



Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Co-ordinated Secondary Admission Scheme for 2017/18 Academic Year

Background

The law requires Local Authorities (LAs) to establish a co-ordinated admission scheme that will apply to all secondary schools.

The purpose of co-ordinated admission schemes is to establish mechanisms for ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that every parent/carer of a child living in the LA area who has applied for a school place in the 'normal admission round' receives an offer of a school place on the national offer day. The scheme must also cover late applications made after the closing date but before the start of the school year.

Schemes must also set out how applications that are made during the academic year for admissions to age groups other than the normal year of entry i.e. "In-Year applications" will be dealt with.

The Council is required to inform the Secretary of State of the agreed scheme by 28 February 2016. The Secretary of State will impose a scheme if the Council fails to notify her of the agreed scheme.

Determined scheme for the 'normal admission round'

Equal preferences

It is a legal requirement on all admission authorities to consider equally all applications for admission to maintained secondary schools. The rank order of preference, whether a first, second or third preference, will not be taken into consideration at this stage. If the school receives more applications than the published admission number, the relevant oversubscription criteria will be applied by the school's admissions authority to all applicants.

If it is possible to offer admission at more than one of the preferred schools then the school at which a place will be offered will be the one that is the highest ranked on the admissions application form.

Offers from lower preference schools will be removed and these places will be offered to other eligible children. This will ensure that each child is only offered a place at one school.

Fraudulent applications

If the Council or a school finds that misleading information has been given, the child will not be given a place at that school. If a place has been offered, that place may be withdrawn. If the place is withdrawn, the application will be considered again, based on the correct information and if the place is refused a right of appeal will be given. If the child is allowed to continue at that school, their sibling(s) will not be given priority for places at that school under the "sibling" category in the admission policy if they then apply for places at the school in question.

Stage 1 – common application form

The Council will publish an admission prospectus "Secondary School Admissions for September 2017". This will be available from the Council's website.

www.blackburn.gov.uk/admissions, any Blackburn with Darwen primary school and from the Children's Services Department from **7 September 2016**. Parent(s)/carer(s) are requested to apply using the on-line form which will be available from **7 September 2016**.

The online application form or the common application form which is included in the prospectus for admission to all maintained secondary schools must be completed by parent(s)/carer(s) of Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) children by **31 October 2016** ("the closing date").

Parent(s)/carer(s) who live within the Borough but whose children attend non-BwD primary schools will be sent information regarding the on-line process. They must either complete the online application form or the common application form included in the "Secondary School Admissions booklet for September 2017".

The completed forms must be returned directly to the Blackburn with Darwen Pupil Support & Admissions Team.

The online application form / common application form (caf) will allow parent(s)/carer(s) to express three preferences in rank order and to state reasons for the preferences. The form will also allow parent(s)/carer(s) to provide denominational reasons in support of their application e.g. baptismal / church membership and attendance / mosque membership.

When applying for admission for St Wilfrid's CE Academy parent(s)/carer(s) must also complete an additional school application form which is available within the Council's prospectus and should be returned to the school.

Parent(s)/carer(s) who are applying for admission under the faith category for Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School must also complete an additional school application form which is available within the Council's prospectus and should be returned to the school.

Parent(s)/carer(s) who are applying for admission under the faith category for Tauheedul Islam Boys High School must also complete an additional school application form which is available within the Council's prospectus and should be returned to the school.

When applying for admission for Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School parent(s)/carer(s) must also complete an additional school application form which is available from the school.

No application will be processed without an online application form or a common application form.

Parent(s)/carer(s) of Blackburn with Darwen children resident in the borough wishing to apply for admission at schools in neighbouring Councils must list the preference(s) on the BwD common application form/online form.

Stage 2 – process for considering applications

The Local Authority will provide admission authorities with details of all children whose parent(s)/carer(s) have indicated the school as a preference on the common application form by **27 November 2016**. The order of preferences will not be included in the details sent to each school.

By **16 December 2016** each admission authority will apply its own published admission criteria and return to the Pupil Support & Admissions Team a list of all applicants, in rank order, in accordance with the published admissions criteria.

Between **4 January 2017 and 5 February 2017** the Pupil Support & Admissions Team will consider the list of children that can be offered and refused admission for all schools. Where a child can be offered admission at more than one school, the LA will offer admission at the school that is the highest ranked preference. Any changes to the list of children to be offered and refused admission will be communicated to the schools.

Stage 3 – letters offering a school place

The LA's Pupil Support & Admissions Team will send letters on **1 March 2017** to all parent(s)/carer(s) of BwD children informing them of the outcome of the application for admission into a secondary school.

If admission is refused to the preferred Borough community school, a letter will be sent which will inform parent(s)/carer(s) of the alternative school to be offered. Where a place cannot be offered at a non-borough community school or at an academy, aided, free, trust or foundation school, the LA's letter will advise parent(s)/carer(s) of their right of appeal and provide details of the appeals process.

