



Gillingham School, Dorset

United Learning Admissions Policy

Gillingham School

Last review:	September 2026
Next review:	September 2027
Signed:	PN
Approval Committee:	Governing Body



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Introductory statement

Gillingham School is an 11-18 school in Dorset. The school is a co-educational secondary academy and is part of United Learning¹.

Gillingham School seeks to bring out 'The Best in everyone'. The school serves all children in the local community. All children will be admitted without reference to ability or aptitude. There are no faith criteria as part of the admissions policy. Children from families of all faiths, or none, are very welcome.

This policy has been determined in accordance with the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code issued by the Department of Education.

The Academy acts as its own admissions authority. The Governing Body has responsibility for admissions arrangements, carried out in accordance with this policy.

Admission number

Year 7:

The school has an admission number of 270 for entry in Year 7 in September 2026.

The school will accordingly admit this number of pupils if there are sufficient applications.

Where fewer applicants than the published admission number for the relevant year group are received, places will be offered at the school to all those who have applied.

Year 12:

The Academy has an admission number for Year 12 of 80 external pupils, though in a typical year we are able to exceed this number. This is the minimum number of places which will be offered on an annual basis to those eligible applicants being admitted from outside the Academy.

If fewer than 150 of the Academy's own Year 11 pupils transfer into Year 12, additional external pupils will be admitted until Year 12 meets its capacity of 230.

How to Apply

Application process for entry into Year 7

The application process for admission into Year 7 is coordinated by Dorset Council on behalf of the school.

Parents should apply online at:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/> or here: [Starting secondary or upper school - Dorset Council](#).

You can contact the Admissions Team at the Council through the Contact Us Feature on their website or via the email address given below.

All applications must be received no later than the **national closing date on 31st October** to receive an offer on national offer day. Applications received after the 31st of October will be processed in accordance with dates published on the Council's website.

Offer letters will be issued by the Council on the National Offer Date (1st March or the first working day after).

Dorset Council's School Admissions Team Contact Details

- Website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/>

¹ United Learning is a multi-academy trust. For more information about the trust visit www.unitedlearning.org.uk

- Telephone: 01305 221060
- Email: admissions@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Admission of Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names Gillingham School will be admitted.

This is a statutory requirement, and such admissions are processed through the relevant local authority.

Oversubscription criteria

When Gillingham School is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan naming the school, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order²:

1. “Child in Care” or who was “previously a Child in Care” (see note A)
2. Children who the Academy Trust accepts have an exceptional medical or social need and where there is a need for a place at Gillingham School specifically (see note B).
3. Children living within the school’s catchment area who will have a sibling(s) attending the school at the time of admission. (see notes C, D & E)
4. Children living within the school’s catchment area who attended Gillingham School’s recognised feeder school during the previous year and are on that school’s roll at the time of application. (see note F).
5. Children living within the school’s catchment area. (see note D)
6. Children living outside the school’s catchment area who will have a sibling(s) attending the school at the time of admission. (see footnotes C & D)
7. Children living outside the school’s catchment area and who are attending Gillingham’s feeder schools during the previous year at the time of application. (see footnote F)
8. Children of permanent staff with at least two years’ continuous service at the school or those who have been recruited to a vacancy to meet a demonstrable skills shortage as at the date of application (in year) and who still intend to be employed at the school at the time of the child’s admission. (see note G)
9. All other children living outside the school’s catchment area, prioritising those who live nearest the school, as described below.

Tie-break

In the event that two or more applicants are tied for the final place, and the distance from home to school is identical (as measured by the agreed method – see below), the place will be allocated using a random allocation process. This process will be independently supervised to ensure fairness and transparency.

Distance is calculated between the child’s permanent home address (see Note E) and the school measured by a straight-line measurement using a geographical information-based system which identifies an Easting and Northing for the home address and the school and calculates the distance between the two locations. These distances are produced by Dorset Council’s Admissions team for the school.

Random allocation will not be applied to multiple birth siblings (twins and triplets etc.) from the same family

² Please also refer to the Notes section

tied for the final place. When considering twins, triplets or other multiple births places, where the final place available was offered to a twin, triplet or multiple birth, a place will be offered above the published admission number to the other twin, triplet or multiple birth children whose twin, triplet or multiple birth was offered a place within the admission number.

