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Co-ordinated admission scheme for Blackpool schools and academies 2024 to 2025

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Introduction

Blackpool's co-ordinated admissions scheme provides a fair and transparent route for the consideration of parental preferences in accordance with legislation and the Department for Education (DfE) School Admissions Code.

The scheme allows parents/carers of all children living within Blackpool to complete a single application expressing up to three preferences for admission to maintained schools, academies and free schools within Blackpool and in any other area.

Following consideration of expressed preferences, Blackpool school admissions will issue the offer of a single school or academy place to all applicants living within Blackpool. This will be for all admission authorities that are required to comply with the statutory co-ordinated scheme.

All preferences will be considered equally, and where more than one offer is possible, the priority order in which the applicant expressed their preferences will be used to determine which single offer is made.

The scheme preserves 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.

For the scheme to operate successfully it is important for all admission authorities to work together and to share information as required and as far as possible within the agreed timescales.

Applying for school places

Blackpool's online admission application system is the main route for all applications for new Reception (primary) and Year 7 (secondary) places.

The application and admissions booklet are available on Blackpool Council's website www.blackpool.gov.uk.

Paper copies of the application and admissions booklet will be available upon request from Blackpool school admissions.

The offer of a place

The Blackpool scheme will ensure that applicants only receive a single offer. The scheme also ensures that each preference is considered equally. Where multiple offers are possible, the priority order of preferences on the application will be referred to. The school or academy where there is an available place and which is the highest ranked preference will be the confirmed offer.

Where a place cannot be offered at a preferred school or academy Blackpool school admissions will ensure that an alternative offer is made.

Processing of preference forms

Stage1 - Expression of preferences

During August each year Blackpool school admissions will provide information notices for schools, academies and nurseries to issue to parents/carers. These will refer prospective applicants to the on-line application system and to links and contacts for information and advice.

The parents/carers of children who do not attend Blackpool primary schools or academies or nurseries and those who reside outside of Blackpool's administrative boundaries will be able to access information and advice through Blackpool Council's website.

Admission information for parents/carers will include:

- Details of how the process is co-ordinated with all admission authorities within Blackpool and how that information is exchanged with the neighbouring authorities;
- A summary of the admission arrangements for all Blackpool maintained schools and academies;
- Contact details for all Blackpool maintained schools and academies, and voluntary aided schools and academies;
- Other admission information to help parents/carers to make realistic preferences and to help them assess the likelihood of obtaining an offer for a preferred school or academy;
- Timescales for the primary and secondary admissions processes and for the subsequent admission appeal schedule.

Some schools and academies have a supplementary information form that parents/carers should complete in addition to the application. The supplementary information form allows the school or academy to consider an application on faith grounds in accordance with their admissions policy. A supplementary form is not a legal requirement. It is, however, necessary for any applicant who wishes their application to be considered against the faith admission criteria.

Blackpool applicants must complete an online or paper application for their children to be considered for a Reception or Year 7 place for each September. Completion of a supplementary information form does not constitute registration within the annual admission process for primary or secondary intakes.

Applicants living outside Blackpool can access the online system for information and advice only. These applicants must however apply for school places via their home authority.

Blackpool applicants should submit an application through Blackpool's online application system. Paper applications must be returned to the Blackpool School Admissions, PO Box 4, Blackpool FY1 1NA.

All applications must be completed and submitted by the national statutory closing dates (see timetables).

Stage 2 - Circulating of preferences

Blackpool primary schools and academies must forward any completed paper application forms that they have received to Blackpool school admissions immediately.

Primary schools and academies must not forward applications to any secondary schools or academies. Under no circumstances must primary schools provide the priority order of preferences to secondary schools or academies.

All preferences received will be transferred onto the Blackpool admissions database.

Voluntary aided schools and academies will be given details of all their applications, including straight line distance measurements, but they will not be informed of the priority order on each application.

The governing board of voluntary aided schools and academies must consider all applications, even where a SIF has not been

completed.

If schools or academies contact applicants when a supplementary information form has not been provided, this must be for all applicants without a SIF, not for selected cases.

If an applicant has only completed the SIF, this should not be considered for a place unless an application has been completed. Blackpool school admissions must be notified where this has happened.

By an agreed date (see timetables) Blackpool school admissions will forward details of all applications together with any supporting information to other admission authorities. This will include straight line distance measurements.

At this time Blackpool will also commence processes relating to verifying looked after children, special educational needs, siblings, medical, and social/welfare issues and addresses.

Blackpool will exchange information with the neighbouring authorities. Information exchanges will continue throughout the process as required.

Stage 3 - First sort

By an agreed date (see timetables) each Blackpool voluntary aided school and academy will return a list of all applicants, ranked in accordance with their admissions policy, to Blackpool school admissions.

It is necessary for every application to be ranked in priority order to accurately allocate places for all admission authorities (those from in and outside of Blackpool).

Blackpool school admissions will:

Identify applications where more than a single offer would be possible and then refer to the applicant's preference priorities. The school or academy with an available place listed highest in priority by the applicant will be the single offer.

Identify where a first preference school or academy cannot be offered and ensure that the applicant's other preferences are considered.

Identify where none of the applicant's preferences can be offered, and ensure that an alternative offer is made. This will usually be the nearest school or academy with an available place, established by measuring as a straight line distance between the child's home and the school/academy.

Ensure that all non-first preference offers refer applicants to the waiting list and appeals information.

Stage 4 - Notifying of offers

By an agreed date (see timetables) Blackpool will inform the neighbouring authority of all Blackpool children who could have been offered a school or academy in their area, but where an alternative offer can be made in accordance with the applicant's preference priority.

