



CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO PRIMARY PHASE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES FOR THE 2027/2028 ACADEMIC YEAR

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.
- 1.2 Academies are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme. 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 primary phase admissions in the Bedford Borough Council area from **September 2027**.
- 1.5 Any reference to Bedford Borough is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.

Section 2 - The Scheme

Primary Admissions

- 2.1 There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF).
- 2.2 The CAF will be used for the purposes of admitting pupils into the intake year of a primary school (Year R).
- 2.3 Parents of all children born between **1/9/22 and 31/8/23** and living in Bedford Borough will be able to apply for a school place using the CAF. The CAF will be available from any local primary school or academy, from the School Admissions Service or it can be downloaded from the Local Authority website.
- 2.4 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 common 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
- 2.5 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough who wish to apply for a primary, lower, junior or middle school place in another Local Authority may also apply online or use the CAF.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 Parents of children living in Bedford Borough will be able to apply online for a school place.
- 2.8 The CAF 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

- 2.9 In **September 2026**, the Local Authority Starting School booklet and the CAF 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.
- 2.10 Completed CAFs are to be returned to the School Admissions Service by **15 January 2027**. 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 All preferences will be logged on the database by **12 February 2027** applications for places in other Local Authority schools are sent to those authorities.
- 2.12 By **15 February 2027** 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 **2 March 2027** 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 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
- 2.15 Between **2 March 2027 and 16 March 2027** 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.
- 2.17 On **16 April 2027** all primary phase schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web-based School Admissions Module.
- 2.18 On **16 April 2027** the School Admissions Service will send decisions 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.
- 2.19 By **4 May 2027** parents should notify the School Admissions Service if they no longer require the place offered. If parents do not respond by this date, it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.
- 2.20 By **4 May 2027** parents not offered a school place will be invited to request a place at a school with vacancies.
- 2.21 From **21 May 2027** the School Admissions Service will co-ordinate the re-allocation of any places that have become vacant since **16 April 2027** and will continue to co-ordinate admissions until such time as the waiting lists are no longer maintained.

Deferred Entry

- 2.22 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/Entry outside chronological age group

- 2.23 Bedford Borough Council's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, this is in line with DfE guidance which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".
- 2.24 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).
- 2.25 Parents/carers may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. 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.
- 2.26 If parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age-appropriate cohort. DfE guidance makes clear that "it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect parents to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case". Detailed information about the application process can be found at www.bedford.gov.uk/delayedentry
- 2.27 With respect to community & voluntary controlled schools, requests for admissions outside of chronological age group will be considered by Bedford Borough, as the Admissions Authority. The governing bodies or trusts of schools responsible for their own admissions (academies, voluntary aided and foundation schools) are responsible for making these decisions for applications made to their schools.

Waiting Lists

- 2.28 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.

- 2.29 Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the Autumn term 2027**. Parents wishing for 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

- 2.30 The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **15 January 2027**. 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 **12 February 2027**, the date the allocation procedure begins.
- 2.31 There is no guarantee that applications received when the allocation procedure has begun (**12 February 2027**) will be considered when places are offered on **16 April 2027**.
- 2.32 Late applications not considered as part of the allocation round and any applications received after **16 April 2027** 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

- 2.33 Parents can exercise their right to transfer schools at any point. If the change of school does not align to a standard intake year (for example moving schools during in Year 1), an application can be made via the 'in-year' process.
- 2.34 The Local Authority co-ordinates in-year applications for all mainstream state schools that have opted in. Other Admissions Authority schools that opt to manage their own in-year admissions will be listed online at [Bedford Borough Council - In Year Admissions](#); in-year applications for these schools must be made directly to the school. If you are unable to access the website, please contact the Admissions Team on Admissions@bedford.gov.uk
- 2.35 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.
- 2.36 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.
- 2.37 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.

- 2.38 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.
- 2.39 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.
- 2.40 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.
- 2.41 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.
- 2.42 If all preferred schools are full and the pupil lives in Bedford Borough, a place can be sought 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 Phase Schools

September 2027

September 2026:	Information about the starting school process issued
15 January 2027:	National closing date for receipt of applications
12 February 2027:	Last date for receipt of applications or changes to existing applications.
15 February 2027:	Applications for places in other Local Authority schools sent to those authorities
15 February 2027:	By this date details of applications to be sent to own admission authority schools
2 March 2027:	By this date own admission authority schools provide School Admissions Service with ranked lists of applicants
2 March 2027 – 16 March 2027	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers
16 April 2027:	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to schools via the web based School Admissions Module
16 April 2027:	National Offer Day - Notification to be sent to parents living in Bedford Borough and available online
4 May 2027:	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if it is no longer required
4 May 2027:	Date by which parents not offered a place can request a place at a school with vacancies
From 21 May 2027:	School Admissions Service will allocate any places that have become available