



Bracknell Forest Council

**Co-ordinated Admission Scheme
In-Year**

**Secondary Schools
and
Primary Schools**

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

BACKGROUND

There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year admissions for schools for which they are not the admission authority however, Bracknell Forest will continue to co-ordinate all in-year applications for own admission authority schools that agree to be part of the local authority in-year co-ordinated scheme, alongside all of its maintained schools.

Those own admission authority schools that do not wish to have applications co-ordinated by the local authority will indicate that in their in-year admission arrangements.

If an application is received after the academic year has started then it will be treated as an “in year” application. If a parent requires a school place within another authority then they must contact that authority in the first instance.

MAIN DETAILS OF THE CO-ORDINATION

Applicants who wish to apply for a place for a co-ordinating school within Bracknell Forest will need to contact the School Admissions Team at the council to obtain a form or apply using the council’s online application process.

The Governors / Academy Trust of own admission authority schools set and apply their own admissions arrangements. A list of academies and voluntary aided schools within Bracknell Forest can be found in the Guide to In Year Applications. These schools will continue to be able to operate their own published over subscription criteria. The over subscription criteria **must** be clear, fair and objective and they must comply with the School Admissions Code.

Applications for all co-ordinating own admission authority schools and all applications for maintained schools must be made on the form available from the School Admissions Team at Bracknell Council.

Voluntary aided (VA) schools or academies can prepare a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) to be completed if they require further information in order for them to allocate places at 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.

The LA will process all the applications for co-ordinating aided schools and academies and then transfer the request for a school place and all relevant information electronically to schools.

The LA will process and apply the relevant criteria to applications received for all maintained school within the borough.

It will be necessary for all schools to inform the LA at regular intervals of their numbers on roll. This information may be collected electronically and should be supplied within two school days of the receipt of the request by the LA.

For any own admission authority schools that choose not to co-ordinate **must**, on receipt of an in-year application, notify the local authority of both the application and its outcome, to allow the local authority to keep up to date figures on the availability of places in the area. Schools should aim to do this within two school days. The admission authority **must** also inform parents of their right to appeal against the refusal of a place.

If a parent wishes to apply for a school that is not within Bracknell Forest then they must contact the maintaining local authority in which the school is situated for advice on their procedure.

- **Making an application**

If a parent wishes to apply for a Bracknell Forest school then they can obtain an application form from the School Admissions Team or can apply using the online application form on the Council's website. This must be submitted to the School Admissions Team who will process applications for all coordinating schools within the borough. Both formats will be treated in the same way.

The form will allow parents to name three Bracknell Forest schools and parents are encouraged to do this. Parents will be asked to rank their preferences. It will also allow them to give reasons for each preference.

If the application is for a place in year 10 or 11 it is important that the child visits / has a meeting with the school to ensure that they can meet their requirements for GCSE before making an application. This is important even when there are available school places.

All applications will be checked for residency via the Revenue Services department, and where there are discrepancies it will become the applicants responsibility to satisfy the LA of that residency. (Service families should refer to General Information section below). In order to accept the offer of a place, applicants will need to ensure they have provided a copy of their child's short birth certificate.

- **Information for parents**

If an application is received after the academic year has started then it will be treated as an "in year" application. For further information and guidance please refer to the booklet 'Guide to In Year Applications Bracknell Forest' This can be found on the Bracknell Forest website or a hard copy can be requested.

Before making an application parents should ensure that their child is able to start at the school within twenty school days from the date of application, a minimum of five school days from the date of offer will be given. Parents must ensure they have visited the school if this is a deciding factor.

Where demand exists, schools admit up to their admission number and no places are reserved for pupils moving into their designated area.

An application will normally be processed within 10-15 school days of receipt. A start date within a school may be delayed if there is a need to refer to another agency or if it is to be referred to the Fair Access Panel (see General Information).

If the application is for the following academic year then the application can only be accepted from the beginning of July in the term prior to the September admission. Please refer to 'new academic year applications' section below for further information.

ALLOCATION OF PLACES

- **Applications for community and voluntary controlled schools**

The LA as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools will consider all applications and apply the admissions arrangements as published. The LA will advise all parents of the result of their application.

- **Application for own admission authority schools**

The LA will process all the applications for all co-ordinating VA schools and academies and the requests for a place in their school will be forwarded to the Governors / Academy Trust for their decision. The Governing Bodies of Aided schools and academies will advise the LA of their decision.

- **Allocation of all school places**

Bracknell Forest School Admissions Team will offer places for all schools that are part of this scheme. Where an application has been forwarded to the Governors / Academy Trust of a school that is its own admission authority, the Governors / Academy Trust will inform the LA of the outcome. A letter will be sent to the parent with the offer and the parent will be asked to contact the school to arrange the start date. They will issue refusals if necessary and give details of the appeals process and details regarding education transport.

