

**In-year Co-ordinated
Admissions Scheme**

**For applications and mid-term transfers during
the school year for all schools in the Bradford
Metropolitan District Area
2019-2020**

1. INTRODUCTION

Although there is no legal requirement to co-ordinate in year admissions, the Local Authority will continue to do so for all community and voluntary-controlled schools and any own admission authority school that wishes to participate in co-ordination. The In Year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme explains this process and is reviewed annually.

An 'in-year admission' is defined as admissions to a school outside the normal transfer times or for a year group that is not the normal year of entry. For community and voluntary controlled schools, Bradford LA will co-ordinate admissions. The scheme does not apply to nursery schools, special schools or sixth form applications.

2. APPLICATION FORMS

- 2.1 Bradford District residents who wish to apply for a community or voluntary-controlled school must complete the ***common in year application form***. Applications for own admission authority schools (voluntary-aided, foundation, trust schools and academies) for which the LA administer their in year applications, should also be made using the LA's application form. The in year application form is available from the Admissions Team at Margaret McMillan Tower, Princes Way Bradford BD1 1NN. A copy of the form can also be downloaded from the Council's website (www.bradford.gov.uk).
- 2.2 Parents/carers will be asked to give reasons why they wish their child to transfer. The form also lists the Fair Access categories and the parent is required to tick any that apply to their child. Where a parent has requested a transfer of school within the Bradford district or from another authority but has not moved house, the Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the child's current school, must complete Part Two of the form which asks for further information on the child to establish whether the transfer request should be dealt with through the Fair Access Protocol. If Part 2 is not completed the application process may be delayed if Fair Access placement is required.
- 2.4 Parents must return the completed application form to the Admissions Team. If any community or voluntary-controlled school receives an application or a request for a place direct from the parent, whether the school has places or not, the application should be forwarded to the Admissions Team.
- 2.6 Applications for any Catholic school, Idle CE and Shipley CE primary schools, must be made on the individual school's application form which are available from the school and returned directly to the school.
- 2.7 **In accordance with the School Admissions Code, these schools must inform the LA's Admission Team of every application made for their school and the outcome of the application and provide copies of any letters sent to the parent.**

3 NUMBERS ON ROLL

All schools and academies are required to communicate the availability of places to the LA's Admission Team when requested to do so. Admission officers will request updated numbers on roll in each year group from all schools on a regular basis, ie fortnightly. This will enable the Admissions Team to offer accurate advice to parents on the availability of school places in their area. In addition, schools should routinely inform the Admissions Team each time a child leaves the school and whether children allocated have been admitted.

4 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

4.1 Applications for community and voluntary-controlled schools

- 4.1.1 The LA's Admissions Team (as the Admissions Authority for community and voluntary-controlled schools) will determine whether an applicant can be offered a place in any of these schools. If there are more applications than places available in the year group, the Admissions Team will consider the application against its published 'oversubscription criteria'.
- 4.1.2 Where a community or voluntary-controlled school is ranked higher on the application form and a place can be offered, the Admissions Team will aim to process the application within **20** school days from receipt of the form.
- 4.1.3 If more than one school listed can be offered, the applicant will be offered a place at the school ranked highest on the application form.
- 4.1.4 If none of the schools listed can be offered, a place will be offered at an alternative available school, unless the child's current school is within a reasonable distance. If this is the case, no other school will be offered.
- 4.1.5 Where any school has **more than two places** in the relevant year group and the parent has approached the school directly, the child may be admitted and the school then send notification of the application and the start date to the Admissions Team, **if the school knows there is no waiting list**. If only one place is available or there is a waiting list, the school **must** contact the Admissions Team to establish whether there are any other applicants waiting to be processed.

4.2 Applications for own admission authority schools for whom the LA co-ordinates admissions

- 4.2.1 The Admissions Team will forward details of the application to the relevant school. This will be done within 7 school days of receipt of the application and where the school is ranked higher than a community or voluntary-controlled school that could be offered.
- 4.2.2 The governing body (or delegated persons to determine the application), as the admission authority, will determine whether the applicant can be offered a place at their school. If, at any one time, there are more applicants than there are places in the year group or a waiting list, the school's oversubscription criteria must be used to determine who will be offered the place.
- 4.2.3 Following receipt of the application, the school must inform the Admissions Team whether the applicant can be offered a place within a maximum of **five** school days. (If the year group is full, the school should inform the Admissions Team immediately.) The applicant may be kept on the school's waiting list if one is maintained.
- 4.2.4 Following receipt of the school's decision, the Admissions Team will write to the parent informing them of the outcome of their application within **five** school days. An offer of an alternative school will be made where appropriate.
- 4.2.5 Where any school has **more than two places** in the relevant year group and the parent has approached the school directly, the child may be admitted and the school then send notification of the application and the start date to the Admissions Team, **if the school knows there is no waiting list**. If only one place is available or there is a waiting list, the school must contact the Admissions Team to establish whether there are any other applicants waiting to be processed.

