

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

Scheme for co-ordinated admissions to secondary schools – Admissions Year 2010/11 (Admissions in September 2010)

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 a secondary school place at the conclusion of the normal admission round for pupils transferring from primary to secondary school. The scheme is designed to foster clear communications on school admissions between the City Council, community schools, Cardinal Newman School, which as a voluntary aided secondary school acts as its own admission authority, and neighbouring Local Authorities (LAs) and admission authorities. It fulfils the requirements of the School Admissions (Coordination of Admissions Arrangements (England)) Regulations 2007 and more detailed arrangements set out in the School Admissions code 2007.

The scheme does not affect the rights of the different admission authorities mentioned 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 that it is possible to meet following the application of the admission priorities by this LA or by other admission authorities. 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.

The time scales set out in the scheme work towards the prescribed date (1st March or the first working day following 1st March where it falls at a weekend) on which secondary school place decisions must be notified to parents/carers. It will also be broadly in line with the time scales used by neighbouring LAs.

Key dates

- Online application facility available 1st September 2009
- Distribution of admission booklets By 7th September 2009
- Closing date for applications 23rd October 2009
- Preference data exchanged with Cardinal Newman School and neighbouring LAs 27th November 2009
- Cardinal Newman provides Council with provisional ranking order of applicants. 18th December 2009
- Neighbouring LAs asked for provisional List of offers to B&H residents, B&H provides Provisional list to those LAs. 18th December 2009
- Consider qualifying late applications. 15th January 2010

- Finalise allocations and exchange offer details With Cardinal Newman and neighbouring LAs. 5th February 2010
- Notification letters posted 1st class to parents, decisions available to online applicants. 1st March 2010
- Deadline date for acceptance of places and appeals to be heard in the main round. 18th March 2010

Process and detailed time scale

1. The school admissions booklet published by the City Council will be distributed to parents at the beginning of September 2009. This LA will have identified those pupils entering Year 6 in city maintained schools (the transfer cohort) from primary school records. Neighbouring LAs will be asked to provide records of Brighton & Hove children attending schools in their areas so that admission booklets and forms can be sent to their parents/carers. Brighton & Hove will in return provide information to other LAs about their residents attending Brighton & Hove schools.
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 or a voluntary aided secondary school (Cardinal Newman), or any maintained school outside the City of Brighton & Hove. Those resident in the City must use the Brighton & Hove school admission preference form to indicate their preferred schools, either the paper or online form. No other form will be valid. The LA allocates places on the basis of equal preference, and each preference listed will be prioritised in accordance with the published admission priorities for community and voluntary aided secondary schools in the City. 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 the child's primary or junior school in the City, or to the Admissions Team at King's House **by 3.00 on Friday 23rd October 2009**. Applicants for Cardinal Newman may wish to return their preference form plus full supporting information (as required by the Governors) to the school directly. If applying online they may wish to send just the supporting information direct to the school indicating that they have completed the common application form online. If returned to the Local Authority, the documents will be shared with the school. This closing date has been set in order to conform to the admission timetables of neighbouring LAs and assist coordination of applications.
4. Where as part of its admission priorities a voluntary aided school within the City or beyond 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 between authorities 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 of Brighton & Hove or neighbouring LAs, or through school published parent information, of any such additional information requirements for voluntary aided schools.

5. If using an application form rather than online application parents and carers whose children attend maintained primary schools in the City are strongly advised to return the form via the school. Parents who prefer to post the form should understand that proof of posting is not proof of receipt, and they will not have confirmation or receipt in the same way as those applying online or returning the form to their child's school. All maintained junior and primary schools in the city will return secondary preference forms they receive 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, the school preferences, 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.

No later than 27th November 2009.

- ❖ LA will identify the number of preferences (first, second or third) received for each school.
- ❖ Cardinal Newman School will be provided with details of any parental preference (via form or online applications) where it gives the school as a preference (first, second or third) received by the LA. It will apply its oversubscription criteria to prioritise all preferences. Where pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs 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 Codes of Practice.)
- ❖ 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.

No later than 18th December 2009

- ❖ Cardinal Newman School will provide the LA with a list showing children in priority order for places at the school. The list will show

which admission criterion was applied to each child and the point at which the final place would be offered. 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 1st March 2010.

- ❖ 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 1st March 2010.
- ❖ 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.

Between 29th January and 5th February 2010

- ❖ 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 (primarily Cardinal Newman) and other LAs. It will determine in each case which is the highest parental ranking.
- ❖ Final lists of school allocations will be prepared.
- ❖ Letters to parents/carers will be prepared.
- ❖ Consideration will be given to late applications received before the allocation date.
- ❖ 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.

1st March 2010

Letters will be sent to parents/carers. 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 LA letter to parents will contain the following.

- ❖ If they have not been allocated a school of preference, the reason why not.
- ❖ How places at all Brighton & Hove schools were allocated.
- ❖ Where it is a voluntary aided 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, a voluntary aided school, and in the case of schools in other LA's, who to contact.

