Admissions Policy 2026-27

The Sittingbourne School

Approved by: Lynn Lawrence (Chair Governors)	**Date:** July 2026
Last reviewed on: July 2026	
Next review due by: July 2027	

Contents

1. Admissions to the September Year 7 Entry

2. Admission to the Sixth Form

3. In year admissions

4. Policy Review

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1. Admission to the September Year 7 Entry

i. Numbers Admitted

The Published Admissions Number for the school is 270.

ii. Applications for Admission

1. Applications for admission to The Sittingbourne School (TSS) should be made online to the Local Education Authority.

2. The opening and closing dates for Kent County Council's online application process will be published on their website. The Governors will follow the Local Authority's timetable for applications.

3. In the event of the school being over-subscribed, all applications for admission will be considered according to the criteria set out below.

4. Kent County Council (KCC) will email their offers on the agreed date; these can also be accessed the following working day by logging on to the KCC site. Offers will need to be accepted by the agreed published date.

5. Should a place at The Sittingbourne School not have been offered, and you wish to be added to the waiting list, an online link will be available in the Local Authority offer email.

iii. Late Applications

1. The deadline for online applications is the agreed published date by KCC.

2. Late applications will be considered by KCC, with applications that have joined the school's waiting list, on the published reallocation date.

3. KCC will not make any new offers after the reallocation date and later applications will be added to the school's waiting list to be dealt with.

iv. In Year Admissions

1. Year 7 applications made after the start of term should be made to the school using KCC's In Year Admission Form (IYAF).

2. Applications received by TSS after the agreed published date should also be made to the school on an IYAF, and will be processed in a similar way to an In Year entry.

3. Details of any statutory right of appeal will be provided by TSS.

v. Admission of students with EHCPs for Speech and Language or hearing impairments

1. A maximum of 30 places in total for Years 7 – 11 per year will be allocated to students with an EHCP for Specific Speech & Language Learning needs, who in the opinion of Kent County Council and the School Governors, would benefit from the school provision.

2. Up to a maximum of 5 places in total for Years 7-11 will also be allocated to students who, in the opinion of the Kent County Council and the School Governors, would benefit from the school's Hearing Impaired provision.

vi. Oversubscription

Before the application of oversubscription criteria, children with an EHCP which names the school will be admitted. As a result of this, the published admissions number will be reduced accordingly.

Where applications for admission exceed 270 (or 285 for entry into the Year 7 cohort who started in September 2025 and 300 for September 2021, 2022 and 2023 cohorts), the following criteria will be applied, in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit:

1. Places will firstly be offered to children in Local Authority care. i.e. a child under the age of 18 years, Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children.
A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

A previously Looked After Child means such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear to the admission authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

2. Places will then be offered in the following order, using the criteria below:

a. A brother or sister attending the school when the child starts. In this context brother or sister means children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers and sisters, adopted siblings, step-brothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.

b. Medical, health, social and special access reasons will be applied in accordance with the school's legal obligations, in particular those under the Equality Act 2010. Priority will be given to those children whose mental or physical impairment means they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Equally, this priority will apply to children whose parents'/guardians', physical or mental health or social needs means that they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Such claims will need to be supported by written evidence from a suitably qualified medical or other practitioner who can demonstrate a special connection between these needs and the particular school.

c. Children of Staff: priority will next be given to children of staff at the school, in either of the following circumstances:

- The member of staff has been employed at the school for 2 or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, or
- The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage

c. Nearness of children's homes to school - we use the distance between the child's permanent home address (defined in KCC's annual admissions prospectus) and the school, measured in a straight line using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) address point. Distances are measured from a point defined as within the child's home to a point defined as within the school as specified by NLPG. The same address point on the school site is used for everybody. When we apply the distance criterion for the school, these straight-line measurements are used to determine how close each applicant's address is to the school. Where applications are made from properties or abodes that are not registered to the NLPG, including new build properties, KCC may be required to use planning sites or other relevant co-ordinates. In

exceptional circumstances where alternative co-ordinates are not available, measurements will be determined by a Senior Admissions Officer and confirmed by Head of Service.

A student's home address is considered to be a residential property that is the child's **only or main residence** and not an address at which your child might sometimes stay or sleep due to your own domestic or special arrangements.

The address must be the student's home address on the day you completed your application form and which is either:

- Owned by the child's parent, parents or guardian, OR
- Leased to or rented by the child's parent, parents or guardian under a lease or written rental agreement.

