In Year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2028 to 2029

1. Background

1.1 In accordance with the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, all local authorities (LAs) are required to formulate schemes for coordinating arrangements for the admission of children to maintained primary and secondary schools and academies. Details of the Dorset Council scheme for 2028 to 2029 for in Year Admissions are set out in this document.

1.2 This scheme lays out the processes for three types of school dependent on their status:

- community and voluntary controlled schools for whom Dorset Council is the home local authority and admissions authority
- voluntary aided, foundation and academies (including free schools and studio schools), all of whom are their own admissions authority but who have a service level agreement with the Dorset School Admissions Team to manage their In-Year Admissions
- voluntary aided, foundation and academies (including free schools and studio schools), all of whom are their own admission authority, but who directly manage their own in year admission applications

2. Interpretation

2.1 Admissions arrangements
The arrangements for a particular school or schools which govern the procedures and decision-making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school.

2.2 Admissions authority
In relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the local authority and, in relation to an academy, foundation, free, trust or VA school, means the board of governors of that school or the multi-academy trust where this applies

2.3 Equal Preference Scheme
The model where whereby all preferences listed by parents on the CAF are considered under the over-subscription criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings. Where a pupil is eligible to be offered a place at more than one school within an LA, or across more than one participating LA, the rankings are used to determine the single offer by selecting the school ranked highest of those which can offer a place.

2.4 CAF
The common application form.

2.5 The home local authority (LA)
The LA in which the applicant/parent/carer is resident.

2.6 The maintaining LA
The LA which maintains a school, or within whose area an academy is situated, for which a preference has been expressed.

2.7 National Offer Day
The day on which outcome letters are posted to parents/carers. For primary school places it is 16 April in the year following the relevant determination year except that, in any year in which that day is not a working day, the prescribed day shall be the next working day.

2.8 Pupil Admissions Number (PAN)
The published admissions number for the year of entry at a school.

2.9 In-Year Fair Access protocol (IYFA)
The purpose of Fair Access Protocols is to ensure that - outside the normal admissions round - unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are found and offered a place quickly, so that the amount of time any child is out of school is kept to the minimum.

2.10 Supplementary Information Form (SIF)
Some schools have a SIF that allows parents to provide evidence to allow the schools to place children based on that schools over subscription criteria where a denominational criteria exists.

2.11 This scheme will apply to the following applications:

- years 1 to 6 applications at any time of year into a primary school
- years 1 and 2 applications into an infant school
- years 1 to 4 applications into a first school
- years 6 to 8 applications into a middle school
- years 8 to 11 applications into a secondary school
- years 10 and 11 into an upper school
- reception year applications into a primary, infant or first school received after the 31 August in any year
- year 3 applications into a junior school received after 31 August
- year 5 applications into middle schools received after 31 August
- year 7 applications into secondary schools received after 31 August
- year 9 applications into upper schools received after 31 August

2.12 Applications for schools outside of the Dorset Council area need to be made to the maintaining authority or direct to the school.

2.13 The scheme shall be determined and processed in accordance with the provisions set out in this document.

2.14 The scheme shall be based on the equal preferences system.

2.15 Where a child is not resident with his or her parent/carer, parental responsibility must be conferred by the parent/carer directly on the person with whom the child is to reside and not on a third party or a commercial or charitable organisation. Where this involves a person who is not a close relative of the child, it is the responsibility of that person to refer the arrangement to social care as a private fostering arrangement.

2.16 In regard to admissions to schools, the Dorset Council Admissions Team will:

- act as champion for children and families
- offer advice to parents and schools
- monitor and challenge the admission arrangements of schools within Dorset
- operate a co-ordinated admissions scheme for normal point of entry to infant, first, primary, junior, middle, secondary and upper schools in Dorset
- operate a local in-year admissions scheme to assist in the coordination of admissions to school outside the normal point of entry as detailed in 2.11
- operate an In Year Fair Access Protocol 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
- liaise with other teams within Dorset Council and other LAs in the planning of school places
- report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator on admissions for all schools in Dorset for which we coordinate admissions
- offer a traded service to own admission authority schools to support them in the delivery of their responsibilities for school admissions and appeals, including the verification and ranking of applications, managing waiting lists, preparing and presenting appeals and processing in year applications.

