

**Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools for
Reading Borough Council for the 2020/21 academic year.**

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Introduction

This Scheme is made under section 88 of the Standards and Framework Act 1998 and in accordance with the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of admissions arrangements (England) Regulations 2014).

The purpose of this co-ordinated scheme for secondary school admissions is to ensure that every parent/carer, of a child **resident in Reading Borough**, who has submitted an application, receives **one offer** of a school place at the conclusion of the normal admissions round. At its heart is clear communication between Reading Borough Council, other local authorities, community, and all state schools in Reading. The scheme sets out a process and timescale to enable the offer of a single school place. It does not affect the right of individual admission authorities to set and operate their own admission arrangements, except where they are required to comply with the timetable set out here. As all schools in Reading are foundation, voluntary aided or academy schools so the governing body of each school will consult, if necessary and determine separately on admission arrangements for September 2020.

Parents/carers who live in the Borough of Reading **must** submit an application to Reading Borough Council if they require a place for their child in any state secondary school as part of a routine admissions round, including schools in other local authorities, academies and free schools. Applications cannot be submitted to a school or to the local authority in which the school is situated. Parent/carers living in the area of another local authority must apply to that authority.

These arrangements deal mainly with a child's admission to secondary school during the school year from September 2020 to August 2021. The children concerned are typically those born between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009. The place offered is a full-time place from September 2020.

Applications

Reading Borough Council will put in place procedures that, as far as possible, ensure that all parents/carers living in the Borough of Reading with a child eligible to start secondary

school in September 2020 will be aware of the application process. Eligible children living in Reading will receive an information pack in September 2019. Children who attend Reading schools but who are not resident in Reading will be advised to apply to their home local authority.

Parents/carers are encouraged to apply online via the Reading Borough Council website. The site will be open from **12 September 2019 until 31 October 2019**.

Parents/carers will be invited to list four schools as their preferences and rank them in priority order. Parents/carers may also give reasons for their preferences. Parents may list any state schools, including those outside of the local authority, this includes academies, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.

Reading Borough Council's application form and the online terms and conditions will include a statement requiring parents to confirm that they have read the Guide for Parents and Carers and accept the policies and procedures in that document.

Parents/Carers should return their completed forms directly to the school admissions team at Reading Borough Council. Those attending Reading schools may return the paper form to the school.

Parents will complete the common application form on line by the agreed deadline. The School admissions team will validate the application. Validation where possible will be electronic, for example, by reference to other data held by the Council, e.g., Council Tax. Where this is not possible then proof of living in the property will be required in the form of proof of ownership or tenancy agreement.

Where, as part of its admission arrangements, a school requires additional information, parents/carers may also choose to complete a supplementary form to support their application. This should be submitted separately to the school. The Guide for Parents and Carers will identify the Reading schools for which this may be necessary. Supplementary forms will be available from Reading Borough Council's website. Supplementary forms are not applications and parent/carers must submit an application to Reading Borough Council either on the common application form or online.

National Closing Date is **31 October 2019**.

Late Applications

Applications received after the closing date will be treated as a 'late' application. However, applications that are received late for a good reason will be treated as on time if received on or before **31 December 2019**. Such good reasons might be if illness prevented a single parent/carer from returning the form on time; or the family moved into Reading after the closing date. The reason for lateness must be supported by documentary evidence to confirm the reasons specified. If no evidence is provided it will be assumed that an

application could have been made by the closing date and it will be treated as a late application and considered after all on time applications have been allocated.

Applications received late for any reason after 31 December 2019 will be passed to the appropriate admission authority in Reading or to the appropriate local authority **after 15 March 2020** to be considered. Parents/carers will be informed about the outcome of their application as soon as possible. Applications for over-subscribed schools will be added to the waiting lists of the schools and ranked according to the over-subscription criteria of the school(s).

Offers from applications received after National Offer Day will receive an offer on the last working day of that month. Applications received 5 days or less before that last day will be considered in the next month.

Changes of preference

Changes of preference made in writing by parents/carers and received before **31 October 2019** by the admissions team will be accepted. On-line applications can be changed up to **31 October 2019**.

Changes of preference received in writing after **31 October 2019** will be treated as late applications in the way described above. Change of preferences received between **1 November 2019 and 31 December 2019** will only be accepted as 'on time' if there is good reason, e.g., family move home or family circumstances change. The reason for the change must be supported by documentary evidence to confirm the reasons specified. If no evidence is provided it will be treated as a late application.

