

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To approve the local authority's admission arrangements for September 2025, as outlined in Appendices A to E in the attached report, which includes the Standard Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and the co-ordinated schemes for admissions for schools in Bedford Borough.

2. Date of decision

15 February 2024

3. Reasons for decision

To ensure the local authority meets the requirements of the School Admissions Code.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The Council has a statutory duty to determine admissions arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

5. How decision is to be funded


There are no funding implications from the report.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Not Applicable

Signed 

Date: 15 February 2024

Name of Decision Taker: Tom Wootton

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published:15February2024.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:27 February 2024.....

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Executive

Date of Meeting: 15 February 2024

Report by: Director of Children’s Services

Subject: DETERMINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 All schools must have admission arrangements. The admission arrangements must clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied, if there are more applications than places at the school.
- 1.2 Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities and it is their responsibility to ensure that they comply with the School Admissions Code.
- 1.3 The Council is the admissions authority for some maintained schools, these being community and voluntary controlled schools. This report relates to all schools where the Council is the admissions authority.
- 1.4 No changes are proposed to the standard admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025.
- 1.5 No changes are proposed to admission numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025.
- 1.5 **Admission arrangements must be determined by 28 February every year.**

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 In order to meet statutory requirements, the Executive is requested to consider and, if satisfied, determine the local authority's admission arrangements for September 2025 by considering the documents outlined in the supporting appendices:
- (a) Approve the Standard Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools (Appendix A).
 - (b) Approve the additions to the Standard Admission Policy for those schools listed in (Appendix B).
 - (c) Approve the proposed admission numbers for those schools listed in (Appendix C).
 - (d) Approve the co-ordinated scheme for admissions in respect of the upper and secondary phases (Appendix D).
 - (e) Approve the co-ordinated scheme for admissions in respect of lower, primary and middle phases (Appendix E).

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the local authority meets the requirements of the School Admissions Code.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 All schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school.
- 4.2 Some schools in Bedford Borough are their own admissions authority and they determine their own arrangements.
- 4.3 Bedford Borough sets admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools.

5. DETAILS

- 5.1 Admission authorities must set ('determine') admission arrangements annually, even if no changes are planned.
- 5.2 Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements.

5.3 If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least every 7 years. Consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the year before those arrangements are to apply.

For example: for arrangements which are to apply to applications for entry in September 2025, consultation must be completed by 31 January 2024. This consultation period allows parents, other schools, religious authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about proposed admission arrangements.

5.4 The Local Authority most recently consulted in respect of the full admissions arrangements for September 2020.

5.5 The Local Authority is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

5.6 No changes are proposed to the standard admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025.

5.7 No changes are proposed to admission numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025.

5.8 All admission authorities must determine admission arrangements by **28 February** every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required.

5.9 Once admission authorities have determined their admission arrangements, they must notify the appropriate bodies (those which they would consult with) and must publish a copy of the determined arrangements on their website displaying them for the whole offer year (the academic year in which offers for places are made).

5.10 Admission authorities must send a copy of their full, determined arrangements to the Local Authority as soon as possible before 15 March. Admission authorities for faith schools must also send a copy of their arrangements to the body or person representing their religion or religious denomination.

5.11 Local authorities must and Bedford Borough Council will, by **15 March**, publish on their website the following information:

- Details of where the determined arrangements for all schools, including academies can be viewed
- Information on how to refer objections to the Schools Adjudicator.

6. <u>ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</u>
6.1 No alternative; The School Admissions Code, issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidelines setting out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of functions relating to school admissions.
6.2 Admission authorities must determine admission arrangements by 28 February every year.

