 3.2. Deliver services in accordance with all relevant legislation and statutory Codes
- 3.3. Liaise with subscribing academies regarding any legislative or regulatory changes affecting service delivery
- 3.4. Provide at least 28 days' notice of any proposed changes to service terms or charges
- 3.5. Fulfil the LA's statutory duty to refer concerns regarding admission arrangements to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator where appropriate.

4. Directions and Refusals

- 4.1. Where an Academy proposes to refuse admission to a child, including in-year applications, the Academy must ensure that any refusal is lawful, reasonable, and compliant with the School Admissions Code 2021.
- 4.2. The Academy must not refuse admission on the basis of perceived challenging behaviour, special educational needs, disability, previous exclusions, or safeguarding history without first consulting the Local Authority where required by the Code.
- 4.3. Where the Local Authority determines that a child must be admitted, including through the operation of the Fair Access Protocol or where the refusal is considered non-compliant with the School Admissions Code, the Academy is expected to admit the child in accordance with its statutory duties.
- 4.4. The Academy agrees to cooperate fully with the Local Authority in resolving directions, refusals, and compliance matters, including the prompt provision of information and attendance at relevant panels or discussions where reasonably required.

5. Performance Expectations

The Local Authority will aim to:

- Meet all statutory timescales for admissions and appeals
- Communicate clearly with academies regarding case progress

- Provide timely escalation where compliance or statutory risks are identified

5. Liaison

The points of contact within the Authority are:

For School Admission enquiries:

Helen Pinner - Team Leader Admissions

Helen.Pinner@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

For School Appeals enquiries:

Luthfur Rahman - Education Legal Manager

Luthfur.Rahman@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Expectations of own admission authority schools

(Please see Appendix 1 for detailed information)

- a. If you use your own Common Application Form – it would be helpful if you could share a copy of the form used, by emailing a copy to the admissions policy inbox (Admissions.policies@cambridgeshire.gov.uk).
- b. Academies that process their own in year applications must forward copies of all applications received and response(s) to the applicant's request in accordance with School Admissions Code 2021. Where a place cannot be offered, the Local Authority may need to explore alternative school placements. This will also ensure that information is not being requested that is against the School Admission Code 2021.
- c. The Appeal presenting officer on behalf of an Academy or Trust as the representative of your school should have in depth knowledge of the school and be able to answer the questions asked during a panel by both parents and panel members. It is not for the Local Authority to provide key documentation.
- d. The Local Authority Appeals Manager may request to join hearings to observe how the appeals process is working and will not take part in the panel.
- e. Pathfinder Legal Services are the external body that will be clerking the appeal hearings.
- f. There are strict statutory deadlines for hearings to be heard and therefore documentation will be sent out in a timely manner to adhere to these obligations, and any late submissions may affect the outcome of an appeal.
- g. If the allocated Presenting officer for the academy fails to attend the planned panel

meeting, as per the Code, the appeal hearing will go ahead in their absence.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. If you wish to take up the following services, you need to notify us by no later than 5th June 2026.
2. A purchase Order number will be required when subscribing to these services so that invoices can be raised.
3. VAT will be charged for any School Admission/Appeals services supplied after the date of conversion to Academy status.

Service Package

- **Transitions:**

School Admissions Service

Elevated Transitions

(the point of entry to a School i.e., Reception and Year 7 for September 2027)

Under statutory requirements the LA must coordinate the transition from nursery to primary, infant to junior and primary to secondary allocation of school placements.

The process involved includes;

- Providing a common application form and process; and
- collecting evidence of current residential address; and
- allocate all school places in accordance with the school's own over subscription criterion, up to their published admission number; and
- determination of a child's catchment area; and
- the calculation of the home to school distance measurements; and
- determination of whether the child has an Education Health Care Plan; and
- determination of whether the child is a Child in Care or was previously in Care; and
- indicating whether there are any older siblings already on roll at the school; and
- maintain waiting lists until 31st December in accordance with 2.15 Admissions code 2021 and own admissions authority schools take over control from the 1st of September; and
- ensuring that Infant Class Sizes are adhered to for Key Stage One allocations; and
- Co-ordination with other Local Authorities, based on parental preferences; and
- responding to applicants on National Offer days; and
- investigating and withdrawing offers if fraudulent application is made – all confirmed cases followed through with Legal Manager; and
- give an applicant the right to appeal if unsuccessful in obtaining any parental preferences.