After **15 March 2020** late change of preferences will be passed to the appropriate admission authority in Reading or to the appropriate local authority to be considered.

Change of Address

As required by the School Admissions Code 2014 – changes of address made **between 1 November 2019 and 31 December 2019** will be considered as on time. If an applicant changes address after the **31 December 2019** they will need to submit a new application, based on the new address which will be marked as late and their previous application will be withdrawn. Documentary evidence of the change of address will be required.

Processing Applications

Exchange of information

By **21 November 2019**, the admissions team at Reading Borough Council will forward applications to other local authorities and admission authorities in Reading. Other Local Authorities will forward applications to Reading for their residents to be considered for Reading schools.

Depending on the arrangements agreed with the governing body of each Reading school the admission team will provide the school with relevant information to enable them to rank against their over-subscription criteria **by 5 December 2019**. Reading Borough Council will not pass on the details of where the school was ranked, and no school will be told about other schools a parent has applied for.

Between **5 December 2019 and 23 January 2020**, each admission authority in Reading will rank the applications according to their published over-subscription criteria and return the ranked list to the admissions team. By **23 January 2020** each admission authority in Reading will provide the Admission Team with a list of all the applications ranked according to the over-subscription criteria.

Resolving multiple offers

From **30 January 2020 to 13 February 2020** Reading Borough Council will inform other Local Authorities of offers that can be made in Reading schools for their residents. During the exchange of information Reading Borough Council will consider all cases where parents can be offered more than one of their preferences. In all cases, the place offered will be at the school that is the parent's/carer's higher preference.

If a place cannot be offered at none of the schools for which the parent/carer expressed a preference, a place will be offered at the designated area school (if there are places available) or at the nearest Reading school with available places. If this is at a school where Reading Borough Council is not the admission authority then this will be in consultation with the governing body of the school. If the nearest school with places is a faith school, parents/carers will be offered this as an option. Should the parent/carer be unhappy with a faith school being offered they will be informed of the schools with available spaces, which may be further away from the home address. If there are no places available at any Reading schools, parents will be informed and alternative schools not in Reading Borough may be offered. The offer will depend on availability and agreement from the appropriate admission authority. This will not preclude parents from requesting an alternative school nor from lodging an appeal with the admission authority for their preferred school.

Informing schools

By **26 February 2020** the admissions team will send to each Reading secondary school a list of pupils who will be offered a place at their school. This will be confidential to the school and must not be passed onto the parents/carers.

Informing Parents

On **1 March 2020** offer letters will be posted to all parents/carers living in Reading Borough Council who submitted an on time application offering a Secondary school place for their child from the first day of the school term in September **2020**. The offer will be made on behalf of appropriate admission authority. The letter will:

- Inform parents of the school offered;
- Provide information on school transport;
- Indicate how to accept a school place. The deadline for accepting school places for 2020 entry is **15 March 2020**.

If the school offered is not the first preference, parents will also be supplied with the following information:

- How the places have been allocated at over-subscribed schools in Reading.
- How to submit an appeal.
- If the place offered is not the highest preference school(s) then parents will be informed that their child's name will be registered on the waiting list(s) of **all of** the school(s) for which a place was not offered (except Grammar Schools if the parents did not pass the admissions test). Parents are required to inform Reading Borough Council if they do not wish their child's name to remain on a waiting list.
- Contact information for other Local Authorities.

This information will also be available on the Reading Borough Council Website.

Parents/carers who submitted an online application will receive an email and be able to view their offer **on 1 March 2020**. This email is for information only as the letter posted is the formal offer of the school place.

Waiting Lists

After 1 May 2020 a 'waiting list' will be administered if a school has more applicants than places available. A child's position on the waiting list is determined according to the over-subscription criteria of the school. When a place becomes available this will be offered to the next child on the waiting list. Positions on the waiting lists may go up or down due to pupil withdrawals or new revised applications. Places will be allocated from the waiting list and a child's current allocation for a lower preference school will be removed and allocated to another student, if appropriate. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the admissions team if they no longer wish to remain on a waiting list of a school. It will be assumed that parents wish to remain on the waiting list of all schools listed as a higher preference than the allocated school. Waiting lists for all schools in Reading Borough will be kept until the end of the 31 December 2020. After this date the policy of the individual school(s) will be followed. After the co-ordinated admissions round ends on 31st August 2021 any waiting list will be treated as an in year admission and will follow the individual policy of the school.