7. KEY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal Issues	<p>a) The School Admissions Code has been issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.</p> <p>b) The Code imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidelines setting out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of functions relating to admissions by the bodies listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission authorities of maintained schools as defined in Section 88(1) (a) and (b) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. • Governing bodies and local authorities (when not admissions authorities). • Schools Adjudicators • Admissions Appeals Panels <p>c) These bodies have a statutory duty to act in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Code.</p>
7.2 Policy Issues	<p>a) The admission arrangements dictate the procedures and timescales for parents/carers to apply for a school place.</p>

7.3 Resource Issues	a) There are no resource implications for the Council.
7.4 Risks	a) Failure to determine admissions arrangements would constitute a breach of the School Admissions Code.
7.5 Environmental Implications	a) There is no environmental impact as a result of implementing the recommendations of the report.
7.6 Equalities Impact	<p>a) In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>b) A relevance test for equality has been completed in respect of the overall recommendations of the report. The equality test determined that approval of the recommendations as set out in this report has no relevance to the Council's statutory equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. An equality analysis is not needed.</p> <p>c) The decision-making process, which is set out in regulation for proposals to expand Council.</p>
7.7 Impact on Families	<p>a) Determination, in alignment with the code, ensures admission arrangements are clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school.</p> <p>b) This provides families with the information they need in order to make suitable decisions regarding school place applications.</p>
7.8 Community Safety and Resilience	a) There are no direct community safety and resilience impacts in relation to this decision
7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing	a) There are no direct impacts on health and wellbeing in relation to this decision

8. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

8.1 No changes are proposed to the standard admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025 and no changes are proposed to admission numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025.

8.2 There was no requirement to consult.

9. CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

Report Contact Officer	Chris Morris – Chief Officer for Education, SEND and Schools Infrastructure
File Reference	As applicable
Previous Relevant Minutes	N/A
Background Papers	N/A
Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2025 Standard Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools (Appendix A).• 2025 Additions to the Standard Admission Policy for those schools listed in (Appendix B).• 2025 Proposed admission numbers for those schools listed in (Appendix C).• 2025 Co-ordinated scheme for admissions in respect of the upper and secondary phases (Appendix D).• 2025 Co-ordinated scheme for admissions in respect of lower, primary and middle phases (Appendix E).

**Bedford Borough Council Standard Admissions Policy 2025
Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools**

The Local Authority will apply the following criteria (in the rank order shown) to decide the order in which places will be allocated when there are more requests from parents / carers than the number of places available:

1. All 'looked after' children and all previously 'looked after' children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority of the school) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (see definitions);
2. Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school (see definition of sibling);
3. Other pupils living in the catchment area;
4. Other siblings (see definition);
5. Any other children

Notes

1. If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, the tie break will be the distance the pupil lives from the school, measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The Local Authority will measure the distance from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site or nodal point/points, agreed with the governing body of the school (published in the 'Starting School' and 'School Transfer' admissions booklets). The Local Authority will not give priority within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.
2. If a pupil moves into the catchment area outside the normal admissions round (or after the allocation process has begun) it may be more difficult to offer a place at the catchment area school if this would mean exceeding the admission number at the school. In this case, a place will normally be offered at the next nearest school or academy which caters for pupils of the same age and has places available.
3. Pupils who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are required to be admitted to the school which is named on their EHCP, even if the school is full. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the school is full.

Definitions

'Looked after' children

A 'looked after' child is a child in the care of a local authority as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school.

Previously 'looked after' children

A previously 'looked after' child is a child who was 'looked after', but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

'Looked after' children from Outside of England

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Sibling

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, foster brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority or the child of the parent / carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

Home Address

A pupil's home address will be regarded as the address of the parent / carer with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. This will not usually include grandparents, aunts or uncles. Where a child spends time with parents / carers at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the child spends the majority of the school week (Mondays to Fridays) including nights. If there is any query on the home address this will be checked against original official documentation e.g. council tax bill, a recent utility bill (gas, electricity or water), a rental agreement, child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information.