The school would still be required to:

- rank children under their own over subscription criterion, any church criteria, medical need, staff criterion, confirmation of the attendance of siblings; and
- carry out any confirmation checks not routinely undertaken by the LA; and
- inform the Schools Admissions Team of any status change for children on their roll.

Service package

- **Summer Born Service - Reception delay**

Parents of children who are born between 1st of April and 31st of August, may request their child be considered for a place outside of their normal chronological year group. For example, a child might be due to start reception in September 2027, but the parent may wish for the child to start in September 2028.

This is called a 'delayed entry'.

[Research published by the Department of Education in 2023 \(gov.uk\)](#) found that 9 in 10 requests for a summer born delay were agreed with more than a quarter of local authorities adopting a policy of accepting all requests.

The local authority can process all requests for summer born delays in the year of entry prior to the allocation process for the start of the academic year.

The process involved includes;

- Online information provision to support parents make an informed decision.
- Online application form for parents to submit delay requests.
- Oversight of applications to ensure criteria met.
- Monitoring of overall applications and ensuring that application for reception place submitted for the following academic year.

The LA take a permissive approach to summer born requests. The DfE is supportive of the right of a parent to make a request that their summer born child is admitted out of their normal year group.

If you want to opt out of this service package, you will be required to:

Manage and respond to any parental requests received to delay outside of the normal round of allocations.

Respond to any referrals made by the parents to the school's ombudsman.

Free of Charge



Service Package

- **Processing in Year Applications:**

School Admissions Service

In-Year (*those applications received outside the normal transitions round*) .

It covers the coordination of all admission applications received for children moving school during the academic year and all tasks relating to this process (as provided in Service Package 1 above).

Where a place cannot be offered, waiting lists will be implemented and actioned in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021, 2.29 pg. 29. Schools will be able to see all information on the schools' portal where there is a waiting list for a year group.

In cases where a Voluntary Aided and Foundation school subscribed to this Service Package prior to conversion, charges will be raised proportionately for the remainder of Academic Year 2026/27.

Service Package

• Transition Appeals

Admission Appeals Transitions

This service is provided by the LA and will provide the coordinated administration of appeals, for those families who are refused a place at your school as part of the transitions process.

It includes:

All administrative work undertaken in preparation for the Appeal hearing in compliance with the School Admissions Appeals Code:

- Written communication with parents;
- Collation and circulation to all parties of all information relevant to the appeal and provide information to parents on the appeal process;
- Timetabling and scheduling of appeal hearing dates;
- Organise panel members;
- Arrange the attendance of panel members at the hearing;
- Requesting school statement;
- Communication with schools – notifying them of the appeal;
- The provision of a legal clerk at the hearing, who will provide legal advice and guidance throughout.
- Communication with the school and parents after the hearing, to advise of the outcome of the appeal – this will only be through formal letter sent out by the legal clerk;
- Admission appeal hearings will be conducted on a virtual basis, using Microsoft Teams, in line with the appeal regulations.

Legal Services

- provide independent clerking by Pathfinder Legal Services who are independent of the Admissions Team
- annual training of panel members;
- communicate with and training of panel members following any changes to the Codes;
- read and consider case papers prior to hearing;
- issue decision letters to appellants and school;
- provide appropriate follow up communication with the appellants; and
- assist with responses to complaints lodged with the Education Funding Agency.

Hearing dates will be set, and it is expected that the school will be available or provide a presenting officer for that date as schedules are very tight and statutory time scales which must be adhered to (see below). Dates and time slots are set with more than just one

school being heard.

The deadline for appeal requests is revised each year in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code, published by the Department for Education (DfE) 2022.

The deadlines for appeals for Academic year 2027 (Transitions Primary/Junior and Secondary) requests are:

- Primary Academy 17th May 2027
- Secondary Academy 12th April 2027

This will enable the Appeals Officer to ensure all appeals are heard within the statutory deadlines, 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.



Service Package

- **In year appeals**

Admission Appeals In Year

This service provides the coordinated administration of appeals, for those families who are refused a place at your school during the academic year.

The service is the same as that detailed in Service Package – Transition Appeals.

If you choose to process your own in-year admission applications, but request that we coordinate your appeals you will be expected to follow the process above.

Hearing dates will be set, and it is expected that the school will be available or provide a presenting officer for that date as schedules are very tight and statutory time scales must be adhered to. Dates and time slots are set with more than just one school being heard.



