



**Admission Arrangements for
Community and Voluntary
Controlled Schools
2011-2012**

POLICY DOCUMENT



2004-2005
Benefits Administration



Blackpool Council

BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY FOR ALL

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Blackpool Community, Voluntary Controlled, Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) Schools

**Appendix 2 – Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Admissions in Blackpool
2011-2012**

Appendix 3 – Timetable for Primary Co-ordinated Admissions 2011-2012

Appendix 4 – Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Admissions 2011-2012

Appendix 5 – Timetable for Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions 2011-2012

Blackpool Council Admissions Policy 2011-2012 For Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to those Blackpool Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for which Blackpool Council is the Admissions Authority.

See Appendix 1 for a comprehensive list of Blackpool Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools including their published admission numbers.

The Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) Schools in Blackpool are responsible for setting their own admissions criteria and for determining the allocation of school places in accordance with their published admission policy.

Legal Framework

In accordance with the provisions of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008 and the Schools Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, Blackpool Council has formulated its admission policy for 2011-2012, and for subsequent years subject to any review, as it relates to Blackpool's Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

In accordance with the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2006, Blackpool Council operates a fully Co-ordinated Primary Admission Scheme which facilitates co-ordination of all Admission Authorities within Blackpool.

Blackpool's Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Admissions allows for an inter-Blackpool Co-ordinated approach to Secondary Admission, which is also fully co-ordinated with Lancashire County Council.

Admission to nursery classes

This policy does **not** apply to children being admitted to nursery education, including nursery provision delivered in schools or co-located children's centres.

Primary schools with an attached nursery class

Where schools have a maintained nursery class attached, separate admission arrangements must be published for entry to the nursery.

The Headteacher and Governing Body manage admissions to a maintained nursery class on behalf of the Local Authority. Admissions are made with reference to criteria that give due priority to Children Looked After, children with specific educational, social or medical reasons for admission.

Where schools have a nursery attached as part of a Children's Centre, the Children's Centre admissions arrangements for entry to the nursery must be published.

Where schools have a private or voluntary provider nursery class attached, that provider should publish its own admission arrangements for entry to the nursery.

Attendance in any nursery class that is attached to a primary school, does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education. Likewise, schools cannot insist that parents attend any nursery class in order to guarantee admission to the school for primary education.

Admission details for other pre-school settings, including those for nursery aged children, is available from the Blackpool Family Information Service, telephone 0800 092 2332.

Starting Primary School

The Education Act 1996 states that a child is required to attend primary school from the start of term following his or her fifth birthday.

Blackpool's policy is that all children, whose fifth birthday falls within the academic year, may start school in the Autumn Term.

A child would be eligible for a place in a school reception class from the beginning of the Autumn Term if they were born on or between 1st September 2006 and 31st August 2007.

Deferred entry

Primary admission may be deferred by up to two school terms. Where parents wish to defer entry this must be agreed with the school and the CSA. Where deferred arrangements are agreed, school places will be reserved.

If a child has a fifth birthday during the Summer term and parents wish to defer entry until the September, they can opt to miss the reception year. School places cannot be reserved in these circumstances and parents would have to apply for a Year 1 place during the Summer term.

Infant class sizes

The Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/1973) as amended by SI 2006/3409 prescribes that infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single schoolteacher.

Factors not taken into account in Blackpool's admission policy

Blackpool Council does **not** operate a 'catchment area' policy.

Blackpool Council does **not** operate a 'feeder school' system.

Applying for a school place

If the parent is a Blackpool resident application must be made to Blackpool's School Admissions Team. However, if a parent resides in the Lancashire County Council area or in any other Local Authority, application must be made to the "home" Local Authority.

It is necessary to apply for a Blackpool school place on the appropriate common application form. Applications can also be made online via the Blackpool Council website www.blackpool.gov.uk.

Submission of a late application could reduce the chance of a place at a preferred school.

A pupil living in any part of Blackpool or outside of Blackpool may express a preference for a place at any of the schools for which the Blackpool Local Authority controls admissions.

Allocation of places

Blackpool Council operates an Equal Preference Scheme.

After the published closing date for the return of the Admission Application Forms, the School Admissions Team will complete the process of allocating school places to pupils.

Wherever possible, pupils will be allocated to a school in accordance with parental preference.

The limitation on this will be the statutory limitation contained in Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which states that a Local Authority need not comply with parental preference, "if compliance with the preference would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources".

Parental preference will be met provided that the demand for places does not exceed the agreed admission number listed against the school.

Where demand for a school exceeds the available places the Local Authority will allocate places fairly and objectively using its published 'oversubscription criteria'.

The criteria used to allocate places at oversubscribed schools is set out in this document.

Published Admission Numbers

The school's Published Admission Number (PAN) defines the number of pupils to be admitted to the school in the relevant year.

