

Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool

What is being reviewed?	School Admission Arrangements 2027/28
What changes are being made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Admissions Code 2021 requires admission authorities for publicly funded non-special schools to consult and determine admission arrangements in readiness for future school applications. • We are the admission authority for four maintained schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Burton CE Primary School ○ Mudeford Community Infants School ○ Mudeford Junior School ○ Somerford Primary School • We have a single admissions policy for the above four schools. The policy only applies to these schools. All other publicly funded non-special schools in BCP Council are responsible for consulting and determining their own admissions policies. • Any changes to the council's admission arrangements must be publicly consulted on to meet statutory requirements. • We are consulting on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reducing the Published Admission Number (the number of children admitted at the start of the 2027/28 academic year into Reception) from 45 to 30 ○ Clarifying the definition of children of staff following advice from our dioceses. • The consultation runs from Monday 10 November 2025 until Monday 22 December 2025. This meets the statutory requirement to consult for a minimum of six weeks. • Once completed, we will be requesting consideration and determination of the Cabinet through our democratic processes. • Further information about School Admissions for all publicly funded non-special schools in BCP Council can be found at bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions
Service Unit:	Children's Services
Participants in the conversation:	<p>Angie Hill, Manager, School Admissions and Home to School Transport, Children's Services</p> <p>Tanya Smith, Head of Service – School Places and Capital, Children's Services</p> <p>Caroline Stanley, Team Leader, School Admissions and Home to School Transport, Children's Services</p>
Conversation date/s:	Weekly since September 2025 (as we also support other schools that need to consult on their policies).
Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?	<p>The BCP Council Community and VC Schools Admissions Policy is for parents and carers of children aged 3-to-11-years-old who want to apply for a primary school in Christchurch.</p> <p>The BCP Council Coordinated Scheme is specifically for the council, schools and other local authorities to refer to in order to ensure that the administrative processes are correctly applied and timescales are followed to meet statutory application closure and notification dates.</p>

	<p>Both the Admissions Policy and the Coordinated Scheme will be made available on the BCP Council school admissions webpages. Current versions are available at Admission arrangements for BCP schools 2026-27 BCP. The 2027/28 arrangements will contain will be publicly available in the same way once determined.</p> <p>During the 2024/25 academic year, BCP Council received approximately 7,500 applications for point of entry to school (Reception, Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 and Year 9) and a further 4,200 (approximately) in year applications to start school during the school year.</p>
<p>Do different groups have different needs or experiences? Age (young/old), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, members of the armed forces community, any other factors/groups e.g. socioeconomic status, carers, human rights</p>	<p>The policy ensures that school admission applications are considered based on the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code.</p> <p>The School Admissions Code requires Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are prioritised.</p> <p>When there are more applications than school places available, the admissions policy includes a set of oversubscription criteria to enable fair and equitable ranking of applications. The oversubscription criteria, after allocation of placement for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (including children who were previously looked after in state care outside of England). 2) Children who BCP Council accepts have an exceptional medical or social need and where there is a need for a place at one specific school. 3) Children who live in the school's catchment area who have a sibling who is already on the roll of the school and will continue to attend the school at the time of admission. 4) Children living within the school's catchment area who are attending a recognised feeder school and are on that school's roll at the time of application. 5) All other children who live in the school's catchment area. 6) Children who live outside the school's catchment area who have a sibling who is already on the roll of the school and will continue to attend the school at the time of admission. 7) Children living outside the school's catchment area who are attending a recognised feeder school and are on that school's roll at the time of application. 8) Children living outside the school's catchment area and whose parents wish them to attend a CE (Church of England) voluntary controlled school on denominational grounds. 9) Children of staff where the member of staff has been employed for two or more years at the school applied for at the time the application for admission is made, or who have been recruited to a vacancy to meet a demonstrable skills shortage as at the date of application (in year) or relevant closing date under the local authority co-ordinated scheme (normal year of entry) and

who still intend to be employed at the school at the time of the child's admission.

10) All other children who live outside the school's catchment area.

If a school is oversubscribed in any of the categories above, children in the oversubscribed category who live closest to the school will be given priority.