This policy applies to the following community and voluntary controlled schools:

Balliol Primary
Brickhill Primary
Broadmead Lower
Bromham Primary
Camestone Primary
Carlton Primary
Cotton End Forest Primary
Kempston Rural Primary
King's Oak Primary
Lakeview Primary
Milton Ernest Primary
Sheerhatch Primary
Westfield Primary School
Wootton Lower

Oct 2023

ADMISSIONS POLICY SEPTEMBER 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Standard Policy (04) (05) (06) (07) (08) (10) (11) (13) (16) (20)	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after', including Looked After Children from Outside of England	Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school	Other pupils living in the catchment area	Other siblings	Any other children		

Notes

1. If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, the tie break will be the distance the pupil lives from the school, measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The Local Authority will measure the distance from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the governing body of the school (published in the 'Starting School' and 'School Transfer' admissions booklets). The Local Authority will not give priority within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.
2. If a pupil moves into the catchment area outside the normal admissions round (or after the allocation process has begun) it may be more difficult to offer a place at the catchment area school if this would mean exceeding the admission number at the school. In this case, a place will normally be offered at the next nearest school or academy which caters for pupils of the same age and has places available.
3. Pupils who have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are required to be admitted to the school which is named on their EHCP, even if the school is full. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the school is full.

ADDITIONS TO STANDARD POLICY

Notes 1,2,3 above will be included after the final criterion for each school

Renhold Primary (2017)	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after', including Looked After Children from Outside of England	Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school	Other pupils living in the catchment area	Other siblings	Children of Staff	Any other children		
Scott Primary (2018)	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after', including Looked After Children from Outside of England	Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school	Other pupils living in the catchment area	Other siblings	Children of Staff	Any other children		

BEDFORD BOROUGH		
COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS		
ADMISSION NUMBERS 2025		
Schools	PAN	Comments
Balliol	52	
Brickhill	30	
Broadmead	60	
Bromham VC	90	
Camestone	60	
Carlton VC	15	
Cotton End	60	
Kempston Rural	60	
King's Oak	120	
Lakeview	60	
Milton Ernest VC	12	
Renhold VC	30	
Scott	60	
Sheerhatch	30	
Westfield	60	
Wootton	120	



CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO UPPER SCHOOLS, UPPER PHASE ACADEMIES, SECONDARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY PHASE ACADEMIES AND FREE SCHOOL

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/2026

Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in their area. Academies are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this scheme any reference to a school means any maintained community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided or foundation school, free school or academy in the Bedford Borough Council area.
- 1.3 The following table sets out the admission authority for each type of school.

Type of school	Who is the admission authority?	Who is responsible for arranging an admission appeal?
Academies	Academy Trust	Academy Trust
Community schools	Local Authority	Local Authority
Foundation schools	Governing body	Governing body
Voluntary aided schools	Governing body	Governing body
Voluntary controlled schools	Local Authority	Local Authority

- 1.4 This scheme will apply to all upper school and secondary school admissions in the Bedford Borough Council area from **September 2025**.
- 1.5 Any reference to Bedford Borough is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.

Section 2

The Scheme

- 2.1 There will be a standard form known as the Standard Application Form (SAF).

- 2.2 The SAF will be used for the purposes of admitting pupils into the first year of an upper school at Year 9 or into the first year of a secondary school at Year 7.
- 2.3 Parents of all children living in Bedford Borough and attending a middle school, or primary school in the Local Authority area will receive details about the transfer process. The School Transfer booklet, available on the Local Authority website, will contain information on:
- the schools in Bedford Borough;
 - dates of open evenings;
 - schools' admission numbers and admissions criteria;
 - how to complete the standard application form;
 - how to make an online application;
 - how places are allocated;
 - timetable for the application and allocation process;
 - school transport
 - who to contact for advice
- 2.4 Parents of children attending a middle school or primary school in Bedford Borough who do not live in the Local Authority area must make an application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.5 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough but not attending a middle school or primary school in the Local Authority area and those who wish to apply for a school place in another Local Authority may apply online or obtain the SAF from the School Admissions Service. The SAF and the School Transfer booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.
- 2.6 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough will be able to apply online for a school or academy place.
- 2.7 The SAF or online application form will enable parents / carers to:
- express a preference for up to 3 schools
 - give reasons for their preferences
 - rank their preferences
- 2.8 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough who wish to apply for a school place (Year 7 or Year 9) in another Local Authority can apply online or obtain the appropriate transfer form from the School Admissions Service. The forms are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

