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Blackpool Council admissions policy 2022 to 2023

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Community, voluntary controlled schools and academies (where the academy has adopted the council's admission policy)

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Scope of the policy

This policy applies to those Blackpool Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for which Blackpool Council is the Admissions Authority, and for the Blackpool Academies that have adopted this Policy.

The Governing Boards of Voluntary Aided Schools, Academies and Free Schools in Blackpool are responsible for setting their own admissions criteria and for determining the allocation of school places in accordance with their published admission policy.

Legal framework

Blackpool Council has formulated its admission policy for 2022-23, and for subsequent years, subject to any review, as it relates to Blackpool Community, Voluntary Controlled Schools and some Academies. The policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of:-

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education and Inspections Act 2006. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008. The Schools Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012. The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012. The School Admissions (Appeals) (England) Regulations 2012. And the School Admissions Codes 2010, 2012 and 2014.

Co-ordinated admission arrangements

In accordance with the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2006, Blackpool's Co-ordinated Schemes for Primary and Secondary Admissions allows for an inter-Blackpool co-ordinated approach, which is also fully co-ordinated with Lancashire County Council.

Admission to nursery class

This policy does not apply to children being admitted to nursery education, including nursery provision delivered in schools or co-located children's centres.

Where schools have a maintained nursery facility, separate admission arrangements must be published for entry to the nursery.

The Headteacher and Governing Board manage admissions to a maintained nursery on behalf of the Local Authority. Admissions are made with reference to criteria that give due priority to Looked After (or previously Looked After)* children, children with specific educational, social or medical reasons for admission.

Where schools have a nursery attached as part of a Children's Centre, the Children's Centre admissions arrangements for entry to the nursery must be published.

Where schools or academies have a private or voluntary provider nursery facility, that provider should publish its own admission arrangements for entry to the nursery.

Attendance in any nursery class that is attached to a primary school or academy does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education. Likewise, schools cannot insist that children attend any nursery class in order to guarantee admission to the school for primary education. Schools may, however, give priority to children in their nursery, but parents are advised to check individual admission policies.

Admission details for other pre-school settings, including those for nursery aged children, is available from the Blackpool Family Information Service, telephone 0800 092 2332.

Starting primary school

The Education Act 1996 states that a child is required to attend primary school from the start of term following his or her fifth birthday. All children are however entitled to a primary school place in the September following a fourth birthday.

A child would be eligible for a place in a school reception class from the beginning of the Autumn Term 2022 if they were born on or between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2018.

Deferred entry

Primary admission may be deferred by up to two school terms. Where parents/carers wish to defer entry this must be agreed with the school and the Children's Services Department. Where deferred arrangements are agreed, school places will be reserved.

If a child has a fifth birthday during the summer term (1 April to 31 August) and parents/carers wish to defer entry until the following September, they can opt to do so and to miss the reception year. School places cannot be reserved in these circumstances and parents/carers would have to apply for a Year 1 place. There is provision for parents to apply for and to provide evidence to support a full year deferral with a retained reception start. This is by agreement with individual admission authorities.

Infant class sizes

The Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/1973) as amended by SI 2006/3409 prescribed that infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher. (The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 introduces certain exceptions relating to children of multiple births and children of UK service personnel).

Factors not taken into account in Blackpool's admission policy

Blackpool Council does not operate a 'catchment area' policy.

Blackpool Council does not operate a 'feeder school' system.

Applying for a school

If the applicant is a Blackpool resident, application must be made to Blackpool School Admissions. If an applicant resides in the Lancashire County Council area or in any other area, application must be made to their "home" Local Authority.

Applications can be made online via the Blackpool Council website - www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Alternatively, a paper application form can be completed, which will be available on request from Blackpool primary schools/academies or Blackpool School Admissions.

Submission of a late application (after the relevant national statutory closing date) could reduce the chance of a place at a preferred school.