In the event that the last place offered is given to a child from a multiple birth, all children from the multiple birth will be offered a place over the published admission number for the school.

In the event that the criteria and distance measurement s equal for two or more applicants, the place will be allocated by the drawing of lots.

The School Admissions Code support equality duties by placing the following restrictions on admission arrangements:

"1.9 It is for admission authorities to formulate their admission arrangements, but they must not:

a) place any conditions on the consideration of any application other than those in the oversubscription criteria published in their admission arrangements;

b) take into account any previous schools attended, unless it is a named feeder school;

c) give extra priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in a particular order, including 'first preference first' arrangements;

d) introduce any new selection by ability;

e) give priority to children on the basis of any practical or financial support parents may give to the school or any associated organisation, including any religious authority. The exception to this is where parents pay optional nursery fees to the school or school-run nursery, for additional hours on top of their 15-hour funded early education, where children from the school nursery class or school-run nursery are given priority for admission to Reception;

f) give priority to children according to the occupational, marital, financial, or educational status of parents applying. The exceptions to this are children of staff at the school and those eligible for the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium and the service premium who may be prioritised in the arrangements in accordance with paragraphs 1.39 – 1.42;

g) take account of reports from previous schools about children's past behaviour, attendance, attitude, or achievement, or that of any other children in the family;

h) discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children, those with special educational needs, or those applying for admission outside their normal age group where an admission authority has agreed to this under paragraphs 2.18 to 2.20;

i) prioritise children on the basis of their own or their parents' past or current hobbies or activities (schools which have been designated as having a religious character may take account

of religious activities, as laid out by the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination;

j) in designated grammar schools that rank all children according to a pre-determined pass mark and then allocate places to those who score highest, give priority to siblings of current or former pupils;

k) in the case of schools with boarding places, rank children on the basis of a child's suitability for boarding – more information on boarding schools is set out at paragraphs 1.43 - 1.44;

l) name fee-paying independent schools as feeder schools;

m) interview children or parents. In the case of sixth form applications, a meeting may be held to discuss options and academic entry requirements for particular courses, but this meeting cannot form part of the decision making process on whether to offer a place. Boarding schools may interview children to assess their suitability for boarding;

n) request financial contributions (either in the form of voluntary contributions, donations, or deposits (even if refundable)) as any part of the admissions process – including for tests; or

o) request photographs of a child for any part of the admissions process, other than as proof of identity when sitting a selection test.”

The School Admissions Code also prohibits collection of the following on the application form:

“2.2 The Common Application Form (CAF) must allow parents to provide their name, their address (including documentary evidence in support), and the name, address, and date of birth of the child. The child must not be required to complete any part of the CAF.

2.4 In some cases, admission authorities will need to ask for supplementary information forms in order to process applications. If they do so, they must only use supplementary forms that request additional information when it has a direct bearing on decisions about oversubscription criteria or for the purpose of selection by aptitude or ability. Places must be allocated on the basis of the oversubscription criteria only. An applicant must not be given additional priority solely on the basis of having completed a supplementary form. Admission authorities must not ask, or use supplementary forms that ask, for any of the information prohibited by paragraph 1.9 above or for:

a) any personal details about parents and families, such as maiden names, criminal convictions, marital, or financial status (including marriage certificates);

b) the first language of parents or the child;

c) details about parents' or a child's disabilities, special educational needs, or medical conditions;

d) parents to agree to support the ethos of the school in a practical way;