The Timetable

- 2.9 In **September 2024** information is sent to parents of all children living in and attending Year 8 at a middle or Year 6 at a primary school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough will be advised to contact their home Local Authority.
- 2.10 Completed SAFs are to be returned to the School Admissions Service by **31 October 2024** via the middle school, primary school, or directly to the School Admissions Service. Online applications are also to be submitted by this date. Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough must apply to their home Local Authority.

- 2.11 By **2 December 2024** applications for places in other Local Authority schools are sent to those authorities.
- 2.12 All preferences will be logged on the database and by **6 January 2025** the School Admissions Service will notify the admission authority for each school of every nomination that has been made for that school.
- 2.13 By **17 January 2025** the admission authority for each school will consider all applications for their school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Service with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 2.14 The School Admissions Service will match the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other schools nominated.
- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated to the child.
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.
- 2.15 Between **27 January 2025 and 10 February 2025** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Bedford Borough child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Bedford Borough school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 2.16 Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy (unless they are already attending a school at which they can remain in the September), but only if the child is resident in Bedford Borough. If the child does not reside in Bedford Borough, parents may request a place at any of the schools that still have vacancies. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular school over those who have not. Children attending a Primary school will also be able to apply for a Year 7 place at a middle school in accordance with the provisions of this scheme for In Year admissions.
- 2.17 Parents can exercise their right to transfer schools at any point, for example moving from a primary school at the end of year 4 into a middle school in year 5.
- 2.18 On **3 March 2025** all upper schools and secondary schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.
- 2.19 On **3 March 2025** the School Admissions Service will post letters to parents of children living in Bedford Borough notifying them of the outcome of their applications, including those who have applied for an upper or secondary school place in another Local Authority. Parents who have applied online will be able to access the decision online. Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough will be notified by their home Local Authority.
- 2.20 By **17 March 2025** parents are to notify the School Admissions Service of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.

- 2.21 By **17 March 2025** parents not offered a place will be invited to request a place at a school with vacancies.
- 2.22 From **22 April 2025** the School Admissions Service will co-ordinate the re-allocation of any places that have become vacant since **3 March 2025** and will continue to co-ordinate admissions until such time as the waiting lists are no longer maintained.

Waiting Lists

- 2.22 Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference school or at any of their preferred schools are kept on a waiting list to be re-allocated if places become available. Children attending a Primary school will also be able to apply for a Year 7 place at a middle school in accordance with the provisions of this scheme for In Year admissions. Where a pupil has been offered a place at their highest ranked school, they will not be considered for re-allocation, unless there has been a significant change in their personal circumstances.
- 2.23 Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the Autumn term 2025**. Parents wishing their children to remain on the waiting list for a Bedford Borough school beyond that time will have to notify the School Admissions Service in writing. A revised waiting list will then be drawn up and maintained until the end of that academic year.

Late Applications

- 2.24 The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **31 October 2024**. As far as is reasonably practicable applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for a *good reason* will be accepted provided they are received before **3 January 2025**, the date the allocation procedure begins.
- 2.25 There is no guarantee that applications received when the allocation procedure has begun (**3 January 2025**) will be considered when places are offered on **3 March 2025**.
- 2.26 Late applications not considered as part of the allocation round and any applications received after **3 March 2025** but before the start of the school year, will be considered as part of the co-ordinated arrangements and a place offered at the highest preference school that has a place available. If all preferred schools are full and the pupil lives in Bedford Borough, a place will generally be offered at the nearest school with places available. However, it may be necessary to make a priority placement available for children living in rural areas whose application is late for *good reason*.

