

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

Scheme for co-ordinated admissions to infant, primary and junior schools – Admissions Year 2005/06 (Admissions in September 2005)

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 in its role as LEA, Community Schools, and Voluntary Aided schools which act as their own admission authority.

The scheme does not affect the rights of Voluntary Aided schools 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 the highest preference listed by the parent /carer that it is possible to meet following the application of the admission priorities by the LEA or by Voluntary Aided 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.

Where parents/carers wish to apply to school outside Brighton & Hove, they should contact the LEA within which the school is located.

The time scales set out in the scheme will be broadly in line with the time scales used by neighbouring LEAs.

Process and time scale – infant and primary schools

1. The school admissions booklet published by the City Council will be distributed to parents/carers applying for infant or primary school places in October/November 2004. This LEA will have identified those pupils seeking places in school through a publicity campaign conducted via schools, other council services, the press and other media and other means. 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 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. No other form will be

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valid, in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 2002. They should list the schools in order of priority (e.g. 1, 2, 3). The 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 3.00 on 4th February 2005**.

3. 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 LEA 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, or 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.
4. All maintained infant and primary schools in the city will return preference forms to the LEA in batches as they are received, with the final batch as soon as possible after the closing date. Schools should record the date on which each form was received, the school given as first preference, and if required 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 LEA subsequently mislay the form.
5. **No later than 25th February 2005.**
 - ❖ LEA will make an indicative allocation of places to all first preferences at Community Schools in the city which are not oversubscribed. The published oversubscription criteria will be applied to those schools with more applicants than places.
 - ❖ Voluntary Aided schools will be provided with parental preference forms giving their school as first preference. They will apply oversubscription criteria if necessary. If the school is not oversubscribed, the LEA will inform the school of its intention to offer all first preference applicants a place on behalf of the governors of the school, and will discuss with the school the application of oversubscription criteria to second and third preference applications if that becomes necessary. Where pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and must be offered a place as first priority this will be indicated. (Stated pupils must be given priority for school of preference in accordance with the SEN and Admissions Codes of Practice. This applies to all maintained schools.)

No later than 11th March 2005

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- ❖ If oversubscribed, Voluntary Aided schools will provide the LEA with a list showing which children will be offered places at the school, and which will not. The list will show which admission criterion was applied to each child. The school will advise the LEA where in its admission criteria it stopped offering places, and such additional information as is necessary to inform parents of the reason for its decision when allocation letters are sent on 6th May 2005.
 - ❖ Brighton & Hove will decide upon its first preference allocations to Community Schools.
- 6. No later than 18th March 2005**
- ❖ Brighton & Hove will liaise with Voluntary Aided schools to establish whether they would be able to offer places to children whose applications to them were second or third preferences. Where the first preference was for a B&H school which can be offered, second and third preference offers will be declined so that only one offer of a place is made.
- 7. No later than 20th April 2005**
- ❖ Final lists of school allocations will be prepared.
 - ❖ Letters to parents/carers will be prepared.
 - ❖ Consideration will be given to late applications received up to this date.
- 8. 6th May 2005**
- Letters will be sent to parents/carers. Although prepared by the LEA these will be sent via schools, who will then be able to add their own information or messages to parents/carers to the envelope. The LEA letter to parents will contain the following.
- ❖ If they have not been allocated their school of preference, the reason why not.
 - ❖ How places at the preferred school 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.
- 9. Proof of address**
- The LEA may require parents/carers to provide proof of address if they are offered a place at a Community School which is over subscribed with first preferences.

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. The tenancy agreement or

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exchange of contract must have been reached by the closing date (4th February 2005) if the application is to be regarded as on time. Applicants should return their preference form by the closing date, but will have until 18th February to provide the evidence of their move.

