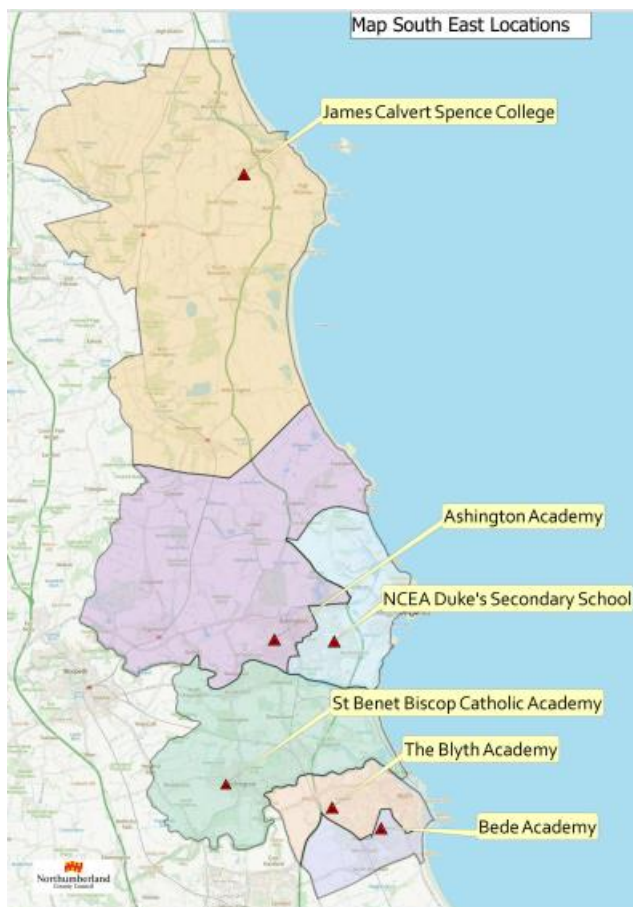




Northumberland County Council



Ashington Education Pathway

Overview

The Council allocates a catchment area (also known as a transport eligibility area) to almost every school in the county. This has enabled the Council to try to ensure there would be a sufficient number of pupils who could attend a given school and to ensure that there is a fair system in place when allocating home to school transport.

The Council also sets the planned admission number (or PAN) for all schools for which it is the 'admissions authority', which includes community and voluntary controlled schools in Northumberland. The PAN sets the number of pupils that the school will accept in its Admissions Year, which for secondary schools is into Year 7.

However, all other admissions authorities such as academy trusts and voluntary aided schools are able to set their own PAN and to set their own oversubscription criteria, such as catchment area, sibling already on roll etc.

The oversubscription criteria are only relevant where there have been more students who apply for places in the admissions year than there are places and are used to allocate the places that are available.

In the case of the North-East Learning Trust (NELT) which includes Ashington Academy and Bedlington Academy in its trust, they decided to remove the 'catchment area' and 'feeder' criterion from their oversubscription criteria and instead use the distance between school and home to allocate places to students where the number of applications exceeds the PAN – i.e. the closer a student lives to the school, the greater chance they have of being offered a place.

In the case of the communities that had traditionally fed into Ashington Academy, this has places students living in the villages of Ellington and Pegswood at a disadvantage under the new home to school distance criteria in relation to gaining a place at the academy.

Northumberland County Council is seeking the views of parents, carers and guardians in respect of their preferred preference in relation to the educational pathway for their child(ren) if they can't attend Ashington Academy.

We are hoping that today's session and the information we receive via the parental survey will form a pre-consultation that we can then formally consult upon when the appropriate window opens.

In order to make changes to our admission arrangements, the Council is required to consult between 1st October 2024 and 31st January 2025. Any changes would take effect from September 2026.

Therefore, we would appreciate it if you could complete the short survey which will be available on the Council's website on Thursday 7th March 2024:

<https://haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/education-skills/ashington-education-pathway-survey>

The survey will close on **Friday 12th April 2024**.

This survey will assist the Council in identifying what is the preferred secondary route parents living in Ellington and Pegswood would like for their children. This will enable the Council to establish an alternative educational pathway for students living in these communities, if that is necessary.

Catchment V's Transport Priority Areas

Schools in Northumberland usually have a defined catchment area for admission purposes, i.e. a defined geographical area surrounding a school from which it will usually take most of its pupils.

There is also a geographical area known as the 'transport priority area' that Northumberland County Council uses to help determine eligibility for assistance with school transport.

For community and voluntary controlled schools, the catchment area for deciding priority for admission and the transport priority area for assessing transport entitlement will always be the same.

However, some schools operate extended catchments for school admissions purposes beyond the areas recognised by Northumberland County Council for determining eligibility for school travel assistance. Such schools may include voluntary aided schools, foundation schools, trust schools as well as academies.

School Admissions

An 'Admissions Authority' is the body responsible for all decisions related to school admissions eg setting and publishing the policy, ranking applications, allocating places etc.

The school type will determine who the admissions authority is; for Council maintained schools, Northumberland County Council is the Admissions Authority, for academies, the Academy Trust is the Admission Authority and for Voluntary Aided church schools and foundation schools the governing body is the Admissions Authority.

For more information about who is responsible for admissions in each of the schools in the Ashington partnership, please see pages 120-125 in the handbook below:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Document-store/School%20admissions/FINAL-Admissions-Handbook-PRIMARY-School-2024-25.pdf>

Appeals

Information on how to appeal a school place is available as follows

Local Authority –

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/School-admissions-places-appeals-1/Appeals.aspx>

North-East Learning Trust (NELT) -

<https://www.ashingtonacademy.co.uk/filecache/560/820/29744-nelt-admission-appeals-guidance-20232024.pdf>