In-year Admissions

- 2.27 If a parent wishes to apply for a school place on or after the start of the school year or during the school year, because they have either moved into the area or moved within the area or simply because they wish to transfer their child to another school, they are likely to make contact with the local school or the Local Authority.
- 2.28 The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any school within the Local Authority area. All schools will be supplied with copies of the In-Year Admissions application form,

which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 schools and to rank their preferences. The form will be available to download from the Local Authority website.

- 2.29 Parents must return their application form to the School Admissions Service. If the application is for a place at a community or voluntary controlled school, for which the Local Authority is the admission authority, the application will be determined by the School Admissions Service. If the application is for a place at a foundation or voluntary aided school or academy, for which the governing body or academy trust is the admission authority, the School Admissions Service will contact the school to determine whether a place is available.
- 2.30 Where a child is eligible for a place at more than one school, a place will be offered at the school or academy ranked the highest by the parent. The School Admissions Service will notify the relevant school or Local Authority of the outcome of that process.
- 2.31 The School Admissions Service will notify parents of the outcome of their application. Acceptance of the school place must be received within two weeks of the date of the offer.
- 2.32 Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference school or at any of their preferred schools are kept on a waiting list. Where a pupil has been offered a place at their highest ranked school, they will not be placed on the waiting list for any lower ranked schools, unless there has been a significant change in their personal circumstances.
- 2.33 Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled schools will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Own admission authority schools will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with their own admission arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.
- 2.34 If all preferred schools are full and the pupil lives in Bedford Borough, a place will generally be offered at the nearest school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school. For those pupils who have moved to a rural area, it may be necessary to make a priority place available at the local school.

Timetable for Co-ordinated Upper School and Secondary School Admissions

September 2025

September 2024:	Information about the transfer process issued
31 October 2024:	National closing date for receipt of applications
2 December 2024:	Applications for places in other Local Authority schools sent to those authorities
3 January 2025:	Last date for receipt of applications or changes to existing applications.
6 January 2025:	By this date details of applications to be sent to own admission authority schools.
17 January 2025:	By this date own admission authority schools provide the School Admissions Service with ranked lists of applicants
27 January 2025 – 10 February 2025	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers
3 March 2025:	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to schools via the web based School Admissions Module
3 March 2025:	National Offer Day - notification to be sent to parents living in Bedford Borough and available online
17 March 2025:	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if it is no longer required
17 March 2025:	Date by which parents not offered a place can request a place at a school with vacancies
From 22 April 2025:	School Admissions Service will start to allocate any places that have become available



**CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO MIDDLE,
PRIMARY, LOWER SCHOOLS AND MIDDLE, PRIMARY AND LOWER PHASE
ACADEMIES**

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/2026

Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in their area. Academies are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this scheme any reference to school means any maintained community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided or foundation school or academy in the Bedford Borough Council area.
- 1.3 The following table sets out the admission authority for each type of school.

Type of school	Who is the admission authority?	Who is responsible for arranging an admission appeal?
Academies	Academy Trust	Academy Trust
Community schools	Local Authority	Local Authority
Foundation schools	Governing body	Governing body
Voluntary aided schools	Governing body	Governing body
Voluntary controlled schools	Local Authority	Local Authority

- 1.4 This scheme will apply to all middle, primary and lower school admissions in the Bedford Borough Council area from **September 2025**.
- 1.5 Any reference to Bedford Borough is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.
- 1.6 The scheme is in two parts. Part A relates to middle schools and Part B relates to primary and lower schools. However, the timetable will be the same.