Period Covered by Annual Subscription to Service Packages: 1st September 2026 - 31st August 2027



Service Packages :

School Admissions - Elevated Transitions Services;

Included in cost

Summer Born decision (primary schools only)

Opt out of the Local Authority process and process directly,
cost indicated in subscription sign up if wish LA to manage

Included in cost

Service Package

School Admissions - In Year application Service

Included in Cost

Service Packages

Appeals – Transitions

Service Packages

Appeals – In Year

Costings:

Primary Academies

£ 434.70 net/Academic Year

Secondary Academies

£2,189.03 net/Academic Year

All through Academies

£2,401.20 net/Academic Year

To subscribe for these services please complete the form at the following link or scan the QR code above:

[Service Level Agreement 2026-27 - School Admissions and Appeals Service – Fill in form](#)

By completing the online subscription form to sign up to these services you agree the information provided within this Agreement and that if you wish to cancel your subscription at any time during the academic year, you will be required to give a minimum of one month's notice.

You will be invoiced according to your preference requests and will need to provide a Purchase Order during the process.

Appendix 1

Cambridgeshire County Council School Admissions and Appeals Service

Expectations for Subscribing Schools Academic Year 2026–2027

Agreement Overview

This document sets out the expectations for Own Admission Authority schools subscribing to Cambridgeshire County Council's School Admissions and Appeals Service from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027.

Academy Responsibilities / Expectations for Own Admission Authority Schools

Timely Information Sharing

Schools must provide all relevant and up-to-date information to the Local Authority Admissions and Appeals teams within **5 school days** of request.

School Admissions

Schools must:

- Provide copies of Common Application Forms to the Local Authority where these are used or information contained in an online application form.
- Forward all applications received directly by the school, including decisions and responses, to the Local Authority.
- Respond to placement requests from the Local Authority within 2 school days. (this will apply to spaces available at own admissions authority schools)

Once a place has been accepted, schools must:

- Add the pupil to both the admissions and attendance registers within 5 school days.
- Notify the Admissions team when the pupil is placed on roll.

Compliance

Schools must adhere to:

- School Admissions Code 2021
- School Admission Appeals Code 2022
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018

Schools are responsible for ensuring pupil addresses are accurate to support correct allocations and waiting list positions.

Appeals Process

Appeal Representation

Schools must:

- Provide a trained* and informed presenting officer for all appeal hearings.
- Ensure documentation is submitted within required deadlines to enable hearings to proceed without delay.
- Respond to requests for case information and approve final appeal statements within 5 school days.

**Trained refers to attendance at Local Authority briefing or equivalent appeals training.*

Appeal Hearings

The Local Authority will administer appeals and schedule hearings in line with statutory requirements.

- Schools must ensure a presenting officer attends the scheduled hearing.
- If a presenting officer does not attend, the appeal may proceed in their absence.

Additional Notes

The Local Authority Appeals Manager may observe hearings for quality assurance purposes.

- Clerking services are provided by Pathfinder Legal Services.
- Statutory deadlines apply to all elements of the appeals process.

Local Authority Obligations

The Local Authority will:

- Deliver the Admissions and Appeals Service in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory codes.
- Provide schools with a minimum of 28 days' notice of any significant changes to processes.

Quality & Performance

The Local Authority will:

- Maintain agreed service standards.
- Monitor performance and compliance with statutory duties.
- Communicate service updates clearly and in a timely manner.

Compliance and Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

The Local Authority will monitor school compliance with the expectations set out in this document to ensure the effective delivery of Admissions and Appeals services.

Monitoring may include:

- Timeliness of responses to requests for information
- Adherence to agreed deadlines (e.g. 2-day and 5-day response requirements)
- Accuracy and completeness of information provided
- Attendance and preparedness at appeal hearings
- Compliance with statutory requirements and relevant codes

Performance Review

Where appropriate, the Local Authority may:

- Provide feedback to schools on performance in relation to these expectations
- Highlight areas of good practice or concern
- Offer guidance or support to address identified issues

Non-Compliance

Where a school does not meet the expectations outlined in this document, the Local Authority will:

- Raise concerns with the school in the first instance
- Work with the school to resolve issues and improve performance

Continued or significant non-compliance may:

- Impact the Local Authority's ability to deliver services effectively
- Be escalated to senior leadership within the school and the Local Authority

Continuous Improvement

Both the Local Authority and subscribing schools are expected to work collaboratively to:

- Review processes and outcomes
- Identify opportunities for service improvement
- Ensure ongoing compliance with statutory requirements