



Executive Summary

The North East Learning Trust ('The Trust') is the admissions authority for Diamond Hall Junior Academy and Biddick Academy in Sunderland. The Trust as the admissions authority must act in accordance with the School Admissions Code in respect of all school admissions.

It is a mandatory requirement of the National School Admissions Code that all schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at an Academy. As part of determining their admission arrangements, the Trust must set an admission number for each relevant age group. This is the age group which pupils are or will be normally admitted to the school, for Diamond Hall Junior Academy is Year 3 and Biddick Academy is Year 7. The Trust is not proposing to change the admission number for either schools, they will remain at 80 and 195, respectively.

Following confirmation from Sunderland Together for Children ('the Local Authority') who are the Admissions Authority for maintained and controlled schools in Sunderland, that they are consulting on a proposal to amend the over-subscription criteria for those schools, the Trust have agreed to consult on the same proposal for Diamond Hall Junior Academy and Biddick Academy.

The consultation will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code and will take place for a period of seven weeks between Monday 13 October 2025 and Friday 28 November 2025. The Trustees will consider the outcome of the consultation and make a final decision at their meeting on 17 December 2025.

The proposed change relates to the offering of places should the Academies be over-subscribed in any of categories included in the over-subscription criteria. Where there are more applicants than places in any one of the categories, places are offered based on distance, which is currently measured by the shortest safest walking distance, using a Geographical Information System (GIS) with priority being given to those living closer to the Academy. The proposal is from 2027/2028 to measure the distance by a straight-line measurement from the centre of the home to the main entrance of the Academy, using a geographical information system (GIS). This uses Ordnance Survey maps and Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), which provides co-ordinates for every dwelling. The use of safest walking route can lead to challenge from parents/carers due to changes on the mapping system because of new housing developments, new roads/footpaths. The LA has confirmed that Sunderland is currently the only LA in the North East that still uses safest walking route.

Therefore, from the academic year 2027/2028 and beyond the Trust are proposing that the over-subscription criteria for Diamond Hall Junior Academy and Biddick Academy are as follows:



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Oversubscription criteria for Diamond Hall Junior Academy

- 1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after including 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 or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.**

A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. (See definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989.

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

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

- 2. Attendance in Key Stage 1 at Diamond Hall Infant School**

- 3. Sibling Link**

Children who have a sibling already attending the Academy and who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission. This includes step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address.

- 4. Children of staff employed at the Academy**

Children of staff employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made and/or the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage, and/or the member of staff has relocated.

- 5. Exceptional medical or psychological need**

You must include a medical or psychological report, prepared by a professional, to confirm information which you include in this section. This report should explain why only this school can meet your child's medical or psychological needs. Common childhood medical conditions such as asthma or giving a child's nervousness at starting a new school as a psychological reason for choosing a school are unlikely to be accepted as exceptional). If you intend to use this criterion when expressing a preference, please contact the School Admissions Team completing the application form.

- 6. Pupils for whom preferences are expressed on grounds other than those outlined above.**



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Tie breaker

Where the Academy is over-subscribed in any of the above categories, places will be offered based on distance from the centre of the home to the main entrance of the Academy with priority given to those living closest to the Academy. Distance will be measured by a straight-line measurement from the centre of the home to the main entrance of the Academy, using a geographical information system (GIS). This uses Ordnance Survey maps and Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), which provides co-ordinates for every dwelling.

Oversubscription criteria for Biddick Academy

- 1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after including 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 or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.**

A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. (See definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989.

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

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

- 2. Attendance in Key Stage 2 (age 7 -10+) at a designated cluster junior or primary school:**

- Biddick Primary School
- JFK Primary School
- Fatfield Primary Inspire Academy
- Barnwell Primary Academy
- New Penshaw Primary Inspire Academy
- Rickleton Primary School

- 3. Sibling Link**

An older brother/sister or older child (including adoptive, foster or stepchildren) that shares the same parent/carer and lives at the same address who will still be attending Biddick Academy at the time of admission.

- 4. Children of staff employed at the Academy**



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Children of staff employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made and/or the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage, and/or the member of staff has relocated.

5. Exceptional medical or psychological need

Parents/carers must submit a supporting medical or psychological report, prepared by a professional. This report should explain why only this Academy can meet your child's medical or psychological needs. Common childhood medical conditions such as asthma or giving a child's nervousness at starting new school as a psychological reason for choosing a particular school/academy are unlikely to be accepted as exceptional. If you intend to use this criterion when expressing a preference, please contact the School Admissions Team before completing the application form.

6. Pupils for whom preferences are expressed on grounds other than those outlined above.

Tie breaker

Where the Academy is over-subscribed in any of the above categories, places will be offered based on distance from the centre of the home to the main entrance of the Academy with priority given to those living closest to the Academy. Distance will be measured by a straight-line measurement from the centre of the home to the main entrance of the Academy, using a geographical information system (GIS). This uses Ordnance Survey maps and Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), which provides co-ordinates for every dwelling.

Responses to the Consultation

The Trust welcome comments on the proposed change to how the distance is to be measured in the event of over-subscription. You can respond to the consultation [here](#) or by email to schooladmissions@nelt.co.uk or by post to Admission Consultation, North East Learning Trust, Traynor House, Traynor Way, Whitehouse Business Park, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 2RU. The deadline for responses is 5pm on Friday 28 November 2025.