Section 2 - The Scheme

Part A – Middle Schools

- 2.1 There will be a standard form known as the Standard Application Forms (SAF).
- 2.2 The SAF will be used for the purposes of admitting children into the first year of a middle school (Year 5).
- 2.3 Parents of all children living in Bedford Borough and attending a lower school in the Local Authority area will receive details about the transfer process. The School Transfer booklet, available on the Local Authority website, will contain information on:
 - the schools in Bedford Borough;
 - dates of open evenings;
 - schools' admission numbers and admissions criteria;
 - how to complete the standard application form;
 - how to make an online application;
 - how places are allocated;
 - timetable for the application and allocation process;
 - school transport
 - who to contact for advice
- 2.4 Parents of children attending a lower school in Bedford Borough who do not live in the Local Authority area must make an application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.5 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough but not attending a lower school in the Local Authority area, this includes children in Year 4 at a primary school, and those who wish to apply for a middle school place in another Local Authority may apply online or obtain the SAF from the School Admissions Service. The SAF and the School Transfer booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.
- 2.6 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough will be able to apply online for a school place.
- 2.7 The SAF or online application form will enable parents / carers to:
 - express a preference for up to 3 schools
 - give reasons for their preferences
 - rank their preferences

The Timetable

- 2.8 In **September 2024** information is sent to parents of all children living in and attending Year 4 at a lower school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough will be advised to contact their home Local Authority.
- 2.9 Completed SAFs are to be returned to the School Admissions Service by **15 January 2025** via the lower school or directly to the School Admissions Service. Online applications are also to be submitted by this date. Parents of children who

do not live in Bedford Borough must apply to their home Local Authority.

- 2.10 By **14 February 2025** applications for places in other Local Authority schools are sent to those authorities.
- 2.11 All preferences will be logged on the database and by **14 February 2025** the School Admissions Service will notify the admission authority for each school and academy of every nomination that has been made for that school or academy.
- 2.12 By **3 March 2025** the admission authority for each school will consider all applications for their school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Service with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 2.13 The School Admissions Service will match the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other schools nominated and:
 - where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated to the child
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference
- 2.14 Between **3 March 2025 and 14 March 2025** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Bedford Borough child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Bedford Borough school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 2.15 Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy (unless they are already attending a school at which they can remain in the September), but only if the child is resident in Bedford Borough. If the child does not reside in Bedford Borough, parents may request a place at any of the schools that still have vacancies. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular school over those who have not.
- 2.16 On **16 April 2025** all middle schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.
- 2.17 On **16 April 2025** the School Admissions Service will post letters to parents of children living in Bedford Borough notifying them of the outcome of their applications, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority school. Parents who have applied online will be able to access the decision online. Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough will be notified by their home Local Authority on the date determined by that Local Authority.
- 2.18 By **1 May 2025** parents are to notify School Admissions Service of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.

- 2.19 By **1 May 2025** parents not offered a place will be invited to request a place at a school with vacancies.
- 2.20 From **21 May 2025** the School Admissions Service will co-ordinate the re-allocation of any places that have become vacant since **16 April 2025** and will continue to co-ordinate admissions until such time as the waiting lists are no longer maintained.

Waiting Lists

- 2.21 Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference school or at any of their preferred schools are kept on a waiting list to be re-allocated if places become available. Where a pupil has been offered a place at their highest ranked school, they will not be considered for re-allocation, unless there has been a significant change in their personal circumstances.
- 2.22 Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the Autumn term 2025**. Parents wishing their children to remain on the waiting list for a Bedford Borough school beyond that time will have to notify the School Admissions Service in writing. A revised waiting list will then be drawn up and maintained until the end of that academic year.

Late Applications

- 2.23 The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **15 January 2025**. As far as is reasonably practicable applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for a *good reason* will be accepted provided they are received before **14 February 2025**, the date the allocation procedure begins.
- 2.24 There is no guarantee that applications received when the allocation procedure has begun (**14 February 2025**) will be considered when places are offered on **16 April 2025**.
- 2.25 Late applications not considered as part of the allocation round and any applications received after **16 April 2025** but before the start of the school year, will be considered as part of the co-ordinated arrangements and a place offered at the highest preference school that has a place available. If all preferred schools are full and the pupil lives in Bedford Borough, a place will generally be offered at the nearest school with places available. However, it may be necessary to make a priority placement available for children in rural areas whose application is late for *good reason*.