All-through school

Unity Academy is an 'All-through' school. Pupils already in Year 6 at Unity Academy at the time of secondary application, are already on roll at the Academy, so are guaranteed a place in Year 7, should they wish to continue their education at Unity Academy.

Allocation of places

Blackpool Council operates an Equal Preference Scheme and this is a statutory requirement.

After the published closing date for the return of the admission applications, Blackpool School Admissions will complete the process of allocating places to pupils. Wherever possible, pupils will be allocated to a school or academy in accordance with parental preference.

The limitation on this will be the statutory limitation contained in Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which states that a Local Authority need not comply with parental preference, "if compliance with the preference would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources".

Parental preference will be met provided that the demand for places does not exceed the agreed admission number.

Where demand for a school exceeds the available places the Local Authority will allocate places fairly and objectively using its determined oversubscription criteria.

Published admission numbers

The school's Published Admission Number (PAN) defines the number of pupils to be admitted to the school in the relevant year.

When setting the PAN, the Local Authority has due regard to the available space within the school as defined by the school's net capacity.

Where a school is oversubscribed, the Local Authority's determined admission arrangements must specify how it will determine the allocation of places.

Governing Boards of Voluntary Aided Schools, Academies and Free Schools in Blackpool are responsible for setting their own admission arrangements including PANs.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (formerly a Statement of Special Educational Needs)

When a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan that names a particular school, all Admission Authorities are required by Schedule 27, Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 to admit the child. Schools and academies must admit these children whether they have

available places or not.

Equal preference scheme

Blackpool local authority operates an 'Equal Preference Scheme', which the Department for Education (DfE) considers maximises parental satisfaction with the admissions arrangements.

Applicants are entitled to express preferences, in priority order, for three schools, and to give reasons for their preference.

All preferences will be treated equally. If more than one school can potentially be offered, a single offer will be made for the school or academy that the applicant has ranked highest.

The Local Authority will make a single offer of a place in accordance with Blackpool's Co-ordinated Admission arrangements, (see the relevant Co-ordinated admission scheme). The Local Authority will make the offer on or by the national statutory offer date.

Expressing a preference does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an offer of their highest ranked school/academy. Furthermore, a small number of applicants may not receive an offer of a place at a lower ranked school.

Oversubscription criteria

The school's Published Admission Number (PAN) determines the number of available places.

Where there are more preferences for a particular school than there are places available, the Local Authority employs its oversubscription criteria to objectively determine which children should be offered a place at that particular school.

In the event of the admission number being reached within any one of the oversubscription criteria in the order listed below, the distance criteria will be used as a 'tie breaker'. In the event of equal distance, a random allocation will be used to determine who takes priority for a place.

If a place cannot be offered at any one of the applicant's preferred schools/academies, a place will be offered at the nearest community school with an available place, or at the nearest academy that is able to offer a place.

The child's name may be added to a school's waiting list and applicants will be advised of any schools/academies at which there are vacancies.

The over subscription criteria is applied in the following order:

Looked after children

Blackpool Council gives the highest priority to Looked After Children (LAC), as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education (Admission of LAC) (England) Regulations 2006.

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that Authority, as defined in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of application and allocation.

Under legislation, children who leave public care through adoption, a residence order or special guardianship order, will continue to be given the same priority although they are no longer looked after by the state.

Also children who were previously in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care as they have been adopted. These are children who were looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious group or another provider of care whose sole purposed is to benefit society. Parents and carers will be expected to provide evidence of previous looked after status.

Medical/Social/Welfare reasons

Children for whom the council accepts that there are exceptional medical social or welfare reasons associated with the child and/or family which are directly relevant to the school concerned.

Only exceptional reasons which are directly relevant to a particular school will be considered. If you feel that there are exceptional medical, social or welfare reasons associated with your child and/or family which support admission to a particular school you must indicate that this is the case on your application.

