

School Admissions and Fair Access – Frequently Asked Questions

In Year Applications

Usually children start school at the start of the school year in September. However, sometimes a child will need to start or change school during the academic year. This can be due to a house move within or into Birmingham, or if a child already has a school place but wants to change school.

Admitted

- **How do I find out which schools have availability in my area?**

If you wish to find information about schools that may have places available in the area you live, then you should contact the preferred schools directly or Children's Services on 0121 303 1888. You should be aware that the availability of places can change on a daily basis.

- **I have moved to Birmingham and need an in-year school place for my child?**

*If you have not already done so, you should make an **application direct to your local schools**. If your local school(s) does not have a place available, they will add your child's name to a waiting list and advise you of your right to appeal. You must complete and submit an application directly to the school before you can be added to any school waiting list.*

- **I have made an application to my local schools but I have not heard anything?**

Where possible, all schools and academies should notify you of the outcome of your application within 5 school days. If your preferred school(s) is unable to offer you a place, they will notify Birmingham's School Admissions of your application and its outcome. Birmingham's School Admissions will then offer your child a place at the nearest school with availability.

- **I want to know where my child is on a school's waiting list?**

In Birmingham, all in-year waiting lists are administered by individual schools. You should contact the individual schools to establish your child's waiting list position. Birmingham's School Admissions does not have direct access to this information. It is important to note that children's positions can both move up and down any school waiting list.

- **I have been offered a school place by Birmingham's School Admissions but the school is not one that I prefer or it is too far from my home address?**

If none of your preferred schools can offer a place to your child, School Admissions will offer your child a place at one of the nearest schools to your home address that has availability. It is imperative that you contact the school to secure the place and arrange a start date. You will only be offered one school place by School Admissions. If you do not accept the place offered, the offer may be withdrawn and offered to another child, which may mean that you have to travel an even greater distance for a school with availability. Your child will remain on the waiting list at your preferred school(s), and if a place becomes available in the future, the school will contact you.

Normal Admissions

Applications to start Reception Class, transferring from infant to junior school, transferring to secondary school and 14-19 academies are made in the autumn term of the academic year before

your child is due to start. For example, if your child is due to transfer from primary to secondary school in September 2019 , the application process will open in September 2018 .

- **How do I make my application for my child to start school/transfer to secondary school?**

All applications for normal admissions must be made online at

www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions

- **How many school preferences can I submit?**

You can submit the following preferences:

Reception Class – 3

Transferring to Year 3 at a Junior School – 3

Secondary Transfer – 6

14-19 Academies - 3

It is very important that you are realistic with your preferences. Parents are encouraged to attend open sessions that are held at the majority of schools in Birmingham. In addition, parents should also read the information provided at

www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions

- **I have submitted my online application but have not heard anything?**

Once you submit your online application you will immediately be sent an email confirmation detailing the information and preferences you have submitted. If you do not receive an email, you should first check your 'junk' or 'spam' folder. If you do not locate the email, and have provided a valid email address, you should contact the Children's Services on 0121 303 1888 who will be able to check to see if your application has been received.

- **I have submitted my online application; however I now want to change the preferences?**

You can change your preferences up until the national closing date by logging back on to the online system using your user name and password. If you need support with this process call Children's Services on 0121 303 1888. Once you have changed your preferences, you will receive an email confirming the change to your application.

The national closing date for secondary school applications is 31 October for primary school applications it is 15th January.

- **When will I be notified of the outcome of my application?**

You will be notified of the outcome of your application by email on the national offer day.

The national offer day for secondary applications is 1 March each year.

The national offer day for primary school applications is 16 April each year. All emails will be sent by 3:30pm on the national offer day. It is important that you wait to receive your email, as we will not be able to provide information over the telephone.

If either of the national offer days falls over a weekend, the offer emails will be sent on the next working day.

- **I have received my email but I have not been offered any of my preferred schools?**

If we have not been able to offer any of your preferred schools, we will offer you a place at one of the nearest schools to your home address with places available. It is important that you do not refuse this offer unless you have secured an alternative school for your child. Your child will automatically be added to the waiting lists of your preferred schools and you will

have the opportunity to submit an appeal for schools you have named as a preference (please see appeal section for more information).

- **I have not received my offer email, what can I do?**

If you provided a valid email address and have not received your email by 3:30pm on the national offer day, in the first instance, you should check your 'junk' or 'spam' folder. If you still have not received an email, you should contact the Children's Services on 0121 303 1888.

- **I want to know where my child is on my preferred schools' waiting list?**

Following the offer of school places, due to the waiting list movement in the first few weeks, waiting list positions will not be provided until approx. 3 weeks after places are offered.

Grammar Schools

- **I want my child to sit the grammar school selective test, how do I apply?**

If you wish for your child to be considered for a place at one of the grammar schools in Birmingham, they will need to sit the optional entry test. The closing date to apply to sit the test is in June each year. You can find more information and apply to sit the test at <https://www.birminghamgrammarschools.org/>

- **I have missed the deadline to apply for my child to sit the entry test, what can I do?**

If you have missed the deadline to sit the entry test, you should contact The Grammar Schools in Birmingham at <https://www.birminghamgrammarschools.org/>
Please note that Birmingham's School Admissions has no involvement in the entry tests and all enquiries should be made direct to The Grammar Schools in Birmingham at the website above.

- **When will the test take place?**

The optional test will usually take place on the first Saturday in September of the academic year before your child is due to transfer to secondary school. Once you have applied for your child to sit the entry test, you will be sent information by The Grammar Schools in Birmingham of the date, time and venue.