Blackpool will also inform the neighbouring authority of children living outside of Blackpool who could be offered places in Blackpool schools or academies.

Blackpool will be informed by the neighbouring authority of all Blackpool children who are to be offered places in schools or academies within their area.

This element of the process will continue to be repeated as required.

By an agreed date (see timetables) Blackpool will send all schools and academies their final allocation lists. There will be some time to review these and make changes if absolutely essential.

Blackpool school admissions will issue offers for primary and secondary schools on the defined national offer dates (see timetables). These will be electronic for all on-line applicants and by letter for those who submitted paper forms.

Offers will be for Blackpool residents only. It will be made clear when an offer is made on behalf of another admission authority (voluntary aided, academies and free schools). Residents outside of Blackpool will receive offers from their home authority.

Applicants who applied on-line will be able to view their offer on national offer date. Letters issued to those who applied on paper forms may arrive slightly later.

Late applications

Applications received after the statutory closing dates (see timetables) must be made on a paper application form as the online application system will be closed.

Applications received after the statutory closing date must be receipted and date-stamped.

These will generally only be considered along with those applications received before the closing date if the following apply:

if the number of preferences received for a school or academy is below the published admission number or

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 application and the closing date for applications.

Individual applicants will be responsible for providing evidence to support an exceptional case for a late application. All other late applications will only be considered after all other applications for places have been considered. Blackpool school admissions will retain the responsibility for issuing offers up to the end of the Autumn Term in liaison with own admission authority schools and academies.

There is a requirement that once the autumn term starts, all Blackpool voluntary aided schools and academies and free schools will liaise with Blackpool school admissions about any Reception and Year 7 offers which they make.

Waiting lists

All admission authorities must retain Reception and Year 7 waiting lists for one term into the new school year.

Waiting lists for all Blackpool schools and academies will be set up the week following the offers being sent. A child's name will be placed on the waiting list for any schools or academies that were ranked higher than the school or academy that has been offered. Parents/carers may also request that a child is placed on the waiting list for a school or academy that was not an original preference.

In accordance with the school admissions code, places on the waiting list are maintained according to the child's priority against the individual admission criteria, not simply the length of time that they have been on the waiting list.

Blackpool school admissions will manage waiting lists for maintained schools and any academies who have delegated this responsibility.

Voluntary aided schools and academies and free schools will maintain waiting lists in accordance with their admissions policy, so parents/carers will have to contact the school or academy direct to ascertain the position on the waiting list.

If a place becomes available which will take a school or academy below its published admission number, the place will be offered from the waiting list.

Any pupils who are subject to a local authority direction to admit or who are allocated in accordance with fair access arrangements (as described within the school admissions code) must take precedence over others who are on any school or academy waiting list.

Appeals

Applicants wishing to appeal for a community or voluntary controlled school may request an appeal form from Blackpool school admissions. This form should also be requested if appealing for an academy that delegates appeal related responsibilities to Blackpool school admissions.

Appeal forms for voluntary aided schools and academies and free schools can be obtained direct from the relevant school or academy.

Applications from abroad and other areas of the UK

It is required that families must be resident in Blackpool, or in the surrounding areas, for a Blackpool school or academy to be allocated within the annual intake process. Exceptional circumstances will be considered on request (and will require necessary evidence to be provided.) Exceptions will include:

UK service personnel families who can provide evidence of a posting into the area and the date from which this will occur.

New to area families purchasing or renting an address in the area, who can provide legal evidence of a contract exchange or lease agreement.

The child must be in residence with the parent/carer at their permanent address. This applies to those returning from living abroad and those returning from periods of employment/secondment abroad. It is required that a family does not just own a property in the area, but that they are actually resident at that property for an allocation to be made at a Blackpool school or academy.

Where families relocate or return to an address in the area after a statutory closing date but during the allocation period (ahead of finalisation of offers) then there will be consideration of accepting a late application. Appropriate evidence must be provided of ownership and date of relocation and residence at that address.

Co-ordinated admission scheme for Blackpool primary schools and academies 2024-2025

Date	Activity
1 September 2023	Online application system goes live and paper application forms are made available
15 January 2024	Closing date for primary applications
By 9 February 2024	Preferences to be exchanged with neighbouring admission authorities
By 8 March 2024	Ranked lists from voluntary aided primary schools and academies to be returned to Blackpool school admissions
By 29 March 2024	Offers to be confirmed with the neighbouring admission authorities
Week commencing 1 April 2023	Final lists of allocated pupils to be sent to all schools and academies
On 16 April 2024	Email notification will be sent to applicants who applied online. Letters will be issued on the previous working day but are likely to arrive after the emails

The closing date and offer date are national statutory requirements.

The dates for exchanging information may on occasion vary slightly by agreement, to take into account local issues associated with workload and/or specific situations affecting a school or academy.

Co-ordinated admission scheme for Blackpool secondary academies 2024-2025

Date	Activity
1 September 2023	Online application system goes live and paper application forms are made available
31 October 2023	Closing date for secondary applications
By 17 November 2023	Preferences to be exchanged with neighbouring admission authorities
By 8 December 2023	Ranked lists from voluntary aided academies to be returned to Blackpool school admissions
Week commencing 22 January 2024	Offers to be confirmed with the neighbouring admission authorities
Week commencing 12 February 2024	Final lists of allocated students to be sent to all schools and academies
On 1 March 2024	Email notification will be sent to applicants who applied online. Letters will be issued on the previous working day but are likely to arrive after the emails

The closing date and offer date are national statutory requirements.

The dates for exchanging information may on occasion vary slightly by agreement, to take into account local issues associated with workload and/or specific situations affecting a school or academy.

Blackpool Council

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