18th March 2010

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 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.

Proof of address

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

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 form 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 15th January 2009 their application will be included in the main admissions 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 school allocations have been made for those received by the closing date. Any received for Cardinal Newman 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 for community schools received 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 5th **February 2010**. 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 of first preference, if necessary negotiating with that school to admit beyond the published admission number in order to do so. 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 for Cardinal Newman School or schools in other LA areas for children in public care will be considered in line with the admission arrangements for those schools and the requirements of the Admissions Code.
- III. Applications received after the closing date but before the allocation date on 5th February 2010 will be sent a letter allocating a school place on March 2nd 2009 or as soon as possible after that date if the volume of late applications is high. Applications received after the allocation date will be sent an allocation letter as soon as possible after 1st March 2010.
- IV. Parents/carers living in the City who change a preference as a result of a change of address within the city, and who return the new form and evidence of the address change will have that change considered in

the main round of allocations if it is received by **15th January 2010**. They will have to provide evidence of the address change. Those preference forms received after that date will be considered as late applications.

- V. Other late applications where there is good reason for the delay will be considered in the main round of allocations if received by **15th January 2010** where independent evidence is given by a third party (usually a professional source such a doctor or social worker) to support the reason for the delay.

Received after the allocation date

- I. 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 Cardinal Newman 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.
- II. If a change of preference or preference order is received following the decision letter on 1st March 2010 and the home address has not changed, that changed preference will not be considered until after 30th June 2010. This allows reasonable time for the consideration of late first applications and the operation of the reallocation pool where places have been offered and refused.
- III. All applications received after the beginning of the autumn term will be regarded as outside the admission round. Nonetheless, Brighton & Hove will act as the point of contact for all preferences for parents/carers living in the City, and will liaise with Cardinal Newman School and other LAs over applications for admission to schools other than Brighton & Hove Community Schools. The Brighton & Hove preference form should be used in all cases by City residents and returned to the Brighton & Hove Admissions Team. The same arrangements will apply to applications for admission to schools for year groups other than the normal admission group in Year 7. Where the LA, Cardinal Newman School or another admission authority is not able to offer a place in accordance with a parental preference, the LA will offer a place at the nearest school to the home address of the applicant with a vacancy in the appropriate year group. Admissions to Years 12 and 13 in those schools that make such provision will be regarded as transfer admissions rather than admission at a normal

point of entry. (The majority of such pupils will have attended the school from Year 7, or transferred to the school in Key Stage 3 or 4.)

Re-allocation Pool

- I. Brighton & Hove will operate a re-allocation pool system for its community schools. (It is a matter for voluntary aided schools such as Cardinal Newman to decide whether or not to operate a waiting list system.) The ranking within this system will be based on the Brighton & Hove admission criteria. All children will be automatically placed in the re-allocation pool for the community school for which they have expressed the highest preference, although parents will be asked to indicate if they wish to be placed in the re-allocation pool for a different preferred school when the allocation letters are sent on 1st March 2010. Places will be offered to children from the pool as soon as a place becomes available at an over subscribed school and the admission priorities have been applied. This LA will notify other LAs as appropriate if it offers a place from the pool at a Brighton & Hove school to a pupil living outside the City. The pool will operate until the end of the Autumn Term.
- II. Parents/carers who want to keep their child's name in the re-allocation pool after that time must inform the LA. They must renew the place each term thereafter. Applicants outside of the main admission exercise will be placed in the re-allocation pool for one term and must also ask for the child's name to remain in the pool each term thereafter.
- III. Other admission authorities may or may not elect to operate a re-allocation or waiting list system. If they are able to place a child resident in Brighton & Hove in one of their schools they are asked to notify this LA at the earliest opportunity.

School Admission Appeals

- I. Parents/carers wishing to appeal against the LA's or a voluntary aided school's decision not to offer a place at a preferred school should do so in writing by 18th March 2010 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 preference form. It will only arrange an appeal for a school that 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. However, unless there is a good reason for a change of preference this new form will not be considered until after 30th June 2010.
- 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, other LAs and the Governing Bodies of voluntary aided schools will make every effort to hear appeals within 6 school weeks of the allocation letter being sent out, as suggested in the Code of Practice, they cannot guarantee this time scale. 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 parent/carer or if appropriate to the student.
- VI. Appeals will be heard for refusals to places in Years 12 and 13 on the basis that they are school transfers.

School transfers

Where parents/carers are seeking a school transfer without having changed address, the LA or the receiving school will not normally offer a place until the beginning of the following term. Exceptions will be allowed where:

- The pupil has been permanently excluded from a school.
- An earlier move is strongly recommended by a doctor, educational psychologist, education welfare officer or social worker.
- There are other exceptional circumstances that lead the Director, Children and Young People's Trust, to conclude that an earlier move is advisable.