Late applications

All applications received after the deadline will be considered to be late for applications. Late applications will be considered after those received on time. If, following consideration of all applicants in the school is oversubscribed, parents may request that their child is placed on the school's waiting list.

Admission of children outside of their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group, either due to being summer born or for any other reason specific to the child's circumstances, such as ill-health.

The decision will be made by the **Governing Body of the Academy**, and in the best interests of the child.

Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in line with the School Admissions Code and relevant DFE guidance, taking into account:

- the parent's views
- the child's academic, social and emotional development
- medical evidence where relevant
- whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group

When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the **Governing Body of the Academy** will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

To apply for admission outside of the normal age group, parents should include a request with their application, specifying why admission out of normal year group is being requested.

Where the Academy agrees to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to a relevant age group as part of the main admissions round (Year 7) the Council and the Academy will process the application as though it were any other application made as part of the main admissions round, and the same oversubscription criteria shall apply.

Where the application falls outside the main admission round, then the in-year admission process shall apply (see below).

Parents have a right of appeal against refusal of a place, but not against the decision regarding year group placement. They can however complain about the decision if they think this has not been made fairly or in line with DFE guidance. To do this, they can contact United Learning (the Trust) at Governancelead@unitedlearning.org.uk

Waiting lists – Year 7

As part of the coordinated scheme for secondary admissions, Dorset Council will hold the waiting list on behalf of Gillingham School.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list.

Parents will be contacted if a place becomes available for their child but should be aware that their child's place on a reserve list may change if an application is subsequently received that meets a higher criterion than their own.

In Year Admissions: Arrangements for Admitting Pupils outside of the normal admissions round

Applications outside of the normal admissions round are known as in-year admissions. Dorset Council manages in-year admissions on behalf of Gillingham School.

To apply for a place after the start of term or in any other year group, please contact the Council here:

[Moving school during the school year \(in year admissions\) - Dorset Council](#)

If the year group applied for has a place available, the child will be admitted unless there are reasonable reason(s) not to admit in accordance with Schools Admissions Code. In such instances, admission may be refused and the child referred to the Fair Access Protocol managed by the Council.

If more applications are received than there are places available, the oversubscription criteria outlined above shall apply. Parents/carers whose application is turned down are entitled to appeal (see below).

When an offer of a school place is made, it is offered on the strength of the information provided on the application form and should any information come to light which reveals false or misleading information or that important information relevant to the application was withheld, the offer may be reversed.

Where an offer is made following an in-year application, and the offer is accepted, arrangements will be made for the child to start school as soon as possible.

Waiting lists – In Year Admissions

Where an in-year application is received but a place is not available in that year group, the child's details will be held on a waiting list until the end of the academic year. Parents wishing to remain on the list for the start of the next academic year will need to re-apply. Names held on the waiting list will not automatically be carried over to a new school year.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list.

Parents will be contacted if a place becomes available for their child but should be aware that their child's place on a reserve list may change if an application is subsequently received that meets a higher criterion than their own.

Parental Disputes

Where more than one individual holds parental responsibility for a child, it is expected that all parties will reach agreement on school preferences prior to submitting an application.

The person submitting the application must confirm that:

- They have parental responsibility for the child.
- The application has the consent of all individuals with parental responsibility, or
- They hold a relevant court order authorising them to make the application independently.

If the school or local authority becomes aware of a dispute—for example, if conflicting applications are received or a challenge is raised by another parent—the application may be put on hold while the following steps are taken:

- **Verification of Parental Responsibility:** Parents may be asked to provide documentation (e.g. birth certificate, court order).
- **Court Orders:** If a court order exists, the school will act in accordance with its terms.
- **No Agreement or Court Order:** If both parents have parental responsibility and no agreement or court order is in place, the application will not be processed until:
 - Written agreement is received from all parties, or
 - A court order is provided.

If a place has already been allocated based on an application later found to be disputed or misleading, the offer may be withdrawn in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

The school and admissions team cannot mediate or take sides in parental disputes. Parents are advised to seek legal advice or mediation to resolve disagreements.

Appeals (Years 7-11)

The parents of any child who is refused a place at the school has a right of appeal to an independent Appeals Panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Education.

The panel consists of three people who are independent of the school, the school's Governing Body and the Council. The panel will consider the circumstances of the case put before them. Both the College and the parents must abide by the decision it makes.