The Scheme

Any parent/guardian may make a school application for any school in Dorset through either the council website admissions portal or for certain schools direct to the school. This includes those resident outside of Dorset or from overseas. The website will also display a guide for parents which provides a written explanation of the scheme. Paper copies of the form are available on request or from the website.

3. Making applications for schools, for whom the local authority is not the admissions authority and who do not have an SLA with Dorset Council for the processing of In Year Admissions

3.1 A parent guardian may submit an application for an in-year school place either through Dorset Admissions Portland or direct to the school.

3.2 If an application is submitted through the Dorset Admissions Portal, the school will access the application through the School Admissions Module. The school will contact the family to provide them with an outcome to their application. This is in the form of a written communication.

3.3 If a place at the school is being refused on the basis that the school is full, then the school will advise the family in writing of the right to lodge an appeal.

3.4 The school will provide the local authority Admissions Team with a copy of the outcome letter whether an offer or a refusal is made.

3.5 If the school is satisfied that the application should be reviewed through the In Year Fair Access protocol, the application and the referral paperwork needs to be sent to the local authority. The school will inform the family that the application has been referred.

4.0 For schools, for whom the local authority is either the admissions authority or through a service level agreement, are managing a school's in year admissions

4.1 Making an application

4.1.1 For schools for whom the local authority is the admissions authority or with whom the LA has a service level agreement, the local authority will process the application and inform families of the outcome of the application.

4.1.2 The application should be completed by the person with parental responsibility who has care of the child for the majority of school days/weeks (unless a Court Order states differently). If there is joint parental responsibility, the applicant by making the application is confirming that that all those with parental responsibility are aware of and agree to the application and the preferences being made.

4.1.3 The Dorset Application Portal may be used to name up to 3 preferences for 3 Dorset Schools.

4.1.4 Some schools may require applicants to complete a supplementary information form (SIF) in order to apply their oversubscription criteria. The requirement will be stated in the relevant school's admissions

arrangements. The supplementary form should be returned direct to the school as the relevant admissions authority.

4.1.5 The home address is where the child spends the majority of the time and is living with the person who has parental responsibility and is the main 'carer' as defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996.

4.1.6 Dorset Council will not accept more than one address as the child's home address. Where a child regularly lives at more than one address the local authority will have to reach a conclusion about which should be counted as the main address when allocating a place. This will normally be the address where any Child Benefit is paid. If Child Benefit is not received, then where the child is registered with a medical GP will be used as the address. Where parents are living separately and the steps detailed above cannot resolve the address for the child and the parents do not agree on the child's home address Dorset Council will suspend the application until such time as agreement between parents is reached.

4.1.7 Dorset Council may undertake checks to ensure that the information provided in the application is true and accurate. Documentary evidence may be requested.

4.1.8 Parents/Carers must inform Dorset Council of any change of address as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in any offer of a place being withdrawn. Documentary evidence will be required before any change is accepted.

4.1.9 Applications may be based on either a current address or a future address. Applications can only be considered based on a future address if that address is appropriately evidenced.

4.1.10 Evidence required for a change of address or a future address will be:

- a solicitor's letter confirming an exchange of contract dated prior to the national closing date
- a copy of a tenancy agreement (giving property address, date and duration of tenancy) signed by the applicant and the landlord as well as any notice to quit from the previous address. The new tenancy agreements must be signed and dated prior to the national closing date
- a letter from the friend/relative confirming arrangements that the applicant and the child are moving into their home address, with a date confirming the move. The friend or relative is required to provide proof of address such as a council tax bill or a utility bill. This address can only be used by the applicant once they are actually resident

- written confirmation from parents and or carer/previous carer that the child's residency is changing on a long-term basis

- members of the Armed Services and Crown Servants may submit a posting order as proof of a future address stating the date of the start of the posting

- written confirmation from refuge staff that the applicant and their child/young person has been accommodated in the refuge due to domestic abuse/violence

4.1.11 Where parents share parental responsibility for a child and two applications are received for the one child, Dorset Council will ask the parents to determine which application should be considered. The other application will be withdrawn. This is because DC will offer only one school place to a child at any one time. If parents cannot agree, they should resolve the issue through the court system, for example to obtain a 'Specific Issues Order' which specifies which parent has responsibility to make decisions on school preferences. If no agreement is reached and no Order is made the applications will be suspended until such time as agreement is reached.