4.3 Applications for Catholic schools and other own admission authority schools dealing with their own in year admissions

- 4.3.1 Applications should be made on the school's own in year application form.
- 4.3.2 Once any application has been considered by the school, the Admission Team **must** be notified of the details and outcome of the application and provided with copies of all correspondence sent to the parent regarding the outcome of the application.
- 4.3.3 Where a place is not available, the school must send details to the Admissions Team, **with a copy of the refusal letter sent to the parent**, who will then offer an alternative school.

4.4 Applications for schools in other local authorities

- 4.4.1 Parents resident in the Bradford district who wish to apply for a school maintained by another local authority must make direct contact with the relevant authority. Parents will be informed of the outcome of their application either by the relevant authority or the school applied for.
- 4.4.2 Residents in other local authorities who would like their child to attend a school in the Bradford LA must complete a Bradford In Year Application form. Parents will be informed by the Bradford Admissions Team, of the outcome.
- 4.4.3 Bradford will accept applications from other LA's where parents are yet to move into the local area, in order to facilitate the allocation of a school place in a timely manner. If parents living in Bradford who are moving to other LA's wish to make their applications through Bradford LA we will facilitate this, however it may be quicker for parents to approach those LA's directly as not all LA's co-ordinate In Year applications.

5 OFFERS OF SCHOOL PLACES

- 5.1 Where the application is for a community, voluntary-controlled school or another admission authority school that the LA is co-ordinating admissions for, the Admissions Team will write to parents informing them of the result of their application. Parents will be given the opportunity to place their child on a waiting list and informed of their right of appeal if not given their preferred school.
- 5.2 When a school has been allocated, the Admissions Team will inform the relevant school that the offer has been made.
- 5.3 Parents will be required to contact the school to make an appointment, within **five** school days of the decision letter being sent. The school must contact parents to chase up any parents who have failed to make an appointment or agree a start date. If a parent refuses the allocated school and no other school is available the allocation will remain unless the place is required due to a shortage of places in an area. Any appeal hearing will be informed of the refused allocation and of the nearest school with places. If an appeal for the preferred school is refused, the case may be referred to the Education Social Work Service.
- 5.4 Where the application is for a Catholic school or an own admission authority school that is dealing with its own in year admissions, they **must** confirm the offer in writing **and** inform the LA's Admissions Team immediately.

6 ADMISSION TO SCHOOL

Once a school place has been determined and the allocated school informed, the pupil should be admitted to the school within the following timescales:

i) Pupils new to the district or who have moved house

Pupils new to the Bradford district or who have had a significant house move (two miles under the age of eight, three miles over the age of eight) should normally be admitted to school within ten school days of the offer being made.

ii) Pupils transferring from another local school

The authority's **'Mid Term Transfer Policy'** which is attached to this document, states that pupils who are transferring from one local school to another may only do so at the beginning of a new term. Therefore, in the case of such applicants, the offer of the school place will be from the start of the following term after the application has been made unless in exceptional circumstances the child may be admitted sooner by agreement between the schools and the Admissions Team. Year group numbers will be amended to take into account the allocation and the reserved place.

7 WAITING LISTS

Parents can request that their child is placed on a waiting list for their preferred school(s), once a term, in writing. The Admissions Team will maintain waiting lists for all year groups for community and voluntary-controlled schools until the end of the school year in which the application was received (for primary schools) and the end of the term (for secondary schools).

Schools which are their own admission authority may choose to keep waiting lists or not. All waiting lists must be maintained in the order of the oversubscription criteria unless a place is requested through the Fair Access Protocol. If places become available during the year, all offers must be made in accordance with the Mid Term Transfer Policy.

8 CHILDREN WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP)

Applications for these children will be dealt with by the Special Educational Needs Team (01274 435750) who will liaise with parents and schools to determine which schools can meet the child's needs.

9 FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

All LA's **must** have a Fair Access Protocol (FAP), agreed with the majority of schools in its area to ensure that outside the normal admissions round, unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. The FAP ensures that all schools admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour and children who arrive outside the admissions round who may have difficulty securing a school place. In these circumstances, all schools may be asked to admit above their published admission number. The operation of the FAP is triggered when a parent of an eligible child has not secured a school place under normal in-year admission procedures, including after an appeal hearing.

