

CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO: SECONDARY AND UPPER ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/26

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) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all academies and maintained schools in their area. Academies are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme.
- 1.2 A school is here defined as any academy or maintained community, foundation, trust, voluntary-aided or voluntary controlled school in the Central Bedfordshire Council area.
- 1.3 Central Bedfordshire Council, acting as the Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. The admission authority for academies is the academy trust. For foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools, the admission authority is the governing body.
- 1.4 This scheme will apply to all secondary and upper academies and schools in the Central Bedfordshire Council area from September 2025.
- 1.5 Any reference to Central Bedfordshire is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.
- 1.6 Central Bedfordshire Council uses the equal preference system to process admission applications, as outlined below:
 - 1.6.1 Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the admissions criteria. At this stage the Council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 120 places and there are 150 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

1.6.2 Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school or academy the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example, a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference academy or school available for another pupil.

Section 2

The Scheme

- 2.1. This scheme is for admissions in the normal year of entry for:
 - a) Secondary Academies and Schools
 - b) Upper Academies and Schools
- 2.2. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) available for parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire to apply online or by completing a hard copy application form.
- 2.3. The CAF will be used for the purposes of admitting children into the first year of a:
 - Secondary academy/school (Year 7), or
 - Upper academy/school (Year 9), or
- 2.4. The CAF will enable parents/carers to:
 - express a preference for up to 3 academies/schools
 - rank their preferences
 - give reasons for their preferences
- 2.5. Information will be provided on the admissions process in the form of the admissions booklet and will contain information on:
 - a) the academies and schools in Central Bedfordshire
 - b) dates of open evenings (where applicable)
 - c) published admission numbers and admissions criteria
 - d) how to complete an application
 - e) how places are allocated
 - f) timetable for the application and allocation process
 - g) school transport
 - h) who to contact for advice

2.6. Admission into the normal year of entry into a Secondary academy/school (Year 7)

- 2.6.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a primary academy/school, in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.
- 2.6.2 Parents of children attending a primary academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.6.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a primary academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for a secondary academy or school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

2.7. Admission into the normal year of entry into an Upper academy/school (Year 9)

- 2.7.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a middle academy/school, in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.
- 2.7.2 Parents of children attending a middle academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.7.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a middle academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for an upper academy or school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

2.8. Admission of children outside their normal age group

- 2.9.1 Parents who want their child to transfer to the next phase of school out outside of their normal age group must make the request in sufficient time for it to be considered before the application deadline.
- 2.9.2 Where the preference is for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school the request should be made in writing for the attention of the Admissions Manager. The Council will liaise with the Headteacher accordingly and will support their professional opinion on the case. The request should include the parent's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development, including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant and whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group. Once determined the

decision will be communicated to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

- 2.9.3 For own admission schools (Foundation, Trust or Voluntary Aided) parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school who will then consider the request, making their decision on what they determine as in the best interests of the child. For Academies parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the academy trust via the Principal.
- 2.9.4 Requests which have been granted must be followed up by a formal application using the appropriate paper CAF within the admission timetable. The application will be considered within the normal allocation process under the relevant admission criterion.

3. Timetable for admissions into Secondary and Upper academies and schools

Secondary:

- 3.1. In **September 2024** information is sent to parents of all children in Year 6 attending a primary academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.
- 3.2. Completed online applications and hard copies of the CAF are to be submitted to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2024**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Upper:

- 3.3. In **September 2024** information is sent to parents of all children in Year 8 attending a middle academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.
- 3.4. Completed online applications are to be submitted and hard copies of the CAF are to be returned to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2024**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Secondary and Upper transfer admissions

- 3.5.1 By 1 **November 2024** all preferences will be logged on the database and the School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust school or voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools are sent to those authorities.

