

Report subject	School Admission Arrangements 2026/27
Meeting date	5 February 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>BCP Council administers admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools. There is a legal requirement to determine the arrangements annually as described in the School Admissions Code 2021 and associated legislation.</p> <p>There are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements for the 2026/27 academic year from those which were publicly consulted upon and determined by the Council for the 2023/24 academic year.</p> <p>The local authority must also formulate and publish a scheme to coordinate the admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools within their area for the 2026/27 academic year.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cabinet consider any comments from Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if any, concerning Schools Admissions Arrangements 2026/2027 for community and maintained schools; and (b) (b) Cabinet support the determination of the arrangements as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.
Reason for recommendations	<p>BCP Council is legally required to determine admission arrangements for the 2026/27 academic year for all maintained schools for which it is an admission authority and to agree coordinated admission arrangements for all admission authorities in the area. Arrangements must be determined by BCP Council by 28 February 2025.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton – Portfolio Holder, Children’s Services
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley – Corporate Director, Children’s Services
Report Authors	Sharon Muldoon – Interim Director of Education and Skills, Children’s Services
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Council and schools which are deemed to be an ‘admission authority’ are required each year to set arrangements explaining how and when they will decide to offer school places.
2. The Council is required to have an admissions policy for its maintained community and voluntary controlled primary schools located in Christchurch.
3. The Council must also set an administrative scheme setting out for parents and schools how the application and offer process will be co-ordinated.

Admission arrangements and published admission numbers

4. The admissions arrangements must explain how to apply for a school place and, once an application is received, how it will be processed. The policy must contain clear oversubscription criteria should there be more applications for places than there are places available. The number of places available at a normal point of entry for each school – the published admission number – must also be set and included in the policy for parents.
5. The proposed admissions policy is attached at appendix one. Minor date alterations have been made. All other areas of the arrangements (catchments, supplementary information form, policies for service families and for requests for applications for a place in a year group different to that determined by date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children) remain the same.
6. As there are no changes to the proposed arrangements, the Council is not required to publicly consult.
7. Proposed published admission numbers (PAN) for 2026/27 are attached at the end of the admissions policy attached at appendix one. They remain the same as the 2025/26 academic year.

Coordinated Scheme

8. The Council is required under paragraph 2.22 of the Department for Education’s School Admissions Code 2021 to set a coordinated scheme for the processing of school applications for entry to school in September 2026.
9. The scheme recommended and attached at appendix two is a single scheme for the whole of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area. The scheme is in principle

the same as that set by the Council for the 2025/26 academic year with minor date alterations.

Options Appraisal

10. The existing arrangements cannot continue as the Council has an annual statutory requirement to determine the admissions policy. Taking no action is therefore not an option.
11. There is no requirement to amend the arrangements that were in place for 2025/26 as they continue to meet the needs of families who wish to apply for a school place for September 2025.
12. It is recommended that the Council determine the arrangements and the coordinated scheme.

Summary of financial implications

13. The admissions function is entirely funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Therefore, there are no wider revenue budget implications to the Council. The recommendations set out above are intended to be accommodated within the existing budget allocated from within the DSG for this purpose.

Summary of legal implications

14. The Council must determine the coordinated scheme, admission arrangements and published admission numbers no later than 28 February 2025.
15. If no action is taken the Council will not meet its statutory duty to have admission arrangements which meet the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021.

Summary of human resources implications

16. There are no anticipated changes to human resources from determining the policy and coordinated scheme.

Summary of sustainability impact

17. BCP Council is committed to encouraging children and young people attend their nearest or catchment school.
18. The draft admissions policy includes oversubscription criteria that gives high priority to children living in their school's catchment area. Attendance at a local school provides families with greater opportunity to travel to school on foot or by cycling, scooting or using public transport in line with the Transforming Travel agenda.

Summary of public health implications

19. Ensuring families are able to apply for a school place supports the health and wellbeing of children and young people by enabling them to attend school.

Summary of equality implications

20. An equality impact assessment screening tool was completed and considered at the equality impact assessment panel on 4 December 2024. It is attached at appendix three.

21. The admissions policy and co-ordinated scheme will be accessible online for all BCP Council residents and paper copies will be provided on request.
22. School applications will be assessed using the policy oversubscription criteria. Where the child/young person and/or their family have additional needs or requirements these will be considered in line with the policy.
23. Families will have the opportunity to access an independent appeal process if they are unhappy with the school offered.

Summary of risk assessment

24. If BCP Council do not determine admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools by 28 February 2025, the Council will not have met its statutory duty as defined in the School Admissions Code 2021 and the Department for Education may impose arrangements upon the Council.

Background papers

[School Admissions Code](#) – Published works

[School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#) – Published works

Appendices

Appendix one – BCP Council admissions policy 2026/27

Appendix two – BCP Council coordinated scheme for 2026/27

Appendix three – equality impact assessment conversation screening tool