



Bracknell Forest Council

**Co-ordinated Admission
Scheme**

Primary Schools

**For entry to schools
in
2024-2025**

PRIMARY SCHEME

BACKGROUND

Legislation requires Local Authorities (LA) to draw up a statutory scheme for co-ordinating admission for all maintained schools in its area (excluding special schools, but including aided schools and academies).

The purpose of a co-ordinated scheme is to ensure that every parent of a child living in the Bracknell Forest Council's area who has applied for a place in the normal admissions round receives an offer of only one place on the same day. Any scheme should also aim to ensure that parents are treated fairly and consistently regardless of the status of the school for which they make an application.

When drawing up admissions arrangements, admissions authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are clear, fair and objective, for the benefit of all children, including those with special educational needs, disabilities or in the care of the LA, including those children who were previously in care. The admissions arrangements must also comply with the relevant legislation, including the equalities legislation. Bracknell Forest Local Authority's admissions criteria for its maintained schools reflect these requirements. Admissions arrangements should enable parents to express their preference. There is no guarantee that a school place will be available at the school(s) chosen by the parents. However, the Admissions Authority will adhere to the parent's expressed preference subject to availability of a school places and in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria.

MAIN DETAILS OF THE CO-ORDINATED SCHEME

- **Equal preferences**

The DfE (Department for Education) states that a co-ordinated scheme is based on equal preferences. In other words all preferences are treated as equal initially. If more than one place can be offered, the single offer will be for the school the parent/carer has ranked highest. If a place cannot be offered at any of the preference schools, then a place will be offered at the next nearest school with available spaces.

This system allows each preference that parents/carers give to be considered separately. If a child could be allocated a place at two or more of their preference schools, then the parents' ranking will be used as a tie breaker.

The scheme will not affect the duty of the Governors of voluntary aided schools or academies to set and apply their own admissions arrangements. These schools will continue to be able to operate their own over subscription criteria and these **must** be clear, fair and objective and they must comply with the School Admissions Code.

- **Information for parents**

Parents wishing to apply for a school place from September 2024 will be able to find information on the process and admissions arrangements published in the LA's composite prospectus. This is entitled The Guide to Primary Education 2024/25. This guide will be available on the Bracknell Forest Council's website from 12th September prior to the admissions year and hard copies will be available on request for those who do not have access to the internet.

- **Making an Application**

Bracknell Forest residents can apply for a place for any primary school either online or using a paper Common Application Form. It must also be used if residents wish to apply for a primary school outside the Borough. All applications will be recorded by the home LA and then sent to the maintaining LA for each of the preference schools in accordance with the co-ordinated scheme's timetable.

If non Bracknell Forest residents wish to apply for a Bracknell Forest school they should use their home LA form or online application to apply. That request will then be transferred electronically by that Local Authority to Bracknell Forest Council by the date in the scheme.

Parents will be able to name up to three schools and parents are encouraged to do this. Parents will be asked to rank their preferences. They will also be able to give reasons for each preference, relating these to the admissions criteria.

All applications will be checked for residency via the Revenue Services department, and where there are discrepancies, it will become the applicant's responsibility to satisfy the LA of that residency. Service families should refer to the General Information section below.

- **Online Applications**

Parents are encouraged to apply using the online application site via the council's website. Information on how to do this will be available in the composite prospectus and on the Bracknell Forest Council's website. The site will be open for applications from 5 November 2023 to 15 January 2024.

- **Common Application Form**

All applicants living in Bracknell Forest can instead, if they wish, apply using a paper form to make an application. Parents can download this form from the Bracknell Forest website or contact the School Admissions Team for a form and this will be sent to them.

- **Supplementary Forms**

Own admission authority schools such as voluntary aided schools or academies can prepare a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) to be completed with the online application/common application form if they require further information in order for them to rank applications for their school against their admissions criteria. Governing Bodies of VA schools and academies and the Local Authority will make the SIF available to parents/carers both in hard copy and as a document on their school website. The forms will be available from and can be returned to either the individual schools or the Local Authority.

- **Applications that name own admission authority schools**

The LA will process all the applications for voluntary aided schools and academies and then transfer the information electronically to schools.

The Governing Bodies of voluntary aided schools and academies will then need to meet within the timescales defined in the scheme in order to advise the LA of their ranking of their applications. The LA will require the Governors to produce a brief statement which will explain to applicants (and future appellants) how and why places have been ranked. The LA will make this statement available on their website and hard copies will be available on request.

- **Faith-based school with a religious character**

A faith-based school with a religious character is required to offer every child who applies, whether of the faith, another faith, or no faith, a place at the school if there is a place available. However, faith-based schools are popular and often over subscribed. Such schools are permitted to use faith-based oversubscription criteria and allocate places by reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.

