

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

Scheme for co-ordinated admissions to infant, primary and junior schools – Admissions Year 2016/17 (Admissions to Reception or year 3 of Junior School in September 2016)

Introduction

The main purpose of the co-ordinated scheme is to ensure that every parent of a child living in Brighton & Hove who has completed a school preference form receives one offer of an infant, primary or junior school place. This will be on a set date following the conclusion of the normal admission round for pupils seeking admission to school. The scheme is designed to foster clear communications on school admissions between the City Council, community schools, and voluntary aided schools which act as their own admission authority.

The scheme does not affect the rights of voluntary aided schools and Academies to set their own admission priorities, and consider applications on the basis of those priorities. It is intended to set out a process and time scale for the exchange of pupil information between the parties to the scheme, resulting in the offer of a single school place. This should represent a preference listed by the parent /carer following the application of the admission priorities by the Local Authority (LA) or by own admission authority schools. Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the preferred schools for a child living in Brighton & Hove, a place will be offered at the nearest school to their home address within the city boundaries with a place available. This will not preclude parents from seeking an alternative place elsewhere if they are unhappy with the offer, nor will it prevent them from lodging an appeal with the admission authority for their preferred school.

All residents of Brighton & Hove should apply using the City Council's common application form (online or paper) even if they are seeking a place at a maintained school in the area of another Council.

The time scales set out in the scheme will be broadly in line with the time scales used by neighbouring LAs. **Please be aware that VA schools' and Academies' governing bodies will need to meet between 22 February 2016 and 11 March 2016 when the ranking order needs to be returned to the Local Authority.**

Key dates

- Online application facility available 1 September 2015
- Distribution of admission booklets on request
- Closing date for applications 15 January 2016
- Preference data exchanged with Voluntary aided schools and other LAs. 12 February 2016
- Voluntary Aided schools provide Council

- with provisional ranking order of all applicants. 11 March 2016
- Data exchanged with VA schools and neighbouring authorities 11 March 2016
- Consider qualifying late applications. 11 March 2016
- Finalise allocations and provide schools with offer details. 24 March 2016
- Decisions emailed to parents/carers, Letters posted to parents who applied on paper. 18 April 2016
- Deadline for acceptance of places and appeals to be heard in the main round. 20 May 2016

Process and detailed time scale – infant, junior and primary schools

1. The school admissions booklet published by the City Council will be distributed on request to parents/carers applying for infant or primary school places. A publicity campaign will be launched in September 2015 encouraging parents to apply online. This will include a leaflet sent via the post, schools, other council services, early years settings, the press and other media to parents of those pupils seeking places in school. Schools will be asked to act as a collection point for information about pupils seeking school places.
2. Parents/carers will be invited to list 3 preferences for a school place ranked in order of priority. These may be for Community Schools or voluntary aided schools within the city. The Brighton & Hove school admission preference form must be used to indicate their preferred schools, either paper or online version. No other form will be valid. They should list the schools in order of priority (e.g. 1, 2, 3). The LA allocates places on the basis of equal preferences, and each preference listed will be prioritised on the basis of the published admission priorities for community and voluntary aided schools. If it is possible to offer more than one place on the basis of those priorities, the one ranked higher on the preference form will be offered.
3. Parents and carers are strongly advised to apply online through the facility available on the Brighton & Hove City Council website. This will provide them with a response which confirms their preference listing and acts as proof of application. Alternatively the paper form should be completed and returned to their local infant/primary school or to the Admissions Team at King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove **by 15 January 2016**.
4. Where as part of its admission priorities a voluntary aided school requires additional supporting information, such as a Governors' form, or proof of denominational commitment, that form or proof should be completed and returned by the same closing date. This is to ensure that target dates for the exchange of pupil information and the notification date for parents/carers can be met. Provided the LA preference form has been completed and returned, that additional information may be given direct to the school, or handed in with the preference form. Parents/carers will be advised through the admissions booklet for Brighton & Hove, and through

school published information, of any such additional information requirements for voluntary aided schools. Parents/carers with queries about voluntary aided school admission requirements should contact the school for further information.