When setting the Admission Number, the Local Authority has due regard to the available space within the school as defined by the school's net capacity.

Where a school is oversubscribed the Local Authority's admission arrangements must specify how it will determine the allocation of places.

Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) Schools in Blackpool are responsible for setting their own Admission Number.

Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs that name a school

When a child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs that names a particular school, all Admission Authorities are required by Schedule 27, Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 to admit the child to that school. Schools **must** admit these children whether they have places or not.

Siblings (including multiple births)

Where there are families of multiple births wanting admission and there is only a single place left within the admission number, then the Local Authority will exercise as much flexibility as possible (within the requirements of infant class size legislation in the case of admission to primary school).

If it is not possible to accommodate all children from multiple births at the same school, then a random allocation will be carried out. In the event of a random allocation, someone independent of the CSA and school would supervise the process, and parents would be invited to attend.

Parents should pursue a place for the other children via the appeal route or consider an alternative school that may be able to accommodate all children.

Equal Preference Scheme

Blackpool Council operates an 'Equal Preference Scheme', which the DCSF considers maximises parental satisfaction with the admissions arrangements.

Parents are invited, for both Primary and Secondary Schools, to express a preference, in priority order, for three schools, and to give reasons for their preference.

All preferences will be treated equally, initially, but if more than one school can potentially be offered, **a single offer will be for the school that the parent has ranked highest.**

The Local Authority will make a single offer of a school place in accordance with Blackpool's Co-ordinated Admission arrangements. See the relevant Co-ordinated admission scheme (**appendix 2 and 4**). The Local Authority will make the offer in writing on the published national offer date.

Expressing a preference does not guarantee that a parent will receive an offer of their highest ranked school. Furthermore, a small number of parents may not receive an offer of a place at a lower ranked school.

Over-subscription criteria

The school's Published Admission Number (PAN) determines the number of available places.

Where there are more preferences for a particular school than there are places available, the Local Authority employs its oversubscription criteria to objectively determine which children should be offered a place at that particular school.

In the event of the admission number being reached within any one of the oversubscription criteria in the order listed below, the distance criteria will be used as a 'tie breaker'. In the event of equal distance, a random allocation will be used to determine who takes priority for a place.

If a place cannot be offered at any one of the parent's preferred schools, a place will be offered at the nearest school with an available place.

The child's name will be added to a school's waiting list and parents will be advised of any schools at which there are vacancies.

The over subscription criteria is applied in the following order:

Children Looked After

Blackpool Council gives the highest priority to Children Looked After, as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.

A Looked After child is a child who is in the care of a Local Authority or provided with accommodation by that Authority, as defined in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of application and allocation.

If a child ceases to be a Looked After Child after the application is made, this is regarded as a relevant change of circumstance.

Medical Conditions

Next places will be given to children where they or their parent(s)/carer(s) have a serious exceptional medical condition where they contend that attendance at a particular school is appropriate.

Supporting evidence will be required and this must set out the particular reasons and the level of risk to the child or family's health as to why the school in question is the most suitable and only school and the difficulties that would arise if the child had to attend an alternative school.

It should be noted that all schools can make provision for special educational needs, and can also manage common conditions e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes.

There must be substantive medical evidence e.g. in the form of a letter from a specialist/consultant doctor (not a General Practitioner). Each case will be treated on merit and the Local Authority will consult its own medical advisers to confirm no alternative school can be considered due to the reasons and level of risk. If no alternative school is suitable, only then will the higher priority of medical condition be given to the child for the preferred school.

It will not be possible to consider an application within this criterion if appropriate supporting evidence has not been produced at the time of application.

Social or welfare reasons for admission

Where there are exceptional sensitive individual and compelling family circumstances, which are directly relevant to the preferred school, these may also be considered at the time of application.

Requests for consideration within this criterion will require appropriate professional reports e.g. from a social worker, police officer or educational psychologist. The report must demonstrate exact reasons and the impact on the child or family's circumstances as to why this is the only suitable school compared to other schools available. Only exceptional reasons directly relevant to a particular school will be considered. The higher priority of social or welfare reason will be given to the child for the preferred school only if the submitted report unequivocally proves the circumstances and why an alternative school is unsuitable.

If supporting evidence is not provided, it will not be possible to consider the application under the social and welfare criterion.

All information which is submitted will be considered as being confidential.

Siblings

Priority will be given to brothers and sisters of children already attending the school at the time of application and who will still be attending at the time of admission.

This includes full brothers and sisters who may not live at the same address. Stepchildren and foster children who are living with the same family at the same address would be classed as siblings. Stepchildren or foster children who do not live with the same family at the same address would **not** be classed as siblings.

'Distance' criterion

Blackpool Council determines the distance from the applicant's home address to the school on the following basis.

The distance between the applicant's home and school is taken as a straight line between the Ordnance Survey address point of the applicant's home address and the main entrance of the school. The Ordnance Survey address point is a point within the boundary of the property and is usually located at its centre.