- **Applications made after the closing date of 15 January 2024**

- **Late Application**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could have been made by the closing date of 15 January 2024 the application will be processed by the School Admissions Team in the second round which begins from 3 May 2024.

- **Moving into Bracknell Forest**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could **not** have been made by the closing date of 15 January 2024 (for example if they have just moved into Bracknell Forest) but the application form is submitted by 2 February 2024 the application will be considered on time and the relevant criteria will be applied to the application. However evidence to support the reason for the late application will be required by the Local Authority. If the application is received after 2 February 2024 it will be processed in the second round which begins from 3 May 2024.

- **Moving within Bracknell Forest**

If parents move house within Bracknell Forest after the closing date of 15 January 2024 and by 2 February 2024 they must contact the Local Authority to discuss any changes they may be able to make to their preferences. They will be accommodated and the relevant criteria applied if at all possible. If parents move house after 2 February 2024 the request will be processed in the second round which begins from 3 May 2024.

PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

All applications received on time by the Local Authority will be verified against the relevant criteria and all requests for places outside of the Local Authority will be sent electronically to those authorities. Bracknell Forest will also receive requests for places.

Requests for places in Bracknell Forest own admission authority schools will then be sent to them electronically for them to rank the applications against the school's admission criteria, which is then returned to the local authority.

All of the applications will be processed by the local authority to achieve a single offer for each child.

ALLOCATION PROCESS

Admission of children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be managed by the Special Needs Team in accordance with the Code of Practice for Pupils with Special Educational Needs. The parents will be informed of their child's allocated primary school by 15 February 2024 by the SEN Team.

- **The allocation process - Bracknell Forest Schools**

As soon as all applications have been received, including those submitted online and from outside Bracknell Forest, the LA will consider all applications equally for its maintained schools and apply the admissions arrangements as published.

The Governors of a voluntary aided school or an academy will make their decisions based on the information received from applicants on the common application form and the SIF where necessary. The Governors will rank all the applications for their school and advise the LA of the results. Their ranked list will include all on time applications. The Governors will provide a statement explaining how places have been ranked and (where appropriate) the reasons why all the preferences have not been met. This statement will be available on the Bracknell Forest Council's website on 16 April 2024* and a hard copy can be sent to parents if requested.

Offers will be sent to parents by their home LA on 16 April 2024*. The home LA will advise all parents of the result of their application. If they have been refused a place at one of their preference schools they will be informed of the reasons for refusal and the details of how to lodge an appeal. Parents will also be required to accept the offer of a place by 3 May 2024. Failure to do this could result in the offer of a school place being withdrawn. Parents will also be required to send a copy of their child's birth certificate at this time to the School Admissions Team.

On behalf of the Governors of the aided school or academy the home LA will advise all applicants of the results of their application. The home LA will advise those applicants who are refused a place of their right of appeal and of the arrangements in place for lodging an appeal.

If the LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools then an offer will be made to the parent for a place for their child at the next nearest school to the home address of the family, this may not necessarily be their designated area school and it may be some distance from their home address.

All parents will be offered a full time place for their child to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the academic year or until the child's statutory school age. Parents can request that their child takes up a part time* place until their child reaches statutory school age. For an explanation of statutory school age see General Information below.

*Part time is defined as either 5 mornings or 5 afternoons a week.

- **The allocation process – non Bracknell Forest schools**

Parents who have applied for schools outside Bracknell Forest will be sent the results of their application by their home LA on 16 April 2024*. In order to do this the maintaining LA will inform the home LA whether they are able to allocate a place at any of the preferred schools. The home LA will then consider all the preferences and possible offers. Where multiple offers can be made, the home LA will make a single offer of a place at the school that was ranked the highest by the parent/carer.

If the home LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools then an offer will be made to the parent for a place for their child at the next nearest school to the home address of the family, this may not necessarily be their designated area school and it may be some distance from their home address.

All non Bracknell Forest admissions authorities will be expected to provide the home LA with a detailed statement explaining how places have been allocated and (where appropriate) the reasons why all the preferences have not been met in order to inform the applicants where necessary.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Statutory school age**

Statutory school age is defined as the following:

If a child's birthday falls on or between **1 September and 31 December** they will become of statutory school age on the 1 January after they turn 5, which is defined as the start of the spring term. They will start in a reception class where they will spend two terms before starting in a Year 1 class in the following September.

If your child's birthday falls on or between **1 January and 31 March** they will become statutory school age on 1 April, which is defined as the start of the summer term. They will start in a reception class where they will spend one term before starting in a Year 1 class in the September.