Part B – Primary and Lower Schools

- 2.26 There will be a standard form known as the Standard Application Form (SAF).
- 2.27 The SAF will be used for the purposes of admitting pupils into the intake year of a primary or lower school (Year R).
- 2.28 Parents of all children born between **1/9/20 and 31/8/21** and living in Bedford Borough will be able to apply for a school place using the SAF. The SAF will be available from any local primary and lower schools, from the School Admissions Service or it can be downloaded from the Local Authority website.
- 2.29 The Starting School booklet, available on the local authority's website, will contain information on:
- the schools in Bedford Borough;
 - schools' admission numbers and admissions criteria;
 - how to complete the standard application form;
 - how to make an online application;
 - how places are allocated;
 - timetable for the application and allocation process;
 - school transport
 - who to contact for advice
- 2.30 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough who wish to apply for a primary or lower school place in another Local Authority may apply online or use this application form.
- 2.31 Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough but who wish to apply for a place at a Bedford Borough school must make an application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.32 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough will be able to apply online for a school place.
- 2.33 The SAF or online application form will enable parents / carers to:
- express a preference for up to 3 schools
 - give reasons for their preferences
 - rank their preferences

The Timetable

- 2.34 In **September 2024**, the Local Authority Starting School booklet and the SAF will be available to parents of children living in Bedford Borough. Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough must contact their home Local Authority for an application form.
- 2.35 Completed SAFs are to be returned to the School Admissions Service by **15 January 2025**. Online applications are also to be submitted by this date. Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough must apply to their home Local Authority.

- 2.36 All preferences will be logged on the database by **14 February 2025** applications for places in other Local Authority schools are sent to those authorities.
- 2.37 By **14 February 2025** the School Admissions Service will notify the admission authority for each school of every nomination that has been made for that school.
- 2.38 By **3 March 2025** the admission authority for each school will consider all applications for their school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Service with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 2.39 The School Admissions Service will match the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other schools nominated and:
- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated to the child
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference
- 2.40 Between **3 March 2025 and 14 March 2025** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Bedford Borough child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Bedford Borough school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 2.41 Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy (unless they are already attending a school at which they can remain in the September), but only if the child is resident in Bedford Borough. If the child does not reside in Bedford Borough, parents may request a place at any of the schools that still have vacancies. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular school over those who have not.
- 2.42 On **16 April 2025** all primary or lower schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.
- 2.43 On **16 April 2025** the School Admissions Service will post letters to parents of children living in Bedford Borough notifying them of the outcome of their applications, including those who have applied for place in another Local Authority school. Parents who have applied online will be able to access the decision online. Parents of children who do not live in Bedford Borough will be notified by their home Local Authority on the date determined by that Local Authority.
- 2.44 By **1 May 2025** parents are to notify School Admissions Service of their rejection of place the offered if this is longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.
- 2.45 By **1 May 2025** parents not offered a school place will be invited to request a place at a school with vacancies.
- 2.46 From **21 May 2025** the School Admissions Service will co-ordinate the re-allocation of any places that have become vacant since **16 April 2025** and will

continue to co-ordinate admissions until such time as the waiting lists are no longer maintained.

Deferred Entry

- 2.47 Parents of children offered a place for admission in September may defer the admission until January or April, provided the child is not of compulsory school age. Parents cannot defer admission beyond compulsory school age nor beyond the academic year for which the place was offered.

Delayed Entry to Reception for Summer Born Children

- 2.48 Bedford Borough Council provides for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Some parents/carers may feel their child is not ready to start school at this point. The School Admissions Code (Sept 2021) allows parents to request to defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age (paragraph 2.17b) of the Code). Children can also attend part-time until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. (2.17c).