Distances are measured automatically using the Council's Geographic Information System.

Due priority will be given to pupils for whom the preferred **Blackpool** school is their nearest school.

Where there is more than one application from a postal address contained within a block of flats, priority will be given to the applicant residing in the lower storey flat.

If the CSA is unable to determine eligibility on distance, i.e. two or more addresses are equal distance from the school, then a random allocation will be carried out. In the event of a random allocation, someone independent of the CSA and school would supervise the process, and parents would be invited to attend.

NB. The shortest safe walking route continues to be a consideration for transport purposes.

Late applications

For under subscribed schools it may be possible to consider late applications up to the school's published admission number.

Any late applications for Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) Schools will be referred to the School Governing Body for the necessary consideration in liaison with the Local Authority.

Applications received after the published closing date will be treated as late applications.

Only in exceptional circumstances, and where appropriate evidence is provided, will those applications received after the closing date, but before offers of places have been made, be considered concurrently with those applications received on time.

The circumstances that might justify a late application include, but are not restricted to, the illness of a single parent/carer, which might have reasonably impinged upon their ability to submit an application on time.

Change of preference

Parents may **not** change their preference once their application has been submitted, unless there is a significant reason for doing so, for example a house move. Any requests must be made in writing, with evidence to demonstrate the reasons.

Any application for a school place received after the start of the academic year will be treated as a non-routine admission and the Local Authority will work with the parents to secure an appropriate school place.

Waiting lists

The Local Authority will establish and maintain a Waiting List for each school for which it is the admissions authority. The Waiting List will be established on the offer day and will be maintained up to the end of the Autumn Term in the admission year.

Children will be automatically placed on the waiting list for any school that is ranked higher than the one they have been offered. If a child has not been offered any of the parent's preferred schools, they will be placed on the waiting list for each school. Parents may also request that the child is placed on the waiting list for a school that was not an original preference.

In accordance with the DCSF School Admissions Code, places on the waiting list are maintained according to the pupil's priority against the school's admission criteria, not simply the length of time that they have been on the waiting list. A new applicant, who has a higher priority according to the admission criteria, would be ranked higher than those that have been on the list for some time.

Parents who intend to appeal against the Local Authority's decision not to offer a place at a preferred school(s) should do so irrespective of having their child's name placed on the Waiting List.

For those parents who proceed to an independent appeal, no consideration is given to the child's position on the Waiting List.

Appeal arrangements

Any parent whose child is not offered a school place for which they have expressed a preference has the right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.

Parents can also appeal for a school that was not an original preferred school.

Parents who intend to make an appeal must complete a Blackpool Council Appeal Form.

Parents who wish to appeal for a place in a Voluntary Aided or Foundation (Trust) School should contact the school direct to request an appeal form.

Fraudulent applications

Where the Local Authority discovers that a child has been awarded a place as the result of an intentionally misleading application from a parent, for example, where a false address has been provided, then the Local Authority is required to withdraw the offer of the place. The application will then be considered afresh and a right of appeal offered if a place is refused.

Admission to Blackpool Schools after 1st September

With effect from 1st September 2010, all parents requesting a school place, either because they are new to Blackpool, or because they are wishing to transfer schools within Blackpool, were required to complete a common application form, allowing them to express up to three preferences. The admission of all students to Blackpool schools are co-ordinated by the School Admissions Team, in line with recent changes in legislation.

In-Year Fair Access Protocol

Blackpool Council operates an In-Year Fair Access Protocol, which ensures that access to education is secured quickly for children who have complex needs, and to ensure that all schools in the area admit equally under these arrangements.

APPENDICES

BLACKPOOL COMMUNITY, VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED, VOLUNTARY AIDED AND FOUNDATION (TRUST) SCHOOLS

Community Primary Schools	Admission Number
Anchorsholme Primary School	90
Unity College Blackpool (Primary Provision)	60
Boundary Primary School	60
Claremont Primary School	60
Devonshire Primary School	60
Hawes Side Primary School	90
Kincraig Primary School	27
Layton Primary School	90
Marton Primary School	60
Mereside Primary School	30
Moor Park Primary School	60
Norbreck Primary School	90
Revoe Community Primary School	60
Roseacre Primary School	90
Stanley Primary School	90
Thames Primary School	60
Waterloo Primary School	90
Westcliff Primary School	30

Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Admission Number
Bispham Endowed C of E Primary School	60

* This is a new primary school facility with effect from 1 September 2010, as part of the Unity College Blackpool

Voluntary Aided Primary Schools	Admission Number
Baines Endowed Church of England School	70
Christ the King Catholic Primary School	30
Holy Family Catholic Primary School	30
Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School	30
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School	30
St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School	30
St John's Church of England Primary School	30
St John Vianney Catholic Primary School	60
St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School	30
St Nicholas' Church of England Primary School	60
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School	30