If your child's birthday falls on or between **1 April and 31 August** they will become of statutory school age on the 1 September, which is defined as the start of the autumn term. **However you are unable to defer entry to a new academic year; a new application would have to be made for a place in Year 1.**

However all children will be offered a full time start in the September following their fourth birthday.

- **Multiple Births**

Where the LA has received applications for twins or other multiple births and when one of the siblings is the last child to be admitted under the oversubscription criteria, the other sibling(s) may be admitted as an exception.

- **Child arrangements orders**

It is increasingly common that parents are agreeing, and courts are endorsing, child arrangements orders (previously called shared residence orders) under Section 8 of The Children Act 1989. Further advice on this matter can be obtained from the School Admissions Team. Any details regarding these arrangement orders, or the child's living arrangements, must be submitted at the time of application. It is the parents' responsibility to provide this information. As a general rule shared residence is based (for admissions purposes) on the number of school nights a child spends at each home. The School Admissions Team may take legal advice on these matters as they relate to a specific case. A main address will need to be used to process the application. If the second parent/carer's address is different from the first they will not receive any information/letters.

- **Home address**

The address where the child lives at the closing date of 15 January 2024 will be used to process on time applications. All addresses will be checked via the Revenue Services department. If any discrepancies are found it remains the applicant's responsibility to satisfy the Admissions Authority that they live at the address that they state. If fraud is suspected, then further proof may be requested. If fraud is established and a school place has been obtained as a result of a fraudulent application, then any offer of a school place will be withdrawn and the application considered afresh.

If a parent/carer owns a property within the Borough which they do not occupy and/or rent out and then move into another property within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school, then it is for the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the Local Authority that the new address is that of the property in which they reside in, to allow that address to be used to determine any relevant criteria.

If an applicant already owns and resides in a property within the borough which is in the process of being sold, Bracknell Forest is able to accept the address of the new property on submission of the appropriate evidence in support of the move eg. a solicitor's letter showing completion. It is for the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the Local Authority that the new address is that of the property where the child resides.

The address used on an application must be a permanent address; temporary addresses can only be considered where evidence is provided of a genuine reason for the move.

- **Applicants from abroad**

Applicants from abroad who intend to move or return to the UK and reside in the borough can make an application for their child prior to their move.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring their child has the right of abode and the right to access a state-funded school before an application can be submitted.

The address where the child resides as of the closing date for applications will be the address used to process the application.

Once the family have moved to the UK, and provided proof of their address within the borough, their application can be updated in line with section 'Moving into Bracknell Forest' above.

Should a child fail to start at the allocated school at the beginning of the autumn term, the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

- **Service Families**

Families of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the Bracknell Forest area (or Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in Bracknell Forest) will be able to make an application for a school place if it is accompanied by an official letter from the relevant service declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering address.

For those service families who already live in Bracknell Forest or are moving to live in Bracknell Forest a formal letter from their chain of command verifying their address would be accepted if applying under the designated area criteria.

- **Looked After and Previously Looked After Children**

Parents or LAs applying on behalf of a child who is either a Looked After Child or a Previously Looked After Child can request the following criterion to be applied to their application:

Looked After Children¹ and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted² (or became subject to a child arrangements order³ or special guardianship order⁴) immediately following having been looked after. This also includes those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted⁵

If a parent or LA (where relevant) wishes to apply under this criterion it is their responsibility to ensure that all relevant paperwork is submitted with the application, for example a copy of the relevant order issued by the family court. Should an applicant not submit any relevant documentation with their application it will be assumed that they do not wish these circumstances to be taken in to account and their application will be processed using any other relevant criteria.

¹ 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.

² This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

³ Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁴ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

⁵ This includes children who were in state care in a place outside of England, if they were accommodated by, a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

- **Appeals**

If parents have been refused a place at one or more of their preferences they will be informed of their right of appeal. The deadline for lodging appeals allows appellants at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeal. Admissions authorities must then hear all appeals submitted by this date within 40 school days.

- **Waiting lists**

The LA will maintain waiting lists for all community and voluntary controlled Bracknell Forest over subscribed schools. Applicants not offered a place at a higher preference school than that which has been offered will automatically be placed on a waiting list for a Bracknell Forest school. Parents should be aware that their child's name can go up or down the waiting list according to the priority of new additions to the list, for example someone moving into the area is placed on the appropriate place on the waiting list. Waiting lists must be maintained in criteria order at all times. The LA will maintain the waiting lists for all Bracknell Forest maintained schools for the school year for which they have applied. At the end of the school year the waiting list will end and parents will need to reapply for a place for the following year. No reminders will be sent.

Parents will be advised that if they want to go on the waiting list for a school named that was a non Bracknell Forest preference they should contact the school or the maintaining local authority of the school to establish their policy on waiting lists.

Details of how waiting lists for each own admission authority school will be managed will be set out in the admission arrangements that apply to each school.