If the LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools a decision will be made to either:

- In cases where a child is a Bracknell Forest resident and is out of school or not attending a local school then an offer will be made to the parent for a place for their child at the next nearest school with vacancies 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. If the next nearest school with available places is an aided or academy school, then this school will be approached and asked if they will accept the application as an alternative school offer, and if denied, the next nearest school will then be considered.
- In cases where a child is currently attending a local school a refusal will be sent and no alternative offer will be made. Parents will still be able to request an alternative school should they wish to do so.
- In cases where a refusal is made for a Bracknell Forest school to a child who is not a Bracknell Forest resident then we will ensure that we inform the relevant local authority of this refusal.

NEW ACADEMIC YEAR APPLICATIONS

Where an application is for the start of the following academic year (ie to start in September of the new academic year) then this will not be processed until after the published date prior to the September. Parents will still be able to visit schools and obtain all of the necessary information and supplementary information forms (as required) before this date.

Applications will then be processed in accordance with the published admission arrangements for each admission authority.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS

- **Child arrangements orders (previously shared residence orders)**

It is increasingly common that parents are agreeing, and courts are endorsing, child arrangements orders (previously known as) 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 shared residency, 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 the 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**

All addresses for Bracknell Forest residents will be checked via the Revenue Services department. Non Bracknell Forest residents will be required to provide a copy of their current council tax notice. 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.

- **Appeals**

If an application is refused, then with the refusal letter will be sent information on the right to appeal. The LA will also inform parents about the appeals process on behalf of any own admission authority school part of this scheme. Appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

- **Waiting lists**

If there is not a place at the preferred school then the child's name will be placed on a waiting list of their preferred 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. This information will then be passed to the relevant admission authority for them to process according to their arrangements. The LA will maintain the waiting lists on behalf of all maintained schools within Bracknell Forest as well as those own admission authorities where requested to do so. A new application will only be required, as per the published date, to be placed back on a waiting list for the following academic year for maintained schools. Own admission authority schools will publish their waiting lists policy in their admission arrangements.

- **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, providing they can start their child within 20 school days from the date the application was submitted.

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 time of application 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.

- **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 prior to their arrival, providing they can start their child within 20 school days from the date the application was submitted. Their application will need to be accompanied by an official government letter declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering address.

For those who already live in Bracknell Forest a formal letter from their chain of command verifying their address would be accepted.

Families **must** indicate on the application form if they are a service family and wish to be considered under this category.

Where a child of a UK service personnel family is of Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 age, moves into the area and is unable to secure a place at a local school, they **may** be

admitted to that school as an excepted pupil. It is for the admission authority to decide if this exception can be accommodated. If the decision is made not to admit the child as an excepted pupil, the application will be refused but will not be bound by the Infant Class Size regulations for the purpose of any appeal.

Further information on any documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

- **Fair Access Protocol**

In line with the School Admissions Code Bracknell Forest has a fair access protocol which prioritises admission for certain categories of unplaced and vulnerable children. The protocol takes priority over a school's waiting list and the LA may require a school to admit above their PAN. Further information on the Fair Access Protocol is available on the Bracknell Forest website.

If after an offer has been made for a school, the school identifies the application as being eligible to be processed under the Fair Access Protocol, then it will be referred by the school to the Admissions Team who will then pass it to the Integration Officer for review and the applicant informed.

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

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. It 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 a parent not submit any relevant documentation with their application it will be assumed that the parent does 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.

- **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents of gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group. If an application is received for a child outside of their normal year group the relevant admission authority must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case.

Where a parent contacts the School Admissions Team with a request for their child to be admitted into a different year group than the relevant one according to their date of birth the parent will be required to put all information in writing to the School Admissions Team (with any relevant supporting evidence*). It is for the parent to ensure that they have submitted all relevant documentation as no further request will be made to the parent. The paperwork must be submitted before the application will be processed outside their normal age group.

If the application is for a school where Bracknell Forest is the admission authority (community and voluntary controlled schools) the request and all supporting documents submitted will be sent to the headteachers of the schools you have listed as a preference to consider your request.

All the information provided may also be exchanged with other departments within the council, as well as other councils, admission authorities, schools, and government agencies where relevant.

Once a response has been received from all relevant parties, a final decision will be made and the applicant contacted with the outcome to the request.

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 / Academy Trust of that school for their decision regarding the request.

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.

***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; whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. The views of the headteacher of the school concerned will be taken into account.

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).

Designated Area/Catchment area

Maps showing the designated area of a school are available to view on the Bracknell Forest 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 \(arccgis.com\)](http://bracknellforest.gov.uk/bracknell-forest-school-admissions)