

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL



Co-ordinated Admissions Arrangements 2017-2018

BLACKPOOL CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR SCHOOLS 2017/18

Introduction

Blackpool's co-ordinated school admissions scheme aims to provide 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 enables parents/carers of all children living within Blackpool who require a school place, to complete a single application (either on-line or on paper form) expressing three preferences for admission to maintained schools, academies and free schools within Blackpool and also in the neighbouring authority area. An opportunity will be given for applicants to state their reasons for the preference.

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.

Following consideration of expressed preferences, the Local Authority will issue to applicants living within Blackpool the offer of a single school or academy place on behalf of all admission authorities operating within the co-ordinated scheme.

In the event that none of the preferred schools or academies can be offered, the Local Authority will ensure that an alternative 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 is important that admission authorities work together closely, share information when required and adhere strictly to the agreed timescales.

The Offer of a Place

In accordance with legislation, the Blackpool scheme will ensure that applicants only receive a single offer.

The scheme ensures that each preference is considered equally and that, where possible, applicants receive a place at their highest ranked preferred school or academy. Where multiple offers can be made, the Local Authority will refer to the priority order of the schools/academies identified on the application. The offer that is the highest ranked preference will be confirmed.

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

Processing of Preference Forms

3.1 Stage 1 – Expression of preferences

During August each year the Local Authority will provide flyers and information notices for schools, academies and nurseries to issue to parents. These will refer prospective applicants to the on-line application system and to links and contacts for information and advice.

The parents of children who do not attend Blackpool schools 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.

Blackpool's on-line system will be available from Monday 5th September 2016. Applicants can access the on-line system at www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions. The parents' information brochure can be viewed on the on-line system and Blackpool Council's website.

Paper application forms and paper copies of the brochure will be available on request from Blackpool School Admissions and Blackpool primary schools and academies.

The school admission information for parents/carers will include the following:

Details of how the process is co-ordinated with all admission authorities within Blackpool and how that information is exchanged with the neighbouring local authority.

An explanation of the admission arrangements for all Blackpool maintained schools, and contact details for Blackpool Academies and Free Schools and Voluntary Aided schools and academies.

The timescale for each stage of the admissions process

Information on the number of applications received for places at each school/academy in the previous year.

The information will also contain details about how to apply on-line for a school place, and how to access a paper admissions application form on which Blackpool residents may apply for schools/academies for their children. Schools/academies in neighbouring authority areas should also be included by Blackpool residents on their application.

Most voluntary aided (church) schools and academies have a supplementary information form that parents 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. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to complete either an on-line or a paper application form and to liaise with voluntary aided schools/academies direct about their supplementary form.

Applicants must complete an on-line or paper application for their children to be considered for a Reception or Year 7 place. Completion of a supplementary information form does not constitute registration within the annual admission process for intakes.

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.

Applicants are encouraged to use the on-line application system. This is secure, provides a quick e-mail acknowledgement of receipt of an application and allows earlier notification of an offer.

Completed paper applications must be returned to the School Admissions Team, PO Box 4, Blackpool FY1 1NA.

All applications must be completed and submitted by the published closing date (see relevant timetable).

3.2 Stage 2 - Circulating of Preferences

All Blackpool schools and academies must forward any completed paper application forms that they have received, to the School Admissions Team immediately.

Primary schools/academies must not forward applications direct to any secondary schools/academies. Nor must they, under any circumstances, inform secondary schools/academies about the priority order of preferences.

Details of all the preferences will be entered into the Blackpool School Admissions database.

Voluntary Aided Schools/Academies/Free School 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 all Voluntary Aided Schools/Academies/Free School must consider all on-line and paper applications, even where applicants have decided not to complete a supplementary form. If a parent/carer has only completed the supplementary information form, this should not be considered for a place unless an on-line or a paper application has been completed.

Where applicants have requested a school or academy outside of Blackpool, the Local Authority will also notify the relevant authority/authorities and forward details of the application together with any supporting information provided. The maintaining authority will notify Blackpool of the details of any applications which they have received which include Blackpool schools/academies as parental preferences.

The Local Authority will also, at this time, commence processes relating to verifying looked after children, special educational needs, siblings, medical, and social/welfare issues and addresses for oversubscribed Community, Voluntary Controlled schools and academies who have delegated these responsibilities.

The Local Authority will exchange information with the neighbouring Local Authority. Information exchanges will continue throughout the process as required.

All preferences will be circulated between admission authorities by the agreed date (see relevant timetable).

3.3 Stage 3 - First Sort

Each Blackpool Voluntary Aided/Academy/Free School will return a list of all applicants, ranked in accordance with their admissions policy, to the School Admissions Team by the agreed date (see relevant timetable).

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 Boards of Voluntary Aided/Academies/Free School must take into account the need for offers to be ranked in accordance with the agreed equal preference scheme and each applicant's priority order of preferences.

The Local Authority will then:

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 parent will be the single offer.

Consider those children who do not currently have the offer for their first preference and ensure that their second and third preferences are considered and, where possible, an offer is made.

(c) Where none of the applicant's preferences can be offered, the Local Authority will offer a place at the nearest suitable school (or academy where appropriate) with an available place. This will be established by measuring as a straight line distance between the child's home and the school/academy.

