**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

# Scheme for co-ordinated admissions to infant, primary and junior schools – Admissions Year 2023/24 (Admissions to Reception or year 3 of Junior School in September 2023)

## 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, Academies (for the purposes of this document Free Schools are included as Academies), and voluntary aided schools which act as their own admission authority, and neighbouring Local Authorities (LAs) and admission authorities. It fulfils the requirements of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements (England)) Regulations 2012 and more detailed arrangements set out in the School Admissions Code 2021.

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 governing bodies for VA schools and Academies will need to meet between 20 February 2023 and 10 March 2023 when the ranking order needs to be returned to the Local Authority.**

## Key dates

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| • Online application facility available | 1 September 2022 |
| • Distribution of admission booklets | on request |
| • Closing date for applications | 15 January 2023 |

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| • Preference data exchanged with Voluntary aided schools and other LAs. | 20 February 2023 |
| • Consider qualifying late applications. | 08 March 2023 |
| • Voluntary Aided schools provide Council with provisional ranking order of all applicants. | 10 March 2023 |
| • Finalise allocations and exchange offer details with neighbouring LAs | Between 20 March - 6 April 2023 |
| • Finalise allocations and provide schools with offer details. | 11 April 2023 |
| • Notification e-mails sent to parents, decisions | 17 April 2023 |
| • posted to applicants without an email address | |
| • Deadline date for acceptance of places | 2 May 2023 |
| • Deadline for acceptance of places and appeals to be heard in the main round. | 16 May 2023 |

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

1. The school admissions guidance 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 2022 encouraging parents to apply online. Posters will be sent to schools, other council services, early years settings, the press and other media to remind parents of those pupils requiring a school place to apply.

2. Parents/carers will be invited to list 3 preferences for a school place ranked in order of priority. These may be at a City Community School, an academy, a free School or a voluntary aided school, or any maintained school outside the City of Brighton & Hove. Those residents in the City must use the Brighton & Hove school admission preference form to indicate their preferred schools, either online or by completing a paper form. No other form of application will be valid. 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 own admission authority schools. If it is possible to offer more than one place on the basis of those priorities, the one ranked higher on the application 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 Hove Town Hall, Hove **by 15 January 2023.**

4. Where, as part of its admission priorities a voluntary aided school requires additional supporting information, such as a Supplementary Information form, or proof of denominational commitment, that form or proof should be completed and returned to the school 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.

5. Parents are encouraged to apply online however, if using an application form rather than the online application parents and carers are strongly advised to return their application 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 as they are received, ideally scanned and sent by email. Schools should maintain a record of 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 20 February 2023**
   - 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. They will apply oversubscription criteria to prioritise all preferences. Where pupils have an Education, Health & Care Plan (naming the school) and must be offered a place this will be indicated. These pupils must be given a place at the school 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 expressed for their schools by Brighton & Hove parents/carers (first, second and third). Where the pupil has an Education, Health & Care Plan 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 subsequent).

7. **No later than 10 March 2023**
   - 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 and emails are sent on 17 April 2023.
   - 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.
   - Consideration will be given to qualifying late applications received before 8 March 2023.

8. **Between 23 March and 6 April 2023**

- 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.
- 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. 17 April 2023**

Online applicants will receive their decisions by e-mail. Letters will be sent only to parents/carers who do not have an email address. 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.
- Where it is an own admission authority school, the fact that the offer is made on behalf of the governing body of the school.
- Where it is a school maintained by another LA, the fact that the offer is made on behalf of that LA.
- The right of appeal to an independent panel, and how to arrange an appeal for a community school or a voluntary aided school.
- Details about waiting lists for preferences that could not be met.

**10. 2 May 2023**

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.

**11. 16 May 2023**

Parents should also have 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.

**12. Proof of address**

The LA may require parents/carers to provide proof of address if they are applying for a community school place. Own admission authority schools may also request proof of address from their applicants.

**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 submit their application 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 an application with the evidence of the move by 8 March 2023 their application will be included in the main admission round.

**Late applications received before national offer day**

I. With the exception of families moving into the area and cases as described at V below, applications 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 **8 March 2023**.

II. Any applications received for community schools in respect of children in care will be included in the main admission round as valid preference at any time up to **8 April 2023**. 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 but before the 8 March 2023 will be sent a letter or email allocating a school place on 17 April 2023 or as soon as possible after that date if the volume of late applications is high. Applications received after this date will be sent an allocation letter or email as soon as possible after 17 April 2023.

IV. Applications received after the closing date will be sent an email or letter allocating a school place as soon as possible after the main notification date of **17 April 2023**.

V. Parents/carers living in the City who change any preference as a result of a change of address, and who return the new application by **8 March 2023** 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.

VI. Other late applications where there is a good reason for this will be considered in the main round of allocations if received by **8 March 2023** 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.

**Late applications received after national offer day**

I. Where an application is received after the allocation date, from a parent/carer living in the City, they must use the Brighton & Hove online application or paper 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 application. 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.

II. If a change of preference is received following the decision letter on **17 April 2023** and the home address has not changed, that changed preference will not be considered until July **2023**. 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.

III. All applications received after the beginning of the autumn term 2023 will be regarded as outside this admission round.

**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 when places are allocated on **17 April 2023**. 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 31st December.

II. Parents/carers wishing to keep their child's name on the list for longer than the 31st December they must inform the LA. They must renew the waiting list place 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 **16 May 2023** 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 July **2022.**

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 much 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 affect 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.