In addition, for summer born children (born 1st April – 31 August) paragraph 2.18 of the School Admissions Code states that parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group and may request that their child is admitted to reception rather than year 1. Detailed information about the application process can be found at www.bedford.gov.uk/delayedentry

Waiting Lists

- 2.49 Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference school or at any of their preferred schools are kept on a waiting list to be re-allocated if places become available. Where a pupil has been offered a place at their highest ranked school, they will not be considered for re-allocation, unless there has been a significant change in their personal circumstances.
- 2.50 Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the Autumn term 2025**. Parents wishing their children to remain on the waiting list for a Bedford Borough school beyond that time will have to notify the School Admissions Service in writing. A revised waiting list will then be drawn up and maintained until the end of that academic year.

Late Applications

- 2.51 The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **15 January 2025**. As far as is reasonably practicable applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for *a good reason* will be accepted provided they are received before **14 February 2025**, the date the allocation procedure begins.
- 2.52 There is no guarantee that applications received when the allocation procedure has begun (**14 February 2025**) will be considered when places are offered on **16 April 2025**.
- 2.53 Late applications not considered as part of the allocation round and any applications received after **16 April 2025** but before the start of the school year,

will be considered as part of the co-ordinated arrangements and a place offered at the highest preference school that has a place available. If all preferred schools are full and the pupil lives in Bedford Borough, a place will generally be offered at the nearest school with places available. However, it may be necessary to make a priority placement available for children in rural areas whose application is late for *good reason*.

In-year Admissions

- 2.54 If a parent wishes to apply for a school place on or after the start of the school year or during the school year, because they have either moved into the area or moved within the area or simply because they wish to transfer their child to another school, they are likely to make contact with the local school or the Local Authority.
- 2.55 The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any school within the Local Authority area. All schools will be supplied with copies of the In-Year Admissions application form, which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 schools and to rank their preferences. The form will be available to download from the Local Authority website.
- 2.56 Parents must return their application form to the School Admissions Service. If the application is for a place at a community or voluntary controlled school, for which the Local Authority is the admission authority, the application will be determined by the School Admissions Service. If the application is for a place at a foundation or voluntary aided school or academy, for which the governing body or academy trust is the admission authority, the School Admissions Service will contact the school to determine whether a place is available.
- 2.57 Where a child is eligible for a place at more than one school, a place will be offered at the school ranked the highest by the parent. The School Admissions Service will notify the relevant school or Local Authority of the outcome of that process.
- 2.58 The School Admissions Service will notify parents of the outcome of their application. Acceptance of the school place must be received within two weeks of the date of the offer.
- 2.59 Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference school or at any of their preferred schools are kept on a waiting list. Where a pupil has been offered a place at their highest ranked school, they will not be placed on the waiting list for any lower ranked schools, unless there has been a significant change in their personal circumstances.
- 2.60 Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled schools will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Own admission authority schools will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with their own admission arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.
- 2.61 If all preferred schools are full and the pupil lives in Bedford Borough, a place will generally be offered at the nearest school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school. For those pupils who have moved to a rural area, it may be necessary to make a priority place available at the local school.

Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions to Primary, Lower and Middle Schools

September 2025

September 2024:	Information about the transfer to middle school and starting school process issued
15 January 2025:	National closing date for receipt of applications
14 February 2025:	Last date for receipt of applications or changes to existing applications authority.
14 February 2025:	Applications for places in other Local Authority schools sent to those authorities
14 February 2025:	By this date details of applications to be sent to own admission authority schools
3 March 2025:	By this date own admission authority schools provide School Admissions Service with ranked lists of applicants
3 March 2025 – 14 March 2025	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers
16 April 2025:	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to schools via the web based School Admissions Module
16 April 2025:	National Offer Day - Notification to be sent to parents living in Bedford Borough and available online
1 May 2025:	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if it is no longer required
1 May 2025:	Date by which parents not offered a place can request a place at a school with vacancies
From 21 May 2025:	School Admissions Service will allocate any places that have become available