All applications will be considered but supporting professional evidence will be required to demonstrate exceptional or compelling reasons why only a specific school can cater for a particular child's needs. This must set out the reasons and the level of risk to the child or family and why the school in question is the only suitable school; plus any difficulties which would arise if the child had to attend an alternative school.

It should be noted that all schools can make provision for special educational needs, and can also manage common conditions e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes.

Only exceptional reasons directly relevant to a particular school will be considered. Priority will be given to the child for the preferred school only if the submitted evidence unequivocally proves the circumstances and demonstrates why any alternative schools

would be unsuitable.

Siblings

Priority will be given to brothers and sisters of children already attending the school at the time of application and allocation (the national statutory offer date).

This includes full brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters, step brothers and sisters and adopted and foster brothers and sisters who are living within the same family at the same address.

Full brothers and sisters who do not live at the same address will still be given priority as siblings. Half, step, adopted and foster brothers and sisters who do not live at the same address will not be classed as siblings.

Distance

Blackpool Council determines the distance from the applicant's home address to the school with the nearest to a preferred school having priority for a place.

The distance between the applicant's home and school is taken as a straight line between the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) address point of the applicant's home address and of the school. The LLPG is a point within the boundary of the property and is usually located at its centre. Distances are measured using the council's geographic information system.

If the local authority is unable to determine eligibility on distance, i.e. two or more addresses are equal distance from the school; a random allocation will be carried out. In the event of a random allocation, someone independent of the children's services department and of the school would supervise the process, and parents/carers would be invited to attend.

Late application

Applications received after the published closing date will be treated as late applications.

Only in exceptional circumstances, and where appropriate evidence is provided, will those applications received after the closing date, but before offers of places have been made, be considered concurrently with those applications received on time.

The circumstances that might justify a late application include, but are not restricted to, the illness of a single parent/carers, which might have reasonably impinged upon their ability to submit an application on time.

For under subscribed schools it may be possible to consider late applications up to the school's published admission number.

Late applications for Voluntary Aided Schools, Academies or Free Schools will be referred to the Governing Body for the necessary consideration in liaison with the Local Authority.

Change of preference

Applicants may not change their preference once the closing date has passed, unless there is a significant reason for doing so, for example a house move. Any requests must be made in writing, with evidence to demonstrate the reasons.

Waiting lists

The Blackpool school admissions will establish and maintain a waiting list for each school for which it is the admissions authority, and any Academy or Free School who have delegated this responsibility. The waiting list will be maintained until the end of the Autumn Term in the admission year.

Parents/carers may request that their child's name is placed on the waiting list for any school or academy. Parents/carers may also request that the child is placed on the waiting list for a school/academy that was not an original preference (this includes those who relocate after initial offers).

If a vacancy occurs, which will take the school below its published admission number (PAN); the place will be filled from the waiting list.

In accordance with the School Admissions Code, places on the waiting list are maintained according to the pupil's priority against the school's admission criteria, not simply the length of time that they have been on the waiting list. A new applicant, who has a higher priority according to the admission criteria, would be ranked higher than those that have been on the list for some time.

Parents/carers who intend to appeal against the Local Authority's decision not to offer a place at a preferred school(s) should do so irrespective of having their child's name placed on the waiting list. For those parents/carers who proceed to an independent appeal, no consideration is given to the child's position on the waiting list at the appeal hearing.

Appeal arrangements

Any applicant whose child is not offered a school/academy place, for which they have expressed a preference, has the right to appeal to an Independent Admission Appeal Panel.

Applicants can also appeal for a school/academy that was not an original preferred school.

Applicants who intend to appeal for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school must complete a Blackpool Council Appeal Form, which is available from Blackpool School Admissions.

This form should also be completed when appealing for an Academy or Free School that has delegated the responsibilities relating to appeals to the Local Authority.

Applicants who wish to appeal for a place in a Voluntary Aided School/Academy, or certain Academies and Langdale Free School, should contact the school/academy direct to request an appeal form. Blackpool School Admissions will offer advice on the appeal application process.