Community Secondary Schools	Admission Number
Beacon Hill High School Business and Enterprise College	165
Bispham High School Arts College	220
Highfield Humanities College	224
Palatine Community Sports College	220

Voluntary Aided Secondary Schools	Admission Number
St George's School A Church of England Business & Enterprise College	210
St Mary's Catholic College	210

Foundation (Trust) Secondary Schools	Admission Number
Collegiate High School, A Raising Aspirations Trust	210
Montgomery High School, A Language College & Full Service School	290

**CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN BLACKPOOL 2011/12
(PROPOSED SCHEME)**

1. Introduction

The aim of Blackpool's co-ordinated primary schools admissions scheme is to provide a fair and transparent route for consideration of parental preferences in accordance with legislation and the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) School Admissions Code.

The scheme enables all parents who live in Blackpool who require a place in a primary school to complete a single application (either on-line or on a paper form). Parents are invited to express three preferences (in priority order) for admission to maintained primary schools. They should include schools in the neighbouring authority, Lancashire County Council (LCC) on the Blackpool application. An opportunity will be given for parents to state their reasons for their preferences. The scheme will also allow an exchange of information with the neighbouring authority in relation to cross border applications for primary school places.

Following consideration of expressed preferences, the Local Authority (LA) will issue to parents living within Blackpool the offer of one primary school. The scheme will ensure that only a single offer of a primary school place will be made by the home LA.

All primary school preferences will be considered equally. Where it is possible to offer more than one primary school, the LA will refer to the priority order on the application. The single primary school offer will be the parent's highest ranked preference that has an available place (even if this is a school in a neighbouring LA).

In the event that any parent's preferred primary school cannot be offered the home LA will ensure that a place is offered at an alternative primary school that has availability.

The scheme seeks to preserve the powers and responsibilities of individual admission authorities to determine and apply their own published admission policies. At the same time it will facilitate decision-making within a co-ordinated framework. It is recognised that for the scheme to operate successfully it will be important for all admission authorities and neighbouring authorities to work closely together and to share information within an agreed timetable.

2. The Offer of a Blackpool Primary School Place

In accordance with legislation, parents will receive an offer for one maintained primary school. All offers to Blackpool residents will be issued on Tuesday 26th April 2011.

3. Distribution of Forms

The LA will issue admissions brochures and details of how to apply for school places to all maintained primary schools during the first week of the Autumn Term 2010. This information will incorporate details of the primary co-ordinated admissions scheme, how to apply on-line and will include a hard copy of the common admissions application form. The brochure will also contain summaries of admission policies for all Blackpool primary schools (Community, Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided).

The brochures will be circulated by schools to all parents who have expressed an interest in admission to reception during the first two weeks of September 2010.

Parents can obtain copies of this information from Blackpool primary schools or from Customer First at Blackpool Municipal Buildings. They can also access the on-line system at www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions. This site contains links to other school admissions information. (eg Ofsted and individual school websites).

Voluntary Aided primary schools may at this stage also wish to issue their own supplementary information forms (SIFs) to parents or may issue their own forms upon receipt of either an on-line application or a common admissions application form. Completion of supplementary forms by parents is not a statutory requirement. These are needed where schools require extra information in order to decide priority of applications in relation to denominational admission criteria. All parents must, however, complete either an on-line or a paper application irrespective of additional requirements for information from Voluntary Aided schools. Schools must consider all applications received even where supplementary forms have not been submitted.

4. Receipt of Parental Preferences

Parents must complete either an on-line application or return a common application form to the School Admissions Team by Friday 14th January 2011.

Details of all preferences will then be entered into Blackpool's database.

For each Voluntary Aided primary school the LA will forward a list confirming those parents who have identified that particular school as their preferences. This will allow the Governors of Voluntary Aided primary schools to consider applications against their published admissions criteria. The LA will not, however, inform individual schools of the parent's order of priority in relation to their preferences. Any additional information provided by parents which is related to their application will however be sent to the relevant school(s). The list provided by the LA will allow the Governing Bodies of voluntary aided primary schools to consider applications against their school's published admission policy.

The LA will also, at this time, commence processes relating to verifying looked after children, medical and social/welfare issues, siblings and addresses, for oversubscribed community and voluntary controlled schools.

The LA will also arrange to exchange information with the neighbouring authority (Lancashire County Council) as necessary.

Information from LCC confirms any preferences for Blackpool primary schools. These will be incorporated within the database and circulated to primary schools as appropriate.

5. First Sort of Offers

All admission authorities must provide the School Admissions Team with a list of applicants ranked according to the schools' oversubscription criteria by Friday 18th March 2011

This list will be used to establish the initial offers and to compile waiting lists (where schools are oversubscribed), from which places will be offered should vacancies subsequently occur. The initial offer lists from the Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided schools will, therefore, need to take into account the need for offers to be reconciled in accordance with the agreed equal preference scheme and parental preferences.