- **My child was ill on the day of the test and was unable to attend?**

If your child was ill on the day of the test, you will need to provide proof of illness (a medical certificate or doctor's letter) to The Grammar Schools in Birmingham who will then arrange for your child to sit the test on an alternative date.

- **My child sat the entry test for the grammar schools in Birmingham but there was an incident on the day that may have affected his/her test results?**

If you have any concerns regarding the entry test, you should contact The Grammar Schools in Birmingham who will be able to investigate.

- **When will I find out the result of my child's grammar school test?**

The Grammar Schools in Birmingham will send you your child's test scores by post around the middle of October each year. The exact date will be provided by The Grammar Schools in

Birmingham. If you do not receive your child's test results, you should contact The Grammar Schools in Birmingham.

- **I have received my child's test results and want to change the preferences I have already submitted?**

You can change your child's preferences up until 31 October by logging on to the online admissions system using your user name and password. Once you have changed your preferences and submitted your application, you will receive an email confirmation.

- **I have received my child's test results and I'm not sure whether they will be offered a place?**

The Grammar Schools in Birmingham will provide information with your child's test results of the lowest score offered a place at each of the grammar schools in Birmingham in the previous three years. It is important to consider this information and be realistic with your preferred schools.

Appeals

Only around 4% of appeals are successful. Any appeal has to have clear grounds and evidence to have any chance of success.

- **How do I make an appeal for my preferred schools?**

When you receive the outcome of your application, Birmingham's School Admissions or the school/academy will advise you of your right of appeal and provide details of how you can submit one. Appeals will either be administered by the school/academy or Birmingham's School Admissions. You can find more information about the appeal process at www.birmingham.gov.uk/sae

Families that do decide to appeal will be required to provide evidence to support their case for example as regards proof of any change of address or asserted social/medical reasons.

- **I have submitted an appeal for my preferred schools but have not heard anything?**

Once you have submitted your appeal to Birmingham's School Admissions, it will be acknowledged in writing and passed to our Admissions Appeals Team. Appeals for in-year applications will be considered by an independent appeal panel within 30 school days of receiving your appeal form. Appeals for normal admissions, (i.e. starting Reception Class, transferring to secondary school, transferring from infant to junior school and 14-19 academies) will be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

- **How much notice will I be given to attend the appeal hearing?**

You will be provided with the date and arrangements for your appeal no later than 10 school days before the hearing.

- **Will I be informed of the outcome of my appeal on the day of the hearing?**

No, the independent appeal panel will write to you within 5 school days of the appeal hearing to inform you of the outcome of your appeal. Where a panel is considering multiple appeals for the same school over a number of days, you will be notified of the outcome of your appeal 5 school days after the final day of appeals being heard.

- **I submitted an appeal for my preferred schools but they have not been successful?**

The decision of the independent panel considering your appeal(s) is final and binding. The decision cannot be reviewed by any MP, Councillor or officer of Birmingham's School Admissions.

- **My appeal has been unsuccessful, can I appeal again?**

Parents do not have the right to a second appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority has accepted a second application because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission. Examples of a significant or material change could be a house move, or that a sibling has been admitted to the school concerned since the last appeal was considered.

- **Can I make a complaint about the independent appeal panel?**

If a parent feels that there has been maladministration on the part of an appeal panel, they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in respect of maintained schools or the Secretary of State (SoS) in respect of appeal panels for academies.

In considering a complaint, the LGO and SoS may consider whether;

a) the panel was correctly constituted by the admission authority; and

b) the admission authority has acted reasonably in exercising functions in respect of the appeals process or failed to discharge a duty in relation to that process.

The Local Government Ombudsman and Secretary of state cannot overturn the decision of an appeal panel. An appeal panel's decision can only be overturned by the courts where the appellant or admission authority is successful in applying for a judicial review of that decision.

School Over-Subscription Criteria

- **How does the over-subscription criteria work in each school?**

Any child with an Education, Health and Care Plan is required to be admitted to the school named in their plan. This gives such children overall priority for admission to a school. This is not an oversubscription criterion.

Where there are more applications than places at the school, each preference expressed by a parent for is considered equally with those of other applicants and places are offered in accordance with their oversubscription criteria.

Examples of the standard oversubscription criteria used for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools are below;

Community Schools

Where there are more applications than there are places available, places will be allocated based on the following order of priority:

1. *Looked after or previously looked after children.*

2. *Children with a brother or a sister already at the school who will still be in attendance at the time admission is sought.*
3. *Children who live nearest the school.*

Note: Distances are calculated on the basis of a straight line measurement between the applicant's home address and a named point at the school.

Voluntary Controlled Schools

Where there are more applications than there are places available, places will be allocated based on the following order of priority:

1. *Looked after or previously looked after children.*
2. *Children with a brother or a sister already at the school who will still be in attendance at the time admission is sought.*
3. *Faith Criteria (e.g. Children whose parents have applied to the school on denominational grounds; anybody whose parent/guardian regularly attends a named Church, Regular is defined as meaning once a month for a twelve-month period and this will be confirmed by the parish priest.*
4. *Children who live nearest the school.*

Note: *Distances are calculated on the basis of a straight line measurement between the applicant's home address and a named point at the school.*

Each school's latest oversubscription criteria no matter what their status is e.g. Academy, Free School, Foundation etc. can be viewed at <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions>. Each school should also have a copy of their oversubscription criteria on their own website.

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