5. If using an application form rather than online application parents and carers are strongly advised to send their form via a preferred school. Parents who post the form should understand that proof of posting is not proof of receipt, and they will not have confirmation in the same way as those applying online or returning the form to a school. All maintained infant and primary schools in the city will return preference forms to the LA in batches as they are received, with the final batch as soon as possible after the closing date. Schools should maintain a list to record the date on which each form was received, and if required will provide proof of receipt to the parent/carer. This ensures that on time applications and late applications are clearly recorded as such. It also provides assurance for parents should the school or the LA subsequently mislay the form.
6. **No later than 12 February 2016**
 - ∇ LA will identify the numbers of preferences (first, second and third) received for each school.
 - ∇ Voluntary aided schools, free schools and academies will be provided with details of parental preferences where their school is given as a preference (via form or online). They will apply oversubscription criteria to prioritise all preferences. Where pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (naming the school) and must be offered a place as first priority this will be indicated. (Statemented pupils must be given priority for school of preference in accordance with the SEN and Admissions Code. This applies to all maintained schools, including Voluntary Aided.)
 - ∇ West and East Sussex and other LA's as necessary will be forwarded the details of preferences (forms and Online applications) expressed for their schools by Brighton & Hove parents/carers (first, second and third). Where the pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs this will be indicated.
 - ∇ West and East Sussex will be asked to provide a list of pupils living in those areas who have expressed a preference for a Brighton & Hove school (first, second or third), indicating those who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
7. **No later than 11 March 2016**
 - ∇ Voluntary aided schools, free schools and academies will provide the LA with a list showing children in priority order for places at the school. The list will show which oversubscription criterion was applied to each child, and relevant information to apply any necessary tie-break. The school will advise the LA of such additional information as is necessary to inform parents of the reason for its decision when allocation letters are sent on 18 April 2016.

- ∇ Other LAs will provide Brighton & Hove LA with a list of which Brighton & Hove pupils could be offered places in their schools. They will advise Brighton & Hove of the reason where a preference cannot be met for inclusion in the allocation letters on 18 April 2016.
- ∇ Brighton & Hove will apply its admission priorities to all preferences received for community schools, and where the children are resident in other LAs, will inform that LA.
- ∇ The LA will apply its own admission priorities for all community school preferences.

8. No later than 24 March 2016

- ∇ Brighton & Hove will establish whether more than one offer could be made on the basis of the application of its own admission priorities and those of voluntary aided schools, free schools, academies and other LAs. It will determine in each case which is the highest parental ranking.
- ∇ Final lists of school allocations will be prepared.
- ∇ Emails to parents/carers will be prepared.
- ∇ Consideration will be given to qualifying late applications received before 11 March 2016.
- ∇ Discussions will take place with other admission authorities as necessary to resolve any remaining unallocated applications.
- ∇ Neighbouring LAs will be sent final details of children living in their area offered a place at a Brighton & Hove school, and for whom they will need to send allocation letters.

9. 18 April 2016

Online applicants will receive their decisions by e-mail. Letters will be sent to parents/carers who did not apply on line. The LA email or letter to parents will contain the following:

- ∇ If they have not been allocated a school of preference, the reason why not.
- ∇ How places at the preferred schools were allocated.
- ∇ The right of appeal to an independent panel, and how to arrange an appeal for a community school or a voluntary aided school.

10. 20 May 2016

Parents and carers should accept offers of places by this date in order to allow schools and the LA ample planning time for the new intake. This does not affect their right to appeal if the place they are accepting is not their highest preference. Parents should have also exercised their right to appeal by this date if they want to be assured of having their appeal heard in the main round of appeals.

11. Proof of address

The LA may require parents/carers to provide proof of address if they are applying for a community school place.

Appendix A – Changes of address and late applications

New arrivals in the city

Parents/carers moving into the City in the course of the admission process who are making an application on the basis of their new address must provide evidence of either a tenancy agreement of six months or more or an exchange of contracts if they are purchasing a property. Applicants should return their preference forms by the closing date if possible, especially if their move took place before the closing date, forwarding proof of the move at the earliest opportunity. If they provide the form and the evidence of the move by 11 March 2016 their application will be included in the main admission round.