All appeals in relation to admissions are arranged by Dorset Council's Admissions Team on behalf of the College. Further information and appeal forms are available from the Council here: [Appeal a school admission decision - Dorset Council](#)

If parents decide to appeal, they will receive an advance notice of the hearing date. They will be invited to attend the appeal. The hearing will be conducted as informally as possible, and there will be an opportunity for parents to put forward their case and ask questions. If the appeal is refused, a further appeal for admission in the same academic year will not be considered unless there is a significant material change in circumstances of the parent or child.

Sixth Form Admissions

The Academy has a Sixth Form with a total capacity of 230 students. The Published Admission Number, which applies to external admissions only, is 80, though Gillingham School typically accepts more. Where fewer than 150 of the Academy's own Year 11 students decide to stay for Year 12, more external applicants may be admitted until Year 12 is at capacity of 230.

We aim to offer a large range of academic and vocational subjects and qualifications. Our policy is to ensure that the students accepted into the sixth form can be placed on appropriate courses where they are likely to succeed. Students are invited to attend the open evening in the autumn term and are required to attend the induction day in September.

Admission to specific courses is subject to meeting individual subject requirements and availability. These apply equally to internal and external applicants. These can be found in the Sixth Form prospectus here: [Sixth Form Admissions | Gillingham School, Dorset](#)

All Gillingham School students in Year 11 can apply for a place in our Sixth Form. We also accept external applications from students wishing to transfer from another institution. The school's catchment area for lower school students does not apply to Sixth Form applications.

How to Apply

External applications to Gillingham Sixth Form will be by published application form to the Admissions Officer. Relevant information and the application form can be found via the School's website: <https://www.gillingham-dorset.co.uk/> or [Sixth Form Admissions | Gillingham School, Dorset](#).

Internal students will complete their applications online at school.

As a result of these applications every student will need to attend a guidance meeting to ensure the student is given appropriate advice and guidance.

Students are asked to select provisional course preferences. This is not a firm commitment, and they will be able to reconsider their options after the GCSE results are published and considering the school's timetable.

Entry Requirements

All places offered, including for those students already enrolled at Gillingham School, are dependent upon the criteria below:

- (i) that the student has attained the specific academic requirements for entry to the courses, which are published in the Sixth Form Prospectus here: [Sixth Form Admissions | Gillingham School, Dorset](#)
- (ii) that there is a suitable course available with a vacancy; group size will normally be capped at 25 but may be smaller depending on the nature of the subject and availability of resources

Oversubscription criteria for External Applicants to the Sixth Form

Children with an EHCP that names the Academy will be admitted, provided they meet the entrance requirements.

Where applications exceed available places, the oversubscription criteria below will be applied to external applicants.

1. “Child in Care” or who was “previously a Child in Care” (see note A)
2. Children who the Academy Trust accepts have an exceptional medical or social need and where there is a need for a place at Gillingham School specifically. (see note B)
3. Children living within the school’s catchment area, who will have a sibling(s) attending the school at the time of admission. (see notes C, D & E)
4. Children living within the school’s catchment area. (See note D)
5. Children living outside the school’s catchment area, who will have a sibling(s) attending the school at the time of admission. (See notes C and D)
6. Children of permanent staff with at least two years’ continuous service at the school or those who have been recruited to a vacancy to meet a demonstrable skills shortage as at the date of application (in year) and who still intend to be employed at the school at the time of the child's admission. (See note G)
7. All other children living outside the school’s catchment area, prioritising those who live nearest the school.

In exceptional but rare circumstances, often due to medical issues, individuals may be accepted onto particular courses with reduced entry requirements. These very rare decisions will be made by the joint Heads of Sixth Form in consultation with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Late applications are those received beyond the third working week in September. Applicants will need to ensure that they are able to catch up with any missed work, especially for new subjects or syllabuses. Moving institutions whilst studying A Levels or Level 3 BTECs is rarely advisable, and students, in the school’s experience, rarely achieve their full potential as a result.

In such scenarios, a guidance interview will take place to discuss options including re-starting the academic year, how we can facilitate catching up missed work, whether there are places available on a particular course or exploring a reduction in the volume of study.

