



Bracknell Forest Council

**Co-ordinated Admission
Scheme**

Primary Schools

**For entry to schools
in
2021-2022**

PRIMARY SCHEME

BACKGROUND

Legislation requires Local Authorities (LA) to draw up a statutory scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements 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 its 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 oversubscription 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 2021 are able to log their child's details with the school admissions team from 1 May 2020 by using either the online registration site or by calling Customer Services on 01344 352000. This information will then enable the school admissions team to inform parents of the application process.

Information regarding the scheme and the admissions arrangements will be published in the LA's composite prospectus. This is entitled A Parent's Guide to Primary School Admissions in Bracknell Forest for children starting at a primary school in September 2021. 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 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 on line or using a 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 internet access site of their home LA 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 allowed 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 allowed to give reasons for each preference, referring 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 applicants responsibility to satisfy the LA of that residency. Service families should refer to the General Information section below.

- **On Line 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 Parent's Guide and on the Bracknell Forest Council's website. The site will be open for applications from 5 November 2020 to midday 15 January 2021.

- **Common Application Form**

All applicants living in Bracknell Forest can instead if they wish apply using the LA's Common Application Form (CAF) to make an application. Parents should contact the School Admissions Team if they wish to apply using a paper application form and this will be sent to them.

- **Supplementary Forms**

Any Supplementary Information Forms for a voluntary controlled school should be returned to Bracknell Forest Council School Admissions Team. These forms are available on the Bracknell Forest Council's website or on request from the School Admissions Team.

Own admission authority schools such as voluntary aided Schools or academies can prepare a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) to be completed with the on line application/common application form 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.

- **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 2021**

- **Late Application**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could have been made by the closing date of 15 January 2021 the application will be processed by the School Admissions Team in the second round which begins on 30 April 2021.

- **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 2021 (for example if they have just moved into Bracknell Forest) but the application form is submitted by 4 February 2021 the application will be considered on time. However evidence to support the reason for the late application will be required by the Local Authority. If the application is received after 4 February 2021 it will be processed in the second round which begins on 30 April 2021.

- **Moving within Bracknell Forest**

If parents move house within Bracknell Forest after the closing date of 15 January 2021 and by 4 February 2021 they must contact the Local Authority to discuss any changes they may be able to make to their preferences. They will be accommodated if at all possible. If parents move house after 4 February 2021 the request will be processed in the second round which begins on 30 April 2021.

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.

All 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) pupils to school 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 2021 by the SEN Team.

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

As soon as all applications have been received, including those submitted on line 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 or on line 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 2021 and a hard copy can be sent to parents if requested.

Offers will be sent to parents by their home LA on 16 April 2021. 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 make an appeal. Parents will also be required to accept the offer of a place by 30 April 2021. 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 making 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. If this deferred date is September 2021 (for summer born children who reach statutory school age at this time), their child's entry will be as a year 1 child and a new application must be made. 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 2021. 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. The home LA will offer 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 the other sibling(s) may be admitted as an exception.

- **Child arrangements orders (previously called shared residence 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 2021 will be used to process the application. 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 then any offer of a school place will be withdrawn. 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, the address of the property they own will be the address used for determining their designated area, unless the owned house has been rented out for 12 months prior to the closing date for the return of the Common Application Form.

If an applicant already owns 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 eg. a solicitor's letter showing completion. The address must be a permanent address; temporary addresses are not acceptable. If applicants are in the process of moving house within Bracknell Forest they should contact School Admissions Team for further advice.

- **Applicants from abroad**

If families are moving into the Bracknell Forest area from abroad, then they (including the child) must be resident in Bracknell Forest before an application for a school place can be accepted. Proof of residency within Bracknell Forest will be required.

- **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**

Criteria A includes those children from whom a request for the allocation of a place for a child has been made and who is 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.

If a parent or LA (where relevant) wishes to apply under this criterion it is their responsibility to ensure that all relevant paper work 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.

- **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

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).

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 time.

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 that 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 allowed 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 2021 will only be allowed after 16 April 2021 in writing to the School Admissions Team and will be processed in the second round.

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

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 evidence*) 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 before 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 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 to other professionals within the council who can advise the admission authority. This advice will then be discussed with the headteacher of the relevant school(s) and a final decision will 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 and the child's current school 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).

- **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 Council's website via 'findmynearest' and entering their road name or postcode.

**TIMETABLE FOR THE PRIMARY CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
2021/22**

Date	Action
By 12 th September 2020	Composite prospectus for Bracknell Forest primary transfers to be published on the council's website
Oct half term 2020	Application information sent to parents who have registered
5 November 2020	Online application site open
15 January 2021	Closing date for paper applications
midday on 15 January 2021	Closing date for online applications
By 4 February 2021	Latest date for accepting applications for those moving into the area
By 15 February 2021	SEN Team to inform parents of statemented pupils of their allocated school
28 February 2021	Closing date for receipt of on time Supplementary Information Forms by own admission authority schools where applicable
By 13 March 2021	Own admission authority schools to advise the local authority of their ranked list
28 February 2021	Appeal timetable to be published on council's website. Own admission authorities to publish their own
By 3 April 2021	Final co-ordination with other local authorities
16 April 2021	Offer emails sent. Offer letters sent
By 30 April 2021	Deadline for parents to accept offers. Second round begins
After 30 April 2021	Late applications and waiting list offers are processed
By 18 May 2021	Appeals should be submitted by this date to be heard together.
Summer Term 2021	Local authority to advise schools of final allocation details Schools to send out registration forms. Appeals to be heard

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