Late applications received before the allocation date

- I. With the exception of families moving into the area and cases as described at V below, forms received after the closing date will not be considered by the LA until allocations have been made for those received before the closing date. Any received for an own admission authority school will be forwarded to the school. The school will decide whether or not there is a good reason to include these late applications in the main admission round, but will only consider them if they are received before **11 March 2016**.
- II. Any preference forms received for community schools in respect of children in public care will be included in the main admission round as valid preference at any time up to **24 March 2016**. Where such applications are received after that date, the LA will, if attendance at that school is seen as a necessity for the welfare of the child, seek to offer places at the school ranked highest on the preference form. If, however, it is acceptable to offer a place at a lower ranked school without going over numbers, the LA will discuss that possibility with the social worker for the child. Applications to voluntary aided schools, free schools and academies received on behalf of children in public care will be considered in line with the published admission policy for each school and the requirements of the School Admission Code.
- III. Applications received after the closing date will be sent a letter allocating a school place as soon as possible after the main notification date of **18 April 2016**.
- IV. Parents/carers living in the City who change any preference as a result of a change of address, and who return the new form by **11 March 2016** will have that change considered in the main round of allocations. They will have to provide evidence of their new address and will not have their changed application accepted without that evidence.
- V. Other late applications where there is a good reason for this will be considered in the main round of allocations if received by **11 March 2016** where independent evidence is given by a third party (usually a professional source such as a doctor or social worker) to support the reason for the delay.

Applications received after the allocation date

1. Where an application is received after the allocation date, from a parent/carer living in the City, they must use a Brighton & Hove preference form. If the preference(s) is for a community school, the LA will allocate a place if the school remains under subscribed. If the school(s) is fully subscribed, a place will be allocated at the nearest school to the home address that has a vacancy. Brighton & Hove will seek to make a decision as soon as possible after receiving the form. Where a preference is given for an own admission authority school or a school in a neighbouring LA, the form will be passed to that admission authority for a decision. They will be asked to reach a decision within fourteen days of receiving the form. Brighton & Hove will endeavour to send a decision to the parent /carer either as soon as possible once it has reached a decision, or has been informed of a decision by the other admission authority.

11. If a change of preference or preference order is received following the decision letter on **18 April 2016** and the home address has not changed, that changed preference will not be considered until after **30 June 2016**. This allows reasonable time for the consideration of late first applications and the operation of the waiting list where places have been offered and refused.

111. All applications received after the beginning of the autumn term 2016 will be regarded as outside the admission round. Nonetheless, the LA will act as the point of contact for all preferences from parents/carers living in the City. The LA will liaise with own admission authority schools over applications for admission to those schools, and will inform parents of their admission decisions, if necessary allocating an alternative school place. The LA online or paper preference form should be used in all cases. The same arrangements will apply to applications for admission to schools for year groups other than the normal Reception year. (See also School Transfers below.) This ensures that the LA has a full record of pupil admissions, and supports both the schools and the LA in their responsibilities for pupil tracking and safety.

Waiting List

- I. Brighton & Hove will operate a waiting list system for its community schools. (Own admission authority schools make their own waiting list arrangements). The waiting list ranking will be based on the LA admission criteria. Rankings within each priority will be determined by home to school distance. All children will be automatically placed on the waiting list for the community school for which they have expressed a first preference, although parents will be given the option of also asking to go on the waiting list for a different preferred school place when places are allocated on **18 April 2016**. Places will be offered to children from the waiting list as soon as a place becomes available at an over subscribed school and the admission criteria have been applied. The waiting list will operate until the end of the Autumn Term.

- II. Parents/carers wishing to keep their child's name on the list for longer than the end of the Autumn Term must inform the LA. They must renew the waiting list place each term thereafter. Applicants outside of the main admission exercise will be placed on waiting lists for one term, and must ask for the child's name to remain on the waiting list each term thereafter.

School Admission Appeals

- I. Parents/carers wishing to appeal against the LA's decision not to offer a place at a preferred school should do so by **20 May 2016** if they want to be assured of having their appeal heard in the main appeal round.
- II. The LA will not arrange an appeal or ask a voluntary aided school to arrange an appeal for a school that was not included on the original application. It will only arrange an appeal for a school which was listed as a preference, as it will not have given a decision to the parent/carer for schools not included on the form. If a parent/carer wishes to receive a decision for a school not included in their original application, and thus acquire a right of appeal, they must complete a further application. However, unless there is a good reason for a change of preference this new form will not be considered until after **30 June 2016**.
- III. Parents/carers will receive 10 school days notice of the date of the appeal hearing, and will receive copies of any documentation relating to the appeal 7 days in advance of the hearing.
- IV. Appeals for on-time applications must be heard within 40 school days of the closing date for appeals to be lodged. The volume of appeals to be heard and the availability of the appeal panel members, who are volunteers, will have a direct effect on the timing of the appeal hearings.
- V. Appeals for late applications and school transfers outside the normal admission round will be arranged as soon as practicable after the decision to refuse a preference has been conveyed to the pupil and the parent/carer, and in any case within 30 school days.