Schools dealing with their own in year admissions must refer unsuccessful applications to the LA's Admission Team as soon as possible as the application may need to be dealt with through the FAP. **All** schools must participate in admitting children through the FAP in accordance with the Code of Practice for School Admissions 2014.

Pupil Mid-Term Transfer Policy

1. Introduction

This policy clarifies the roles of headteachers and the Local Authority when parents make a request to change school during the school year and sets out the process for dealing with such requests.

The aim of this policy is to enhance pupil progress by encouraging a considered approach to changes of school and provides a framework for the exchange of pupil information. The majority of pupil transfers take place for legitimate reasons, such as a change of address and the aim is not to inhibit parents' rights to express a preference for another school in appropriate circumstances.

2. Background

There is an expectation that pupils will remain at school for the usual period of time and only change schools at the end of the primary phase. Both primary and secondary schools liaise closely to ensure smooth transition and pastoral arrangements are aimed at providing pupils with continuity between phases. However, many schools in the Bradford District experience high levels of pupil mobility during the school year which impacts on the attainment and achievement of pupils and on school staff in terms of induction, administration and tracking pupils' progress. This mobility undermines the pupil's continuity of progress and that of other pupils when school staff have to manage pupils leaving or joining classes mid-year. It can also impede financial and staff planning.

There is evidence that mid-year movement is often disruptive to the statutory SEN process. This is particularly important during a child's early years at school, when the first steps towards assessing educational needs are taken. If this process is delayed because of changes of school, the result is often a lack of appropriate support throughout the remaining phase of education.

3. Legal Framework

Under the Schools Standards and Framework Act (1998) as amended by the Education Act 2002, a parent has the right to express a preference for a place at a school at any time. The LA (or in the case of VA, foundation schools and academies, the governing body) has a legal duty to comply with the parents' preference to admit the pupil on to the school roll, unless to do so would 'prejudice the provision of efficient education, or efficient use of resources'. This means that the school must admit the pupil unless that particular year group is at or above the published admission number.

While it is essential that children who have no school place are found one quickly, section 433 of the Education Act 1996, permits deferment of admission until the start of a school term, subject to certain exceptions (see paragraph 5). This would particularly be the case where requests for school transfer has been made that do not involve a house move or where there is no need for an immediate move (see exceptions below). In such cases, schools can arrange for a child to start at the beginning of the next term. This does not conflict with the parent's right to 'express a preference', but does allow schools to manage the movement of pupils transferring mid-year.

The LA has powers to direct admission to a foundation or voluntary-aided school in its area and can refer matters to the Education & Skills Funding Agency for consideration in relation to academies and free schools.

4. School Transfer Process

Any in-year admission request (whether the child is already attending a Bradford District school or is new to the area) shall be co-ordinated by the local authority. An *'In Year Common Application Form'* is available from the Admissions Team or can be downloaded from the Bradford Council website and must be returned to the Admissions Team.

For all applications, parents will be required to ask the Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the child's current school to complete Part Two of the application form. This section asks for information such as attendance, reasons for the transfer request and other factors which may have affect the child's education and therefore the suitability of a school place. The information provided by the current school will assist in determining whether the transfer request may require being dealt with under the Fair Access Protocol and/or by LA officers to determine whether the transfer request comes under one of the exceptions given below.

If the preferred school has places in the appropriate year group and the school does not refer the application through the Fair Access process, the Admissions Team will inform parents that a place is allocated and arrangements can then be made for the admission to take place at the start of the next school term.

5. Exceptions

Mid-term transfer of a pupil may only take place sooner than the start of the next term, if:

- the headteachers of the current **and** receiving schools agree that it is in the best interests of the pupil that transfer should take place sooner;
- the pupil has moved house to live more than three miles from the present school (if the pupil is aged over eight years) or over two miles (if the pupil is aged under eight years);
- the pupil has been unable to transfer at the start of the term as a result of illness or for other reasons beyond the parents' control;
- the admission is into Year 7 and Reception only, where a place becomes available from the waiting list during the autumn term only;
- it has been determined that the admission of the pupil comes under the 'Fair Access Protocol' or other significant circumstances apply which identify the child as vulnerable; and
- the admission is due to a successful appeal heard by an independent appeals panel.

When a request for transfer has been agreed and the offer of a place made, the receiving school must liaise with the current school regarding the agreed admission date and pupil data.

For pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP), any change of school must be made through a review of the EHCP by the school / SEN Team. Children with EHCPs are not dealt with through the admissions process as they have their own process enshrined in legislation.

6. Information for parents

Guidance notes that accompany the 'in-year common application form' informs parents of the detrimental affects that changing schools has on their child's progress and that such decisions should not be taken without careful consideration. Governors may wish to add similar statements to their school booklets and websites.