Withdrawing a place

If the place is not accepted within a reasonable time after the **15 March 2020** then Reading Borough Council will send a reminder and allow a further seven days for a reply. After that date the place **may** be withdrawn. If the place has been offered based on fraudulent or intentionally misleading information which denied the place to another child then the place will be withdrawn.

Requests for admission outside the normal age group

In exceptional circumstances applications may be received for children who may not be in the school year appropriate to their age. Where this arises, the schools requested will consider the circumstances of each case. Applications for these children will normally be processed with all other children, and these children will be permitted to enter their allocated secondary school.

Applicants should submit an application on the common application form by 31st October 2019. Parents should outline their reasons for the request and supply any supporting documents (e.g. information from their child's education setting or medical evidence) to the school admissions team as soon as possible. The application will be forwarded to the head teachers of the listed schools for consideration and the school admissions team will seek the views of the child's primary school. Each case will be carefully considered by the admissions authority and parents/carers will be informed of the decision in writing, before the national offer day, setting out clearly the reasons for the decision.

Requests for schools outside Reading will be referred to the council in whose area the school is for consideration under that council's scheme.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Therefore if an application for 2021 entry lists different schools to the application withdrawn in 2020 then this may need to be forwarded to different admissions authorities for consideration. If this is the case then supporting evidence will need to be resubmitted.

Transgender Students

Where a transgender pupil wishes to apply for a single sex school, they must do so in the normal way, outlined in this policy by completing the Common Application Form. Reading Borough Council will co-ordinate these admissions but it is for the admissions authority of the school(s) listed on the application to make a decision on the case. If a place is refused parents will be notified of their right of appeal.

Disputes between Parents

When completing the application a parent must tick to state they have parental responsibility for the child and that this application is made in agreement with all parties with parental responsibility. If one or more application is received for a child and there is dispute about the preferences or preference order on the application, the applications will be withdrawn until a court order is provided detailing the arrangements for schooling. If consensus between parents or a court order is not received by the 1st February 2019, all preferences will be removed and preferences will be inserted in the following order: catchment area schools(s), closest appropriate Reading schools by straight line distance to the home address. This is to ensure an allocated school for a child. The home address used will be that of the parent receiving child benefit for the child, or if no parent claims this, then the address registered with the school.

In Year Admissions.

Parents/carers seeking admission for their child into Year 7 – Year 11 in a secondary school in Reading Borough must apply to Reading Borough Council. Parents/carers may apply direct to some schools in the Borough but the majority of schools have opted to be part of the co-ordinated admission arrangements and applications are normally submitted to the admissions team at Reading Borough Council. A list of those schools to which a direct application is necessary is available from the Reading Borough Council website. Where a school listed is in another local authority the parent will be advised to apply directly to that local authority and the application for that school will follow the relevant local authority's scheme.

Timetable for the Secondary School Admissions Round 2020-21

Action	Date
Parents/carers to receive application information Guide for parents and carers to be placed on Reading Borough Council Website.	By 12 September 2019
Online admissions site open.	12 September 2019
National Closing date for receipt of applications.	31 October 2019
Late applications/Change of preference /Changes of Address accepted for good reasons.	By 31 December 2019
Application details sent to other local authorities.	21 November 2019
Application details to be sent to schools.	5 December 2019
Own Admissions Authority schools to provide Reading Borough Council admissions team with a list of children ranked according to the schools over-subscription criteria.	By 23 January 2020
Reading Borough Council to inform other local authorities of offers that can be made to their residents in Reading schools.	From 30 January 2020
Final co-ordination.	By 13 February 2020
Reading secondary schools sent list of children to be offered a place.	By 26 February 2020
Offer Day - offer letters posted to Reading residents.	1 March 2020
Online applicants can view outcome of application.	1 March 2020
Deadline for parents to accept.	15 March 2020
Closing date for receipt of appeals.	29 March 2020
Late applications for over-subscribed schools added to the waiting lists/change of preferences processed.	From 16 March 2020

Action	Date
Co-ordination with other LA's ends.	31 st August 2020
Waiting lists held for Reading schools.	Until at least 31 st December 2020