Fraudulent applications

Where the Local Authority discovers that a child has been allocated a place as the result of inaccurate or misleading information - for example, where a false address has been provided - then the Local Authority is required to withdraw the offer of the place. The application will then be considered afresh and a right of appeal offered if a place is refused. Parents retain their rights of appeal where a fresh offer has been made.

Admission to Blackpool schools after 1 September

All applicants requesting a school place, either because they are new to Blackpool, or because they are wishing to transfer schools within Blackpool, are required to complete an In-Year Application Form. This allows them to express up to three preferences. By agreement with its schools, the admission of all students to Blackpool schools will be co-ordinated by the Local Authority.

In-year fair access protocol (IYFA)

The council operates an In-Year Fair Access Protocol which has been agreed with the majority of schools and academies. This ensures that access to education is secured quickly for children who have complex needs and / or are considered vulnerable. It operates outside of the usual admission processes and can allocate places to year groups which are already full or oversubscribed. IYFA applies to Blackpool resident children without schools places who meet the defined criteria (eg new to area or those returning from Pupil Referral Units or secure accommodation).

Blackpool community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided schools, academies and free schools

(Details are correct at the time of publication)

Community primary schools

School	Admission number
Boundary Primary School	60
Kincraig Primary School	30
Layton Primary School	90
Moor Park Primary School	60
Stanley Primary School	90

Voluntary controlled primary school

School	Admission number
Bispham Endowed Church of England Primary School	60

Voluntary aided primary school

School	Admission number
Holy Family Catholic Primary School	30
Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School	30
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School	30
St John's Church of England Primary School	30
St John Vianney Catholic Primary School	60
St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School	30

St Nicholas' Church of England Primary School	60
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St Teresa's Catholic Primary School	30
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Primary academies

School	Admission number
Anchorsholme Primary Academy (Part of the Blackpool Multi Academy Trust)	90
Armfield Academy- primary phase of Armfield Academy All-Through School (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	60
Baines' Endowed Primary School and Children's Centre, A Church of England Academy	70
Blackpool Gateway Academy	60
Christ the King Catholic Academy (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
Devonshire Primary Academy (Part of the Blackpool Multi Academy Trust)	60
Hawes Side Academy	90
Marton Primary Academy	30
Mereside Primary School	40
Norbreck Primary Academy	90
Revoe Learning Academy (Part of the Blackpool Multi Academy Trust)	60

Roseacre Primary Academy	90
St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	30
Thames Primary Academy	60
Unity Academy Blackpool - primary phase of Unity Academy All-Through School (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	60
Waterloo Primary Academy	90
Westcliff Primary School	30
Westminster Primary Academy	60

Primary free school

School	Admission number
Langdale Free School	18

Blackpool academies

(Details correct at the time of publication)

Secondary academies	Admission number
Armfield Academy- secondary phase of Armfield Academy All-Through School (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	160
Blackpool Aspire Academy (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	180

Highfield Leadership Academy	150*
Montgomery Academy (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	250
South Shore Academy	175
St George's School, A Church of England Academy	210
St Mary's Catholic Academy (Part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust)	210
Unity Academy Blackpool - secondary phase of Unity Academy all-through school (Part of the Fylde Coast Multi Academy Trust)	120

*A local agreement is in place to limit the PAN at Highfield to 150 for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. This is subject to ongoing review.

Academies that have adopted this policy

Anchorsholme Primary Academy
Blackpool Gateway Academy
Devonshire Primary Academy
Hawes Side Academy
Marton Primary Academy
Montgomery Academy
Norbreck Primary Academy
Revoe Learning Academy
Roseacre Primary Academy
Stanley Primary School
Thames Primary Academy
Waterloo Primary Academy

Blackpool Aspire Academy

South Shore Academy

Unity Academy Blackpool

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