	<p>e) both parents to sign the form, or for the child to complete the form.”</p> <p>The requirements of the School Admissions Code, our admissions policy and our application form therefore support different groups, including groups with protected characteristics applying for a school place and ensure that the allocation of school places is fair, clear and objective.</p>
Will this change affect any service users?	<p>As the proposed changes to the admission arrangements do not impact on the anticipated number of children who will be in the area and require a school place at Burton Primary there will be no change in how service users are affected.</p>
What are the benefits or positive impacts of the change on current or potential users?	<p>The proposed reduction in the Published Admission Number (PAN) at Burton Primary is intended to strengthen the school's financial sustainability and support effective planning, resourcing, and delivery of the curriculum. This change will help provide children and their families with a stable and well-supported educational experience.</p> <p>As there are no other changes to the admission arrangements and the processes involved in allocating school places the impact of the policy will remain the same as previous years.</p> <p>The arrangements remain in line with the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code and ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of places is fair, clear and objective.</p> <p>The requirement to ensure that children with EHCPs are placed before allocation of all children and the requirement to ensure all Looked After and Previously Looked After Children are ranked highest using the oversubscription criteria ensures that these vulnerable groups are positively impacted by the admissions process.</p> <p>Families are asked prior to completing their application to confirm they have read the Parent's Guide to Admissions. They can also seek advice and guidance from the School Admissions Team and reminders about applying for a school place are promoted through BCP Council media channels, early years providers and schools.</p> <p>Families are strongly advised to complete all four preferences on their application form and include their nearest or catchment school as one of their preferences to ensure they have the maximum opportunity to be offered a place at their local school should one of their higher preferences be unable to do so.</p>
What are the negative impacts of the change on current or potential users?	<p>As the reduction in PAN is underpinned by pupil place planning data illustrating the reduced need for places in the Christchurch area it is anticipated that there will be no change in how service users how service users are affected.</p> <p>This is further evidenced by the fact that Burton (which has an Admission Number of 45 in all its year groups) has vacancies in all year groups except Year 6.</p>

Will the change affect employees?	Not applicable as the arrangements only apply to those seeking a school place.
Will the change affect the wider community?	The proposed reduction in PAN will not impact the wider community – almost all pupil place planning areas in BCP Council are experiencing reduced demand for school places due to falling birth rates.
What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by this change?	<p>The consultation has been made available on both the Have Your Say website and on the BCP Council school admissions webpages available at bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions.</p> <p>In addition, we have publicised the consultation on social media and through BCP Council newsletters.</p> <p>We are also statutorily required to inform all schools in our area (including those within a mile of BCP Council's boundaries), neighbouring local authorities and our local dioceses. This has been completed through emails, our Early Years and Childcare Newsletter and our Education Bulletin. Early Years providers and schools have been encouraged to share the consultation with their families, staff and other interested parties.</p> <p>Forecasts indicate that from September 2027, no more than 30 places will be required at the school. This reflects a broader trend of fewer families seeking school places in the area due to falling birth rates.</p> <p>The Governors and staff at Burton Primary School support the proposed reduction. Operating with a PAN of 30 will help ensure the school remains financially sustainable and enable the school to plan, resource and deliver our curriculum effectively. It is more cost-efficient to run a full class than two small classes. If needed, the PAN can be increased again in the future if local demand for school places rises again.</p> <p>Parents Guides are published annually to support parents and are available at Parents guide to school admissions BCP.</p> <p>As the processes involved in allocating school places remain the same, there will be no change in how service users are affected.</p> <p>In circumstances where families are not offered one of their preferred schools, we are required to allocate a school place. Families who are unhappy with their offered school can submit additional preferences and consider using their right to request an independent admission appeal.</p> <p>Advice and guidance for families wishing to apply for a school place is available at bpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Families can also email their queries to school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk or talk to us by calling 01202 123222.</p>
Summary of Equality Implications:	<p>All school applications will continue to be processed in line with the requirements of the School Admissions Code and the relevant school admissions policy(s). Families are provided with advice and guidance on how to apply, deadlines for applying and information about their right of appeal should they not be offered their preferred school.</p> <p>Families will have the opportunity to access an independent</p>

	<p>appeal process if they are unhappy with the outcome of their application.</p> <p>The requirement to ensure that children with EHCPs are placed before allocation of all children and the requirement to ensure all Looked After and Previously Looked After Children are ranked highest using the oversubscription criteria ensures that these vulnerable groups are positively impacted by the admissions process.</p> <p>School admission arrangements are within the domain of Education described in the Measurement Framework for Equality and Human Rights. They ensure access to appropriate education is provided for children and young people.</p>
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