4.2 Processing

4.2.1 Details of applications will be available to all schools through the School Admissions Module (SAM) as they are submitted though preference order is not provided based on the equal preference protocol.

4.2.2 Schools are not permitted to make any contact with parents based on the information they are privy to as a result of being able to view these applications.

4.2.3 Dorset Council will undertake checks to ensure that an application does not satisfy inclusion under the In Year Fair Access protocol.

4.2.4 All schools may be required to verify any sibling links and staff links in accordance with that schools over subscription criteria.

4.2.4 All schools that require a SIF to verify a denominational link, where the denominational criteria is likely to be the highest ranking criteria for an application, will be responsible for receiving the SIF, verifying the link claim and informing Dorset Admissions of the criteria under which the application is to be considered.

4.2.5 If additional information is required, Dorset Admissions will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian within 5 school days of receiving the application.

4.2.6 Where Dorset Admissions liaise with a school prior to offering a place, that school must respond to Dorset Admissions within 3 days of being made aware of a request for a school place.

4.2.7 Dorset Council Admissions will not delay an outcome to parents if the school wishes to meet the parent prior to an offer being made.

4.3 Determining Offers

4.3.1 Dorset Council will offer a place at the highest preference school for which there is a place available in the cohort. Dorset will endeavour to make an offer of a school place within 10 school days of receipt of the application or once in receipt of the required information (see 4.2.5).

4.3.2 If a place can't be offered any of the preference schools, Dorset Admissions will contact the parent or guardian providing them with the information on places available in their area. The family may at that point submit a change of preference for a school that has places.

4.3.3 If it is not possible to make an offer of a school place within a reasonable distance, the child, if they are a Dorset resident, will be deemed as being a Dorset resident without a school place and will be referred to the In Year Fair Access Protocol.

4.3.4 Where the application is from a family who do not have a confirmed Dorset address (see 4.1.10) and it has not been possible to make an offer of one of the preference schools, no further school place offer will be made.

4.3.5 Where a preference school has been refused, the parent/guardian will receive a written refusal which will also detail why a place has not been offered and who they may appeal against that decision.

4.3.6 Where an application has preferences for schools under section 3.0 and 4.0, Dorset Admissions will look to secure a school place at an appropriate school and will liaise with other preferred schools to ensure that the highest preference school is offered.

4.3.7 A school place will not be offered more than half a term before it is required.

5.0 Waiting Lists

5.1 Where an applicant has not received their highest preference school, they may ask to be placed on a waiting list for that school if that school holds a non-statutory waiting list.

5.2 When an applicant submits an appeal, they will automatically be placed on the waiting list for that school.

5.3 When a place(s) becomes available at an oversubscribed school, all outstanding applications, pending appeals and waiting list applicants will be

ordered against the oversubscription criteria and the highest ranked applicant will receive the place(s).

5.4 Where the local authority maintain waiting lists for schools beyond the 31 December, then the family will have to renew their waiting list place each and every September. It is the responsibility of the family to make the renewal.

6.0 Place Availability

6.1 Dorset Council must, on request, provide information to a parent about places available in all schools within its area.

6.2 All schools in the Dorset area, through the School Admissions Module, must provide updated on-roll figures for each statutory year group on a weekly basis, preferably by the close of day each Friday.

6.3 These figures should reflect all children on roll at the school in each year group as at 9 am that day.

7.0 Right of Appeal

7.1 All letters detailing the outcome of a school place application and where the highest preference has not been offered, must detail the right of appeal for any school that has been refused.