All parent(s)/carer(s) will be asked to return acceptance/refusal slips to the LA's Pupil Support & Admissions Team by **8 March 2017**. After this date the LA will inform the relevant admission authorities of the children whose parent(s)/carer(s) have not returned slips.

The admission authorities will write to these parent(s)/carer(s), informing them that if the offer/refusal slip is not returned within 7 days, the place will be withdrawn. If after 7 days no slip is received, the Admission Authorities will tell the LA which children to withdraw from the offer list. If the school has a reserve list the LA will make further offers and inform the schools of these children. The process will continue until all places have been allocated.

For admissions into the Borough community school, the LA will contact parent(s)/carer(s) who do not return the offer/refusal slips. If after 7 days the slip is still not received they will follow the same process re withdrawing places as the other Admission Authorities.

Late applications

1. Late applications received between the closing date and the allocation date

The closing date will as far as possible be observed. If there are exceptional reasons for the delay, then provided the application is received before **1 February 2017 (“the cut-off date”)**, a late application may be considered alongside the applications which were submitted on time. The exceptional reasons may include the following:

- Parent(s)/carer(s) who have moved or are moving into the borough after the closing date
- Parent(s)/carer(s) were abroad for the whole period between the publication of the LA’s admission booklet and the closing date for the application form
- Parental/carers/child illness which required hospitalisation for the major part of the period between the publication of the LA’s admission booklet and the closing date for the application form

If the Admission Authority is not satisfied that there were relevant exceptional circumstances for the delay then any application form received after the closing date but before places are allocated will only be considered after all the on-time applications have been considered and allocated places.

Please note that if a late application is received after the cut-off date, it will not be possible for the Admission Authority to consider it alongside the on-time applications even if there are exceptional reasons for the delay.

Parent(s)/carer(s) of BwD children will be sent letters from the LA informing them of the outcome of the application for admission to secondary schools on **1 March 2017**.

2. Applications received after the allocation date

The LA will continue to manage the co-ordinated admission arrangements after the allocation date i.e. **1 March 2017** until **31 December, 2017**.

Anyone applying after places have been allocated must still complete the LA common application form. The application form and any relevant documents will be passed on to the appropriate admissions authority for consideration. The LA will retain responsibility for informing parent(s)/carer(s) about the outcome of their application.

If admission is refused to the preferred Borough community school, a letter will be sent to inform parent(s)/carer(s) of the alternative school to be offered. Where a place cannot be offered at a non-borough, academy, aided, free, trust or foundation school, in addition to the details about the alternative school offered, the LA’s letter will advise parent(s)/carer(s) of their right of appeal and provide details of the appeals process.

Waiting lists

All admission authorities must maintain a waiting list until at least the end of the autumn term in the academic year of admission for every oversubscribed school. The admission authority must use the existing oversubscription criteria to rank the children. As no distinction will be made between applications received on time and late applications, the waiting list will remain fluid.

The LA will maintain a waiting list for admission to the community school. Details of children who have not been offered a place at the community school, including late applicants will automatically be placed on the waiting list using the LA published oversubscription criteria.

Change of preferences

A change of preference after the closing date (but before the cut off date) will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances. This is likely to be when there is a change of address. Verification must be provided e.g. letter from a solicitor exchanging contracts or a tenancy agreement.

If parent(s)/carer(s) wish to change a preference after the cut-off date, then they must follow the process outlined in the section **Applications received after the allocation date**. Since this is effectively a request for admission to a school(s) not previously indicated on the original application form, the parents/carers must complete a fresh application form. Where a place cannot be offered, the child's details will be placed on the waiting list and parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of alternative schools which have places available.

In year admissions

The LA has formulated a scheme for the co-ordination of all in year admissions.



Secondary Admissions for 2017/18 Timetable

Closing date for applications and return of forms to the LA
31 October 2016



LA sends application details to admission authorities within Blackburn with Darwen LA
27 November 2016



LA to send application details for schools in other LAs to those LAs
27 November 2016



BwD admission authorities and neighbouring LAs to inform BwD LA of pupils to be offered / refused places
16 December 2016



LA to exchange information of children to be offered and refused places with neighbouring LAs.
16 January 2017



LA applies agreed scheme for own schools. The list of children to be offered / refused places is provided to schools.
22 January 2017



If there are exceptional reasons for the delay, then provided the application is received before "the cut off date" a late application may be considered alongside the applications which were submitted on time
1 February 2017



LA to receive information from schools and neighbouring LAs about late applications.
9 February 2017



Schools informed by LA of the list of pupils offered admission to their school,
including pupils not resident in the borough
20 February 2017



Offers made to BwD parent(s)/carer(s) by LA
1 March 2017



Parent(s)/carer(s) to return acceptance/refusal slips to LA by
8 March 2017



Closing Date for receipt of appeal forms for appeals to be heard in May/June 2017
31 March 2017



Appeals
May/June 2017