The LA will then:

- a) consider those pupils who could be offered more than one school. Where the LA is aware that more than one offer of a primary school place could be made, reference will be made to the parents' original order of priority on their original application. The school, which is listed highest in priority on the parent's application, is deemed to be the school which will be offered;
- b) where none of the parent's preferred primary schools can be offered, the LA will offer a place at the nearest school with an available place.

6. Notification of Offers

By Friday 1st April 2011 the LA will complete liaison with the neighbouring authority regarding cross-border issues and finalise these cases, again applying the criteria within Blackpool's co-ordinated primary admissions scheme.

By Friday 1st April 2011 the LA will forward to Blackpool Voluntary Aided schools, a list of all pupils who will be offered a place at the school.

On Tuesday 26th April 2011 the LA will write to all parents who completed an application on behalf of all Blackpool primary schools, to inform them of their offer of a school place. Where the offer is made on behalf of another admission authority then this will be made clear.

7. Late Applications

Any form received by the primary school after the closing date of Friday 14th January 2011 should be date-stamped, receipted and returned to the School Admissions Team. Application forms received after the published closing date, will only be considered at that time if the following conditions apply:

- a) if the number of preferences received for a school is below the published admission number or:
- b) there are extenuating circumstances justifying a late application, for example, parent/carer illness which required hospitalisation for the major part of the period between the publication of the brochure and the closing date for applications.

All other late applications will only be considered after all other requests for places have been considered.

Onus will be placed upon individual applicants to provide the necessary evidence to support an exceptional case for late application. The relevant admission authority will decide about the appropriateness of each case.

Forms received after the allocation date of Tuesday 26th April 2011

Any applications received for reception places at community and voluntary controlled primary schools after the allocation date will be considered by the LA within the co-ordinated admission arrangements.

Any late applications for voluntary aided schools will be passed to the relevant admission authority (School Governing Body) for the necessary consideration and there will then be liaison with the LA.

This process would operate until the end of Autumn term 2011 after which any enquiries for places would be directed to the appropriate admission authority who would make decisions and issue letters accordingly.

Waiting lists for all Blackpool primary schools will be set up in the week following the offer letters being sent. Children will be placed on the waiting list(s) for any schools that were ranked higher than the school that has been offered. Parents may also request that a child is placed on the waiting list for a school that was not an original preference.

When a vacancy occurs which will take a school below its published admission number, the LA will contact the parent to offer a place.

In accordance with the the DCSF School Admissions Code, places on the waiting list are maintained according to the pupil's priority against the school's admission criteria, not simply the length of time that they have been on the waiting list. A new applicant, who has a higher priority according to the admission criteria, should be ranked higher than those that have been on the list for some time.

The School Admissions Team will continue to compile and manage waiting lists until the end of the Autumn Term 2011. After this date these will be passed on to individual schools. Parents who still wish to be on a school's waiting list must then contact the school direct at the start of the Spring Term 2012 to confirm that this is the case.

Voluntary Aided primary schools will maintain their own waiting lists in accordance with the school's admissions policy, so parents will have to contact the school direct to ascertain the position on the waiting list.