- **Changes of preference**

Parents who wish to amend their paper application before the closing date will be able to do so as long as they put their request in writing to the Admissions Team by the closing date. Online applications can be amended up until the closing date.

Changes of preference after the closing date of 15 January 2024 will only be allowed after 16 April 2024 in writing to the School Admissions Team and will be processed in the second round.

- **Admission of children outside their normal age group / delayed entry**

Where the parents of a summer born child does not wish to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, they may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

The parent will be required to contact the School Admissions Team with a request (supported by any evidence the parent wishes to submit*) for their child to be admitted into a different year group than the relevant one according to their date of birth. This request must be made by the published closing date for their child's date of birth. It is for the parent to ensure that they have submitted all relevant documentation (where necessary) as no further request will be made to the parent.

If the application is for a school where Bracknell Forest is the admission authority the paperwork may be forwarded where necessary to other professionals within the council who can advise the admission authority. All information will then be sent to the headteacher of the relevant school(s) for their views and a final decision will then be made.

If the application is for a school that is their own admission authority (eg voluntary aided school, academies etc) then the request and the supporting documents will be forwarded to the Governors of that school for their decision regarding the request.

The decision from all relevant admission authorities will be sent to the parent from the local authority and this decision is final.

***Evidence Required**

Consideration of these requests will include taking account of the parents' views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional. The views of the headteacher of the school concerned will also be taken into account.

When informing a parent of the decision on the year group to which the child will be admitted, the parent will be notified of the reasons for the decision. The decision from all relevant admission authorities will be sent to the parent from the local authority and this decision is final.

The parent has a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

DEFINITIONS

- **Parent**

Parent is defined under S576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
 - any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
 - any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).
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- **Designated areas/catchment areas**

Maps showing the designated area of a school are available to view on the Bracknell Forest Council's website, at the school in question, or at a council office on request.

Parents can also find their designated area school on the Bracknell Forest website:
[Bracknell Forest School Admissions \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.braccknellforest.gov.uk/bracknell-forest-school-admissions)

**TIMETABLE FOR THE PRIMARY CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
2024/25**

Date	Action
By 12 th September 2023	Composite prospectus for Bracknell Forest primary transfers to be published on the council's website
5 November 2023	Online application site open
15 January 2024	Closing date for applications
By 2 February 2024	Latest date for accepting applications for those moving into the area
By 15 February 2024	SEN Team to inform parents of statemented pupils of their allocated school
28 February 2024	Closing date for receipt of on time Supplementary Information Forms by own admission authority schools where applicable
By 13 March 2024	Own admission authority schools to advise the local authority of their ranked list
28 February 2024	Appeal timetable to be published on council's website. Own admission authorities to publish their own
By 3 April 2024	Final co-ordination with other local authorities
16 April 2024*	Offer emails sent. Offer letters sent
By 3 May 2024	Deadline for parents to accept offers.
After 3 May 2024	Second round begins Begin processing of late applications and waiting list offers
By 16 May 2024	Appeals should be submitted by this date to be heard together.
Summer Term 2024	Local authority to advise schools of final allocation details Schools to send out registration forms. Appeals to be heard

*Or next working day if this is a non week day

Bracknell Forest's Admissions Relevant Area

The School Standards & Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities to establish Relevant Area(s) for admission policy consultations. The Relevant Area is the area in which admission authorities must consult with schools regarding their proposed admission arrangements before finalising them.

Bracknell Forest proposes that its Relevant Area will remain as follows:

- The local authority will consult on the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools with:
 - all schools within Bracknell Forest all 4 neighbouring local authorities
 - any out of county academy and foundation, trust and voluntary aided primary school within 3 miles of the Bracknell Forest border
 - any out of county academy and foundation, trust and voluntary aided secondary school within 3 miles of the Bracknell Forest border.

- Having first consulted with their Diocese, primary schools designated as having a religious character will consult with:
 - Bracknell Forest Council
 - all other primary schools within a 3 miles
 - other local authorities within a 3 miles
 - other faith primary schools within their own deanery, according to guidance issued by their Diocese

- Primary academies and foundation and trust schools will consult with:
 - Bracknell Forest Council
 - all other primary schools within a 3 miles
 - other local authorities within a 3 miles

- Having first consulted with their Diocese, secondary schools designated as having a religious character will consult with
 - Bracknell Forest Council
 - all other primary and secondary schools within a 3 miles radius
 - other local authorities within a 3 mile radius
 - other primary and secondary faith schools within their own deanery, according to guidance issued by their Diocese

- Secondary academies and foundation schools will consult with:
 - Bracknell Forest Council
 - all other primary and secondary schools within a 3 mile radius
 - other local authorities within a 3 mile radius