Decisions to offer or refuse admission will be made by our admissions committee comprised of the joint Heads of Sixth Form and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

There is a right to appeal any admission decisions through the School’s Governing Body.

To appeal, please contact pam.henderson@gillingham-dorset.co.uk in the first instance for further information.

Fair Access Protocol (FAP)

Gillingham School participates in the In-Year Fair Access Protocol managed by Dorset Council in order to minimize the number of students who are at risk of underachievement by being out of school. This is reviewed by the local Admissions Forum on a regular basis.

Fraudulent Applications

The Academy reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if it is found that the application contains fraudulent or misleading information.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body will review these admission arrangements annually.

Any consultation will be carried out in accordance with the statutory requirements.

NOTES:

- A. Child in Care.** A “Child in Care” means any child who is in the care of a local authority in accordance with Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989. A child who was “previously a Child in Care” means a child who after being Looked After became subject to an Adoption Order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, a Child Arrangement Order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 or Special Guardianship Order under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989. This category also includes Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Children (IAPLAC). These are also children outside of England, who were deemed to have been in the care of the State (or by the 3rd sector where no state provision is available) prior to their adoption.
- B. Exceptional medical or social need.** Applications will only be considered under this category if there is evidence provided such as a Child Protection Order, Children in Need document or a written statement from a doctor, social worker or other relevant independent professional. The information must confirm the exceptional medical or social need and demonstrate how only Gillingham School can meet the defined needs of the child.
- C. Sibling Link.** The term ‘sibling’ means full brother or sister, half or stepbrother or sister, adoptive brother or sister and other non-blood related children who live with married or cohabiting parents in the same household and relates to all year groups provided by the school.
- D. Catchment Area.** Pupils living in the following areas of Dorset will normally be allocated places at Gillingham with transport provided by Dorset Council; Gillingham, Bourton, Silton, Moorside, Todber, Stour Row, Stour Provost, East Stour, Madjeston, Marnhull, Fifehead Magdalen, West Stour, Kings Mill, Nyland, Kington Magna, Bowden, Buckhorn Weston and Quarr.

Pupils living in the following areas of Wiltshire will normally be allocated places with transport provided by Wiltshire Council; Mere, West Knoyle, East Knoyle, Hindon, Sedgemoor, Norton, Zeals, Stourton, Kilminster, Chicklade and Maiden Bradley.

A map of the catchment areas can be found on the school’s website here:
[Admissions Arrangements | Gillingham School, Dorset](#)
- E. Home Address.** For the purpose of admissions, a child’s home address or normal residence is where they normally live during term time.

Where a child lives with a parent with shared responsibility for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined by confirmation of the registered address from which the child in question is registered with a doctor. If this is not applicable, then residence at which the parent with whom the child spends the greater proportion of the school week from Sunday evening to Thursday evening lives will be taken as the home address.

For the purpose of admissions, proof of address would need to be from the following list:

- Council tax bill.
- A rental agreement for a minimum of six school weeks signed and dated by both the tenant and the landlord.
- A letter from your Solicitor confirming the exchange of contracts on the new property you are purchasing stating the full postal address. Preferably with a completion date.
- If you are moving in with a friend or relative, we will need a letter from the friend/relative confirming that you are coming to stay with them (mentioning you all by full name) and we will also need to see a recent utility bill for the friend/relative dated within the last three months.
- Current Gas or Electricity Bill
- Tied/Work Accommodation with letter from employer

We will withdraw school places which have been gained using false information or documentation.

F. Feeder Primary Schools. The designated feeder primary schools for Gillingham School are:

- Bourton
- Gillingham
- Hindon
- Mere
- Milton
- St Gregory's, Marnhull
- St Mary's, Marnhull
- St Mary the Virgin
- Stower Provost
- Whitesheet
- Wyke

G. Children of Staff. The term 'children' includes full, half, step, adopted and those non-blood related but resident through marriage, civil partnerships or single-family co-habitation arrangements at the time of application or deadline.

H. Staff are defined as all Dorset Council employed teaching and support staff at the preferred school. 'Children of staff' refers to situations where the staff member is the natural parent, the legal guardian or a resident stepparent. If applicants wish to be considered under this criterion, then a letter from the Headteacher confirming the above applies to the applicant must be provided at the time of application.

Failure to provide sufficient evidence will result in the application being processed against the next highest

criteria.