Late applications

- I. Forms received after the closing date will not be considered by the LEA for schools oversubscribed with applications received before the closing date. Any received for a Voluntary Aided school will be forwarded to the school, which will decide whether or not to include the application in the main admission round.
- 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 first preferences at any time up to the allocation date on 20th April 2005. Where such applications are received after that date, the LEA will, if attendance at that school is seen as a necessity for the welfare of the child, seek to offer places at the school of first preference, if it is possible to do so without exceeding the Key Stage 1 maximum class size limit. If, however, it is possible to offer a place at a second or third preference school without going over numbers, the LEA will discuss that possibility with the social worker for the child. Applications to Voluntary Aided Schools received on behalf of children in public care will be considered in line with the published admission policy for each school.
- III. Applications received after the closing will be sent a letter allocating a school place as soon as possible after the main notification date of 6th May.
- IV. Parents/carers living in the City who change a preference as a result of a change of address, and who return the new form by the closing date 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. Where an application is received after the closing 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 LEA 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 if the application is for a Community School. 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 school if the application is for a place at a Voluntary Aided School.
- VI. All applications received after the beginning of the autumn term 2005 will be regarded as outside the co-ordinated scheme. Nonetheless, Brighton & Hove will act as the point of contact for all preferences from parents/carers living in the City. The LEA will liaise with Voluntary Aided schools over applications for admission to those schools, and will

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inform parents of their admission decisions, if necessary allocating an alternative school place. The LEA 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 LEA has a full record of pupil admissions, and supports schools and the LEA in their responsibilities for pupil tracking and safety.

Waiting List

- I. Brighton & Hove will operate a waiting list system for its Community Schools. (It will be for Voluntary Aided schools to decide whether to use a waiting list system, and if so how it should operate.) The waiting list ranking will be based on the LEA admission criteria. Rankings within each priority will be determined by distance from school as the crow flies. Places will be offered to children from the waiting list as soon as a place becomes available at an over subscribed school. All children refused a place at their school of first preference will be placed on the waiting list as soon as their school allocation is notified. The waiting list will operate until the end of the Autumn Term, or for one term from the date of application for applications outside the main admission exercise.
- II. Parents/carers wishing to keep their child's name on the list for longer than one term must inform the LEA. 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 LEA's decision not to offer a place at a preferred school should do so within two weeks (fourteen days) of their receiving the allocation letter despatched on 6th May.
- II. The LEA 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 preference form. 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 preference, and thus acquire a right of appeal, they must complete a further preference form.
- III. Parents/carers will receive 14 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. Whilst the City Council and the Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools will make every effort to hear appeals within 6 weeks of the allocation letter being sent out, as suggested in the School Admissions Code of Practice, they cannot guarantee this time scale. The volume of appeals to be heard and the availability of the appeal panel members,

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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.

School transfers

Where parents/carers are seeking a school transfer for their child to another school without having changed address, a place will not normally be offered by the receiving school until the beginning of the following term. Exceptions to this rule will be allowed where:

- The pupil has been permanently excluded from another school.
- An early move is strongly recommended by a doctor, educational psychologist, Education Welfare Officer or Social Worker.
- There are other exceptional circumstances which lead the Director, Children, Families and Schools to conclude that an early move is advisable.

Junior schools

Co-ordinated arrangements for admission to junior schools will follow the same pattern as set out for infant/primary schools except that the relevant time scales shall be as follows.

- a) The school admission booklet will be distributed to parents in September 2004.
- b) Preference forms should be returned to the current school or to the Brighton & Hove School Admissions Team by 3.00pm on **19th November 2004**.
- c) The LEA will make indicative allocations to schools which are not over subscribed with first preferences by **17th December**. The Voluntary Aided Junior School, St Nicolas CE Junior, Portslade, will be provided with parental preference forms giving the school as a first preference.
- d) If over subscribed, St Nicolas CE Junior will provide the LEA with a list showing which pupils will be offered places, which will not, and the admission criterion applied in each case by **14th January 2005**.
- e) If places remain available after first preferences are satisfied, the LEA will liaise with St Nicolas CE Junior over second and third preference applications by **21st January**.
- f) The final list of school allocations will be prepared by **28th January**. The preparation of letters of notification to parents/carers will start by this date. Late applications received up to this date will be considered.
- g) Letters will be sent to parents/carers confirming the school allocated for their child on **8th February**.

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