9. APPEALS

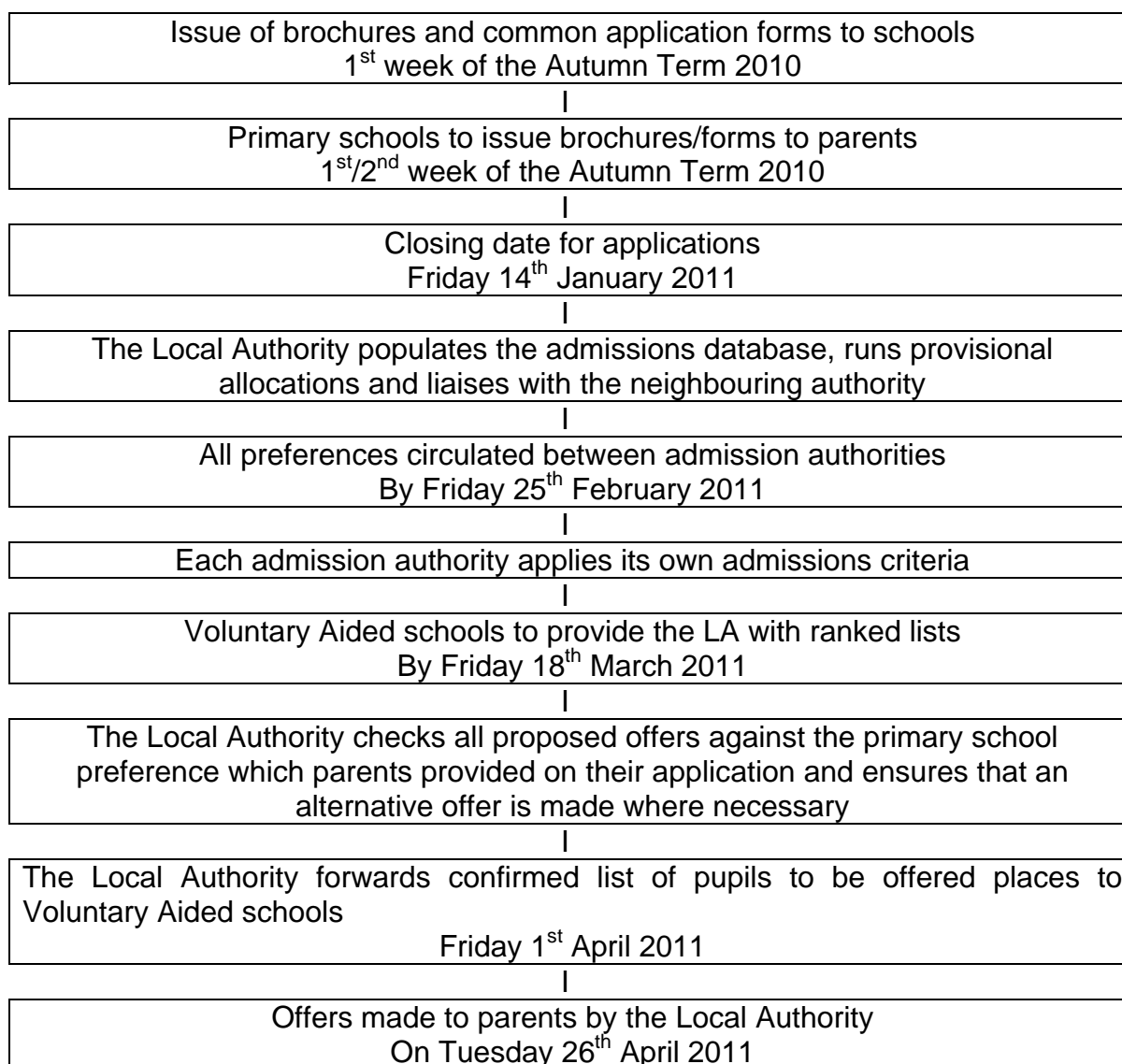
Where the LA as the admission authority, or on behalf of another admission authority which is party to the scheme, notifies parents that none of their preferred schools can be offered, they will also inform parents of their right of appeal.

Parents wishing to appeal for a Community or Voluntary Controlled primary school may request an appeal form from the School Admissions Team.

Appeal forms for Voluntary Aided schools can be obtained direct from the relevant school.

CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR PRIMARY ADMISSIONS 2011/2012

T I M E T A B L E



**CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN BLACKPOOL 2011/2012
(PROPOSED SCHEME)**

1. Introduction

The aim of Blackpool's co-ordinated secondary school admissions scheme is to provide a fair and transparent route for the consideration of parental preferences in accordance with legislation and the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) School Admissions Code.

The scheme enables parents of all pupils living within Blackpool who are transferring to secondary school, to complete a single application (either on-line or on a paper form) expressing up to three preferences for admission to all secondary schools both within Blackpool and also in neighbouring authority areas. An opportunity will be given for parents to state their reasons for this preference. All preferences will be considered equally and where more than one secondary school could be offered the priority order in which the parents expressed their preferences will be used to determine which single secondary school offer is made.

Following consideration of expressed preferences, the Local Authority (LA) will issue to parents living within Blackpool the offer of one secondary school on behalf of all admission authorities operating the co-ordinated scheme.

In the event that any parent's preferred secondary school cannot be offered the Local Authority (LA) will ensure that an alternative secondary school offer is made.

The scheme seeks to preserve the powers and responsibilities of individual admission authorities to determine and apply their published admissions policies, but enables decisions to be taken within a co-ordinated framework. It is recognised that for the scheme to operate successfully, it will be important for admission authorities to work together closely, share information when required and strictly adhere to the agreed timescales.

2. The Offer of a Blackpool Secondary School Place

In accordance with legislation, parents will receive an offer for one secondary school in Blackpool. All offers will be issued on Tuesday 1st March 2011.

The scheme aims to ensure that each preference is considered equally and that parents receive their highest priority school. Where multiple offers of a school place can be made, the Local Authority (LA) will refer to the priority order of the schools identified by parents on their application. The offer that is the highest ranked priority will be confirmed.

Where a place cannot be offered at a parent's preferred secondary school the LA will ensure that an alternative school offer is made.

