



THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST

ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS CONSULTATION

06 December 2024 – 31 January 2025

This is the formal consultation document for the admission arrangements of the academies of The Challenge Academy Trust from 2026/27 situated in Warrington Borough Council local authority area comprising:

Beamont Collegiate Academy
Bridgewater High School
Padgate Academy
Penketh High School
Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School
Broomfields Junior School
Appleton Thorn Primary School
Dallam Community Primary School
Great Sankey Primary School
Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School
Penketh South Primary School

Overview

The Trust came into existence in 2017 and has grown to include 12 academies within the Warrington area – 6 primary academies, 5 secondary academies and Priestley College whose admissions guidance as a Sixth Form College sits outside of these statutory arrangements.

The trust also includes the Sutton Academy in St Helens and their admission arrangements sit outside this consultation and are subject to a separate consultation.

The Trust is the Admissions Authority for the primary and secondary academies within the Trust. The Trust and its Warrington academies have developed a policy which ensures all academies within the Trust have a unified approach to admissions whilst ensuring the individual character of each academy is maintained.

All state-funded schools have a set of admissions rules, published admission number and oversubscription criteria to help them process school applications consistently, transparently and fairly in accordance with the 2021 School Admissions Code. The Trust is consulting on the unified policy for the Trust's Warrington academies from 2026/27.

The consultation is open between 6 December 2024 to 31 January 2025 on admission arrangements for the Trust's academies.

This specifically relates to the following academies in Warrington for whom The Challenge Academy Trust is the Admissions Authority:

Beamont Collegiate Academy
Bridgewater High School
Padgate Academy
Penketh High School
Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School
Appleton Thorn Primary School
Broomfields Junior School
Dallam Community Primary School
Great Sankey Primary School
Meadowside County Primary and Nursery School
Penketh South Primary School

Have your say

We would like to hear what you think about the proposed admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria for these academies.

If you have any comments, queries or concerns about the school admission arrangements, please email admissions@tcat.uk.com.

Any comments or queries can also be sent to academy trusts direct via their general enquiries form but please include the words 'Admissions Consultation 2026-27' in the subject header.

Feedback provided through the admission consultation will be treated confidentially and will be considered by the Trust Board in deciding the final arrangements.

Consultation Timeline

Consultation opens	6 December 2024
Consultation closes	31 January 2025
Review by Trust board	By 7 February 2025
Final determination	By 28 February 2025

Element 1: Academy Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

Each academy has a Published Admission Number (PAN) which refers to the maximum number of pupils who can be admitted at the first year of entry - Reception for primary schools, Year 3 for junior schools and Year 7 for secondary schools.

The majority of the academies' Published Admission Numbers remain the same. However, changes are proposed for:

- Broomfields with a reduction in PAN from 72 to 60 in Year 3
- Penketh with an increase in PAN from 220 to 240 for Year 7
- Padgate Academy with an increase in PAN from 150 – 180 for Year 7

The table below gives the PAN for each of the Trust academies in Warrington providing a comparison between the agree PAN for 2025/26 and the proposed PAN for 2026/27.

<i>School</i>	Year of Entry	Current PAN (2025/26)	Proposed PAN (2026/27)
<i>Appleton Thorn Primary School</i>	Reception	30	30
<i>Dallam community Primary School</i>	Reception	30	30
<i>Great Sankey Primary School</i>	Reception	45	45
<i>Meadowside Community Nursery and Primary School</i>	Reception	30	30
<i>Penketh South Primary School</i>	Reception	30	30
<i>Broomfields Junior School</i>	Year 3	72	60
<i>Beamont Collegiate Academy (BCA)</i>	Year 7	180	180
<i>Bridgewater High School</i>	Year 7	360	360
<i>Padgate Academy</i>	Year 7	150	180
<i>Penketh High School</i>	Year 7	220	240
<i>Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School</i>	Year 7	175	175

The rationale for each proposed change in PAN is as follows:

Padgate Academy

The Admissions Arrangements being consulted on here increase the PAN from 150 to 180. This reflects the projected increase in demand from 2026-27 in the local area as a result of demographic change and projected local development in the area.

Proposed change: The Trust proposed to increase the PAN to 180

Penketh High School

Penketh High School originally had a PAN of 240 until 2020 when the PAN was reduced to 180 as a consequence of declining pupil numbers. There is a rising demand for school places in the area alongside the increasing popularity of the academy. The DfE is also providing investment into the academy by the DfE as part of the School Rebuilding Programme. The Trust increased the PAN to 220 in 2025/26 to support the increased demand in the local area. The capital investment from the DfE enables the proposed further increase to 240 from 2026-27.

Proposed change: The Trust proposes to increase the PAN to 240.

Broomfields Junior School

Pupils at Broomfields Junior School historically have transferred from The Cobbs Infant and Nursery School to Broomfields Junior School when pupils complete Year 2 at the end of Key Stage One. As a result of the falling demand in the local area., the Trust went through a significant consultation for 2025-26 to reduce the PAN to 72 with 2 large classes in place.

Cobbs Infant School has now also reduced its intake to a 2-form entry with a PAN of 60. The proposed change to a PAN of 60 at Broomfields junior follows Cobbs model and ensures that children are able to move from Cobbs to Broomfields smoothly.

Proposed change: The PAN is reduced to 60 for September 2026

Element 2: Change in Over-Subscription Criteria for Broomfields Junior School

Criteria 2 of the over-subscription criteria for Broomfields Junior School currently reads

“Children who attend Cobbs Infant School. For the admissions year 2025-26

- pupils on roll as at 1st December 2023 will be considered first
- children admitted after 1st December 2023 will be considered second”

For the specific 2025-26 admission year, over-subscription criteria 2 was specifically designed to suit the circumstances for the year group in question. As these circumstances do not affect those applying for admission from 2026/27 year, criteria 2 has been amended to read “Children who attend Cobbs Primary School.”

Proposed change: The oversubscription criteria 2 is changed to read 'Children who attend Cobbs Infant School'.

Element 3: Inclusion of Dallam Community Primary School

Dallam Community Primary School joined The Challenge Academy Trust on 1st August 2024. Previously the school's admission arrangements were determined by Warrington Borough Council as the local authority. This consultation brings Dallam Community Primary School into the same admissions arrangements as the other primary schools in the Trust.

Proposed change: Dallam Community Primary School changes their admission arrangements in line with the other Warrington Primary schools in the Trust.