7.2 If an applicant who has not received a place at one of their higher preference schools, have the right to lodge an appeal within 20 days of notification of the refusal of a place

7.3 The Admissions Authority must hear the appeal within 30 days of lodging the appeal.

7.4 Appellants will be given 10 days notice of the appeal hearing date and the arrangements for the hearing.

7.5 The Appeals process will be conducted in accordance with the statutory guidance contained in School Admissions Appeals Code – October 2022.

8.0 Children with education, health and care (EHC) plans

8.1 Children with education, health and care (EHC) plans who are moving into Dorset or who wish to move schools within Dorset need to contact the SEND Team at County Hall. These applications will not be processed through the normal in-year admissions process.

9.0 Children Resident Abroad

9.1 Applications to attend UK state funded schools may be made from outside of the UK for children who are moving to the UK.

9.2 If the parent is a UK citizen, the application needs to have the following supporting documentation:

- copies of parent/guardian and the relevant child's passports
- proof of the intended address
- date of probable arrival in the UK.

9.3 A place may be offered at a preference school if there is a place available and the application is not more than half a term in advance of the place being required. If places at any of the preference schools are not available then the local authority will not provide an alternative until the child has arrived in the country and is resident at the proposed address. Parents may add preferences while they are resident outside of the UK.

9.4 Irish citizens' right to live in the UK did not change after 31 December 2020. Irish citizens do not need to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme, but their family members, who are not Irish or UK citizens, will need to apply. They are entitled to make an application for a school place.

9.5 Overseas nationals (including such EEA nationals entering the UK after 31 December 2020) wishing to apply for a state-funded school place, need to check that they have a right of abode or that the conditions of their immigration status otherwise permits them to access a state-funded school.

9.6 All European Economic Area and Swiss national children who entered the country before 31 December 2020 will continue to have the right under immigration law, to access a school place.

9.7 Children aged under 18 are classed as dependent children if they are the children of foreign nationals who have settled status in the UK, or who are entering the UK on a work visa or Student visa, or who are part of a family entering or residing in the UK under the immigration route for British National (Overseas) citizens and their dependents. These children are entitled to enter the country with their family, or to join their family and study at a state-funded or independent school once in the UK.

9.8 Foreign nationals cannot use the 6-month Standard Visitor visa, or 11-month Short-term Study (English language) visa, to enter the UK to enrol as a pupil at a state funded school.

9.9 If the parent or child is an overseas national (including such EEA and Swiss nationals who entered the UK after 31 December 2020), then applications need to have the following supporting documentation:

- Copies of parent/guardian and the relevant child's passports
- Appropriately endorsed visas for both parent/carer and child
- Proof of the intended address
- Date of probable arrival in the UK.

10.0 Children and Young People who are LGBT

10.1 Children and young people who are LGBT should feel able to apply to a school without any restrictions.

10.2 Where a school or college is co-educational, the gender a person associates with has no bearing on an admissions application. Dorset's application forms ask for the child's gender. At this point, the gender appropriate to the birth certificate should be entered. Any other information around gender identify may be submitted through the notes section on an application.

11. Applications from UK Service Personnel & Crown Servants

11.1 Dorset Council is committed to supporting service families through the Armed Forces Covenant. Further detail is available in the Armed Forces Policy 2027 to 2028.

12.0 Withdrawing a School Place Offer & Fraudulent Applications

12.1 An offer will only be withdrawn if:

- it was based on an application that was fraudulent or deliberately misleading
- it was made in error
- it was made by someone who did not have the authority to offer a school place
- a parent (having been issued with reminders from the school or admissions team and made aware of the consequences) failed to accept their school place within 15 days of the final reminder. This includes failure to respond to contact from the school regarding transition arrangements/"taster" sessions
- we receive written confirmation from a parent that they wish to decline the school place offered

13.0 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

13.1 The information that you give on an application form will be used by Dorset Council for the purpose of processing your application for a school place and determining school transport eligibility where appropriate for your child.

The information will be shared with schools, the Department for Education, and where relevant and pertinent to your application, diocesan bodies, appeal panels and with other maintaining authorities and school admission authorities

in their area. It will not be used for any other purpose unless required to do so by law. A record of the information you provide will be kept whilst your child is of compulsory school age plus a further academic year.

Should you have any queries about Data Protection more detailed information is available on our Dorset Council website.