3. Processing of Preference Forms

3.1 Stage 1 – Expression of preferences

During week commencing Monday 6th September 2010, the LA circulates admissions brochures and details of how to apply for school places to the parents of all Year 6 pupils attending Blackpool primary schools who are due to transfer to secondary school in Autumn 2011. Parents of Blackpool children who do not attend Blackpool primary schools can obtain copies of this information from Blackpool primary schools or any Blackpool Council building. They can also access the on-line system at www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions. This site contains links to other school admissions information. (eg Ofsted and individual school websites).

Parents living outside of the Blackpool will be sent copies of admission brochures on request from the School Admissions Team. These parents will be advised to complete either an on-line or paper application form for their home authority.

The school admission brochures for parents will include the following:

- (a) details of the operation of the qualifying scheme for the co-ordination of secondary admission arrangements both within Blackpool and with neighbouring authorities;
- (b) an explanation of the admission arrangements for all Blackpool secondary schools;
- (c) the timescale for each stage of the admissions process;
- (d) information on the number of applications received for places at each school the previous year, the number which were successful and the criteria under which they were successful;
- (e) where possible additional information to help parents assess realistically their likelihood of obtaining a place at their preferred schools, and describing the risk of unrealistic preferences and the consequences of ranking preferences in a certain way.

The brochures will also contain details about how to apply on-line for a school place and a hard copy of the common paper admissions application form on which Blackpool residents may apply for secondary schools for their children. Either the on-line system or the paper application form must be used for applying for a place at all Blackpool secondary schools. Secondary schools in neighbouring authority areas should also be included by Blackpool residents on their application.

On-line and paper applications can be supplemented (but not replaced) by a school supplementary admissions form where a Voluntary Aided (Church) school requires additional information to be able to consider an application on religious grounds. Where a parent lists a Voluntary Aided school on the common application form, they may also wish to complete the schools supplementary admissions form and return it to the school. The school will retain the supplementary admissions form and match it with details sent to the school from the LA. The supplementary form is not a legal requirement. It is however necessary for any applicant who wishes their application to be considered against the school's denominational admission criteria. It will be the responsibility of the parent to complete either an on-line or a paper application form and to liaise with Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) Schools direct about their supplementary form. Consideration of preferences and the allocation of places cannot be made without the completion of either an on-line application or a paper application form.

Parents will be invited to state on their secondary school application up to three preferences in priority order and an opportunity will be given for parents to state their reasons for those preferences. All parental preferences will be considered equally by individual admission authorities and the LA will co-ordinate the process to ensure a single secondary school offer for each pupil.

Parents will be required to return the completed application to the School Admissions Team, Progress House, Clifton Road, Blackpool FY4 4US. All parents must return their completed application by Sunday 31st October 2010 (this national closing date is a new requirement of the School Admissions Code).

3.2 Stage 2 - Circulating of Preferences

Blackpool primary schools must forward any paper application forms they may have received to the School Admissions Team by Friday 5th November 2010.

Primary schools must not forward parent's applications direct to any secondary schools. Nor must they under any circumstances inform secondary schools about the priority order of parent's preferences.

Details of all the preferences will be entered into the Blackpool's admissions database.

Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) secondary schools will be given details of all applications for the school but will not be informed of the school's priority order on each parent's application.

Voluntary Aided schools must consider all on-line and paper applications, even where applicants have decided not to complete a supplementary form.

The LA will also, at this time, commence processes relating to verifying looked after children, siblings and medical, social, welfare issues for oversubscribed Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. The on-line system will allow primary schools to have input into this during the period of application although final verifications are only possible after the closing date (as applicants can amend their application up to this date).

By Friday 26th November 2010 the LA will notify Blackpool Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) Schools and neighbouring authorities of every application that has been made for that school.

Voluntary Aided schools will be sent all relevant details and any supplementary forms received by this date, which they will require in order to apply their own oversubscription criteria.

Where parents have requested a school outside of Blackpool, the LA will also notify the relevant authority and forward to them details of the application together with any supporting information provided by the parent(s).

The maintaining authority will notify Blackpool of the details of any applications that they have received which include Blackpool secondary schools as parental preferences.

3.3 Stage 3 - First Sort

By Friday 18th December 2010 each Blackpool Voluntary Aided school will return a list to the School Admissions Team, of all applicants, ranked in accordance with the school's admissions policy. This list will be used to establish the initial offers and to compile a waiting list from which places will be offered should vacancies subsequently occur. The lists from the Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided schools will therefore need to take into account the need for offers to be manipulated in accordance with the agreed equal preference scheme and each parent's priority order of preferred schools.

The LA will then:

- (a) consider those pupils who could be offered more than one school. Where the LA is aware that more than one offer of a secondary school place could be made, reference will be made to the parents' original order of priority on their original application. The school which is listed highest in priority on the parents application be deemed to be the school which will be offered;

- (b) consider those children who do not currently have the offer for their first priority school and ensure that their second and third priority schools are considered and, where possible, an offer is made.
- (c) where none of the parent's preferred secondary schools can be offered, the LA will offer a place at the nearest suitable school with an available place. The nearest suitable school will be established by measuring the shortest straight line route between the child's home and the school.