- 3.5.2 By **8 January 2025** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust or voluntary aided school will consider all applications, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 3.6 The School Admissions Team will match the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies or schools nominated.
- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.
- 3.7 Between **22 January 2025 and 27 January 2025** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 3.8 Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.
- 3.9 On **28 February 2025** all Secondary and Upper academies and schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web-based School Admissions Module.
- 3.10 On **3 March 2025** the School Admissions Team will notify parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire of the outcome of their application, including those who have applied for a secondary or upper academy/school place. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be notified by their home Local Authority.
- 3.11 By **17 March 2025** parents are to notify the School Admissions Team 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.
- 3.12 By **17 March 2025** parents who have applied on time and want to change their preference from their original offer need to have submitted a change of preference by this date.

4. Late Applications

- 4.1 The national closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **31 October 2024**. Applications received after this date will be considered late and will be processed after the initial allocation of places.
- 4.2. Late applications received after 31 October until 15 March will be processed as part of the initial late allocation round and will be logged onto the database by **20 March 2025**.
- 4.3. The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school by **20 March 2025**.
- 4.4. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools will also be sent to those authorities by **24 March 2025**.
- 4.5. By **25 March 2025** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school will consider all their initial late applications for their academy or school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 4.6. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other schools or academies nominated and:
 - where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.
 - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference
- 4.7. Information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 4.8. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.

- 4.9. On **23 April 2025** the School Admissions Team will email letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.
- 4.10. Late applications received on or after the 16 March will be processed from **23 April 2025**.

5. Waiting Lists

- 5.1. Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference academy or school or at any of their preferred academies or schools are kept on a waiting list maintained by the admission authority to be re-allocated if places become available. Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the academic year for 2025/26** for Community and Voluntary controlled schools. Waiting lists for academies, foundation, trust and Voluntary aided schools may operate different waiting list arrangements. Allocation will be on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

6. In-year Admissions (applications received on or after 1 September)

- 6.1. An in-year admission is an application made for a child to be admitted outside of the co-ordinated admissions scheme for the normal year of entry or for another year group within an academy/school.
- 6.2. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools as the admission authority for those schools.
- 6.3. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications made for academies and own admission authority schools (foundation, trust and voluntary aided) who opt-in to the local authority's scheme for in-year admissions.
- 6.4. The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any academy or school within the Local Authority area, which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 academies or schools and to rank their preferences. The form will be available on the Local Authority website as an e-form or can be downloaded or a hard copy can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.
- 6.5. The application will be dealt with by the local authority for those schools which are community or voluntary controlled schools or those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme.

- 6.6. Any application received by the School Admissions Team for an academy or own admission authority school who has opted out of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be forwarded to them to process.
- 6.7. All academies and own admission authority schools who deal with their own in-year admissions (i.e. opted out of the in-year co-ordination scheme) will be required to determine the child's application and notify the parent and local authority of the outcome.
- 6.8. Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled school or at an academy or own admission authority school who has opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Academies and own admission authority schools who have opted out will have their own waiting list arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.
- 6.9. If all of the preferred academies and schools are full and the pupil lives in Central Bedfordshire, a place will generally be offered at the nearest academy or school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school or academy.
- 6.10. Any place offered is usually expected to be taken up by the child within 4-6 weeks or by the start of the next school term.
- 6.11. Details of the community and voluntary controlled schools and those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted-in to the in-year co-ordination scheme and those who have opted out can be obtained from the School Admissions Team at:
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

**Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions to:
Secondary and Upper Academies and Schools for academic year 2025/26**

September 2024	Information about the admission process issued.
31 October 2024	National closing date for receipt of applications.
1 November 2024	By this date details of applications to be sent to academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools. Applications for places in other Local Authority schools and academies sent to those authorities.
8 January 2025	By this date academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants.
22 January – 27 January 2025	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers.
28 February 2025	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to academies and schools via the School Admissions Module.
3 March 2025	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire on the offer made to their child.
17 March 2025	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if not required.
18 March 2025	Late applications received between 1 November 2024 and 17 March 2025 will be logged onto the database by this date.
20 March 2025	The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that school or academy. Applications for places in other Local Authority schools / academies will be sent to those authorities.
25 March 2025	By this date academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants in the initial late allocation round.
23 April 2025	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
23 April 2025	Late applications received on or after 16 March will be processed from this date.