3.4 Stage 4 – Notifying of offers

The Local Authority will inform the neighbouring authority of all Blackpool children who could have been offered a school/academy in their area, but where an alternative offer can be made in accordance with the applicants' preference priority. Blackpool will be informed by the neighbouring authority of all Blackpool children who are to be offered places in schools/academies within their area. No changes can be made to offers after this date.

Blackpool will inform the neighbouring authority of children living outside Blackpool who could be offered places in Blackpool schools/academies. Where the child could also be offered a school or academy in their home authority, the home authority scheme will determine which offer should be made.

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

By the agreed date (see relevant timetable), Blackpool Local Authority will send all schools and academies their final allocation list.

On the national offer date (see relevant timetable), the Local Authority will send notification of the allocated primary school or academy, to every Blackpool applicant. If the offer is made on behalf of another admission authority, this will be made clear.

Where the initial offer is not for a preferred school or academy this will be made clear and the reasons why a place at the preferred school or academy could not be offered will be given. In these cases the notification will also include advice about waiting lists and right of appeal.

On-line applicants will be able to view their school or academy offer on the national offer date. Letters issued to those who applied on paper may arrive slightly later.

Late Applications

Applications received after the published closing date, will only be considered at that time if the following conditions apply:

if the number of preferences received for a school/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.

The onus will be placed upon individual applicants to provide the necessary evidence to support an exceptional case for late application.

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

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists for all Blackpool schools and academies will be initiated in the week following the offers being sent. Parents/carers may request that their child's name be placed on the waiting list(s) for any schools or academies that were ranked higher than the school/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.

If a vacancy occurs, which will take a school/academy below its published admission number, the place will be filled from the waiting list.

In accordance with the DfE 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. 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.

Blackpool School Admissions Team will manage waiting lists for maintained schools, and academies who have delegated this responsibility.

Voluntary Aided schools/Academies/Free School 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.

All waiting lists will be maintained until the end of the Autumn Term.

Applications received after the national offer date

The Local Authority will co-ordinate admission arrangements on behalf of all Blackpool maintained schools, and academies who have delegated the responsibility, for the annual intake. Applications made direct to any Blackpool maintained school/academy within the scheme, must be forwarded to the Local Authority immediately.

Where a Voluntary Aided school/academy receives only a supplementary form, they must inform the Local Authority so it can be verified if an application has been received. If an application has not been completed, the parent would be asked to complete an application, but this would be treated as a late application.

The Local Authority 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 preferences can be met, the nearest suitable school (or academy where appropriate) with a place available will be offered and waiting list and appeals information will be provided.

The Local Authority will retain the responsibility for issuing offer to parents on behalf of maintained schools (and academies who have delegated the responsibility) up to 31st December 2017.

Appeals

Where the Local Authority as the admission authority, or on behalf of another admission authority which is part of the scheme, notifies applicants that none of their preferences can be offered, they will also inform applicants of their right of appeal.

Applicants wishing to appeal for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school may request an appeal form from Blackpool School Admissions Team. This form should also be requested if appealing for an Academy that delegates appeal related responsibilities to the Local Authority.

Appeal forms for Voluntary Aided Schools/Academies and Langdale Free School can be obtained direct from the relevant school/academy.

Applications from other areas

It is required that families must be resident in Blackpool, or in the surrounding areas, for a Blackpool school to be allocated within the annual intake process. Exceptional circumstances will be considered, which 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 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.

Where families relocate or return to an address in the area after the published 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-ORDINATING SCHEME FOR PRIMARY ADMISSIONS - 2017/18
T I M E T A B L E

Week commencing Monday 5th September 2016	On-line application system goes live and paper application forms are made available
Sunday 15th January 2017	Closing date for primary applications
By Friday 10th February 2017	Preferences to be exchanged between admissions authorities
By Friday 10th March 2017	Ranked lists from Voluntary Aided schools/academies to be returned to the School Admissions Team
By Friday 31st March 2017	Offers to be confirmed with other admissions authorities
Week commencing Monday 10th April 2017	Final lists of allocated pupils to be sent to all schools and academies
On Sunday 16th April 2017	Email notification will be sent to applicants who applied on-line. Letters will be issued (where workload allows) on the previous working day but are likely to arrive after the on-line system notifications

The closing dates and offer dates are national statutory requirements. The dates of exchanges of information may on occasion vary slightly by agreement, to take into account local issues associated with workload and/or specific situations affecting a school/academy.

CO-ORDINATING SCHEME FOR SECONDARY ADMISSIONS – 2017/18
T I M E T A B L E

Week Commencing Monday 5th September 2016	On-line application system goes live and paper application forms are made available
By Monday 31st October 2016	Closing date for secondary applications
By Monday 7th November 2016	Primary schools/academies to forward any paper application forms to the School Admissions Team
By Friday 25th November 2016	Preferences to be exchanged with neighbouring admissions authorities
By Friday 16th December 2016	Ranked lists from Voluntary Aided schools/academies to be returned to the School Admissions Team
Week commencing 23rd January 2017	Offers to be confirmed with other admissions authorities
Week commencing Monday 20th February 2017	Final lists of allocated pupils to be sent to all schools and academies
On Wednesday 1st March 2017	Email notification will be sent to applicants who applied on-line. Letters will be issued (where workload allows) on the previous working day but are likely to arrive after the on-line system notifications

The closing dates and offer dates are national statutory requirements. The dates of exchanges of information may on occasion vary slightly by agreement, to take into account local issues associated with workload and/or specific situations affecting a school/academy.