3.4 Stage 4 – Notifying of offers

By Monday 31st January 2011 the LA will forward to Blackpool Voluntary Aided schools, a list of all pupils who will be offered a place at the school.

The LA will inform neighbouring authorities of any Blackpool pupils who could have been offered a school in their area, but where an alternative school is to be offered in accordance with the parents' preference priority. Blackpool will be informed by neighbouring authorities of any Blackpool pupils who are to be offered places in schools within their areas.

Blackpool will inform neighbouring authorities of pupils living outside Blackpool who could be offered places in Blackpool schools. Where the pupil could also be offered a school in their home authority, the home authority scheme will determine which offer should be made.

The School Admissions Team will send all schools the final pupil allocation list by Wednesday 9th February 2011.

On Tuesday 1st March 2011, the LA will write to every parent in Blackpool who completed an application on behalf of all Blackpool secondary schools, to inform them of their allocated secondary school place. If the offer is made on behalf of another admission authority, this will be made clear.

Where the initial offer is not for a parent's first priority secondary school this will be made clear and the reasons why a place at the school could not be offered will be given. In these cases the offer letter will also include advice about rights of appeal.

4. Late Applications

Any form received by the primary school after the closing date of 31st October 2010 should be date-stamped, receipted and returned to the School Admissions Team. Application forms received after the published closing date, will only be considered at that time if the following conditions apply:

- (a) if the number of preferences received for a school is below the published admission number or:
- (b) there are extenuating circumstances justifying a late application, for example, parent/carer illness which required hospitalisation for the major part of the period between the publication of the brochure and the closing date for applications.

All other late applications will only be considered after all other requests for places have been considered.

5. Waiting Lists

Waiting lists for all Blackpool secondary schools will be set up in the week following the offer letters being sent. Children will be placed on the waiting list(s) for any schools that were ranked higher than the school that has been offered. Parents may also request that a child is placed on the waiting list for a school that was not an original preference.

When a vacancy occurs which will take a school below its published admission number, the LA will contact the parent to offer a place.

In accordance with the in the DCSF School Admissions Code, places on the waiting list are maintained according to the pupil's priority against the school's admission criteria, not simply the length of time that they have been on the waiting list. A new applicant, who has a higher priority according to the admission criteria, should be ranked higher than those that have been on the list for some time.

The School Admissions Team will continue to compile and manage waiting lists until the end of the Autumn Term. After this date these will be passed on to individual schools. Parents who still wish to be on a school's waiting list must then contact the school direct early in the new school year to confirm that this is the case.

Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) secondary schools will maintain their own waiting lists in accordance with the school's admissions policy, so parents will have to contact the school direct to ascertain the position on the waiting list.

6. Applications received after 1st March 2011 but before the end of August 2011

The LA will continue to co-ordinate admission arrangements on behalf of all Blackpool schools for the new Year 7 intake, until the end of August 2011. Applications made direct to any Blackpool school within the scheme, must be forwarded to the LA immediately. Where only a supplementary form is received, the school must inform the LA so that it can verify whether either an on-line or a paper application form has been received from the parent and if not, to contact the parent and ask them to complete an application. The LA will enter the details onto the central admissions database and after consultation with the relevant admission authorities, will offer a place in accordance with the agreed scheme. If none of the parent's preferences can be met, the nearest suitable school with a place available will be offered and waiting list and appeals information will be provided.

7. Appeals

Where the LA as the admission authority, or on behalf of another admission authority which is party to the scheme, notifies parents that none of their preferred schools can be offered, they will also inform parents of their right of appeal.

Parents wishing to appeal for a Community school may request an appeal form from the School Admissions Team.

Appeal forms for Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) schools can be obtained direct from the relevant school.

CO-ORDINATING SCHEME FOR SECONDARY ADMISSIONS – 2011/2012

T I M E T A B L E

Issuing of brochures and common application forms week commencing Monday 6 th September 2010
Closing date for applications Sunday 31 st October 2010
The Local Authority populates secondary admissions database, runs provisional allocations and liaises with the neighbouring authority
All preferences to be circulated by Friday 26 th November 2010
All admission authorities to apply their admissions criteria
Voluntary Aided and Foundation (Trust) schools to provide the LA with ranked lists by Friday 18 th December 2010
The Local Authority to allocate alternative places, to unsuccessful applicants. Consider preference priority for those pupils where more than one offer could be made and determine offer in accordance with equal preference scheme
The Local Authority to forward confirmed list of pupils to be offered places to Voluntary Aided schools and other authorities By Wednesday 9 th February 2011
Offers made to Blackpool parents by the LA on Tuesday 1 st March 2011