If you live separately from your partner but share responsibility for your child, and the child lives at two different addresses during the week, we will regard the home address as the one at which the child sleeps for the majority of weekdays.

A block of flats has a single address point reference, so applicants living in the same block will be regarded as living the same distance away from the school. In the unlikely event that two or more children live in the same block and in all other ways have equal eligibility for the last available place at the school, the names will be issued a number and drawn randomly to decide which child should be given the place.

vii. Waiting List

Parents may ask to be kept on a waiting list; this list will be re-ranked in accordance with the schools oversubscription criteria (listed above) each time a child is added.

viii. Appeals Against the Decision not to Offer a Place at the School

On the agreed published date parents will be notified by the Local Education Authority that they are being offered a place at the allocated school. This letter will give information about their statutory right of appeal.

2. Admission to the Sixth Form

The Published Admissions Number for students entering Year 12 in The Sittingbourne School Sixth Form in September 2026 is 300.

Places will firstly be offered to children in Local Authority care. i.e. A child under the age of 18 years for whom the Local Authority provides accommodation by agreement with their parents/careers (Section 22 of the Children's Act 1989) or who is subject of a care order under Part IV of the Act.

Priority will be given to existing pupils transferring from Year 11. The PAN for external candidates will be 20 but this figure may be exceeded in the event that this and the number of internal pupils transferring into Year 12 is less than the overall total figure for the year group, which is 150.

Students are admitted to the Sixth Form subject to the following:
1. a formal application by student and a student interview to determine the courses to be studied;
2. availability of a specific course or combination of courses;
3. minimum entry requirements for specific courses, as published on the school's website:

- Level 2 course: 5 GCSEs at grade 2 to 9
- A Levels - Average entry requirements at least 5 grade 5+ qualifications, including English and mathematics. Some subjects may have additional entry requirements.
- BTEC Level 3 - Average entry requirement at least 5 grade 4+ qualifications, including English and mathematics. Some subjects may have additional entry requirements.
- T Level - Average entry requirement of at least 5 grade 5+ qualifications, including English and mathematics.

Please note that the school reserves the right to withdraw courses if there is insufficient student demand.

After a place has been offered, the school reserves the right to withdraw the place in the following circumstances:

- when a parent/student has failed to respond to an offer within a reasonable time; or
- when a parent/student has failed to notify the school of important changes to the application information; or
- The admission authority offered the place on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application from a parent.

3. In Year Admissions

Year 7 applications received after the agreed published date, together with applications for places in year groups other than the normal year of entry, will

be treated as "In Year Admissions". If you would like to apply for admission to The Sittingbourne School in these circumstances, please complete a local authority In Year Admission Form (IYAF) and return it to the school. The IYAF is available online at: www.kent.gov.uk.

If a place is unavailable at the school, the child can be placed on our waiting list. Details of any statutory right of appeal will be provided by TSS at the time of the decision.

Applications Out-of-Chronological Age Group

In line with government advice that "*children should be educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate, and that they should only be educated out of their normal age group in very limited circumstances*" our policy is to allocate within a child's chronological age group.

In rare circumstances (e.g. the child has experienced problems such as ill health, or has had an interrupted education through residency abroad) it may be possible to make an application outside of this. This decision will always be made on the basis of the unique circumstances for each specific case and what is best for that individual child. The decision will be made by the Headteacher of the school and will take into account the following:

- parents'/carers' views;
- expert advice from relevant social, educational and medical professionals;
- whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group;
- any evidence that the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely;
- the long-term impact of the decision on the child.

Applications for a child to be admitted to a year group outside of their chronological age group should be made through the same process set out in this policy for both 'normal round' and 'in-year' applications. However, in addition to the standard application form further documentation should be provided to support the request for a place out of the chronological year group. This applies regardless of whether it is for a higher or lower year group.

The Headteacher may request additional information after the submission of an application for an out-of-year group place, if necessary.

Each application will be considered on the individual circumstances of each case. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision, including the reasons for it.

Unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal if they are refused a place at the school. However, this right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school which is not in their preferred age group.

4. Policy Review

In accordance with the DfE's 2021 statutory 'School Admissions Code' guidance, The Sittingbourne School carried out a consultation on this Admission Policy between 18 October 2023 and 29 November 2023.

This policy will be reviewed every year. This is so that it remains up to date, useful, and relevant.