



CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA)

**DETERMINED SCHEME FOR
CO-ORDINATION OF
SECONDARY ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 All local authorities are required¹ to formulate a scheme to co-ordinate admissions during the normal admission round to maintained secondary schools (including academies, but excluding maintained special schools and maintained nursery schools) within their area.

Co-ordination for September 2021

- 1.2 Cambridgeshire County Council (LA) will notify the Secretary of State for Education by 28 February 2020 that agreement to its co-ordinated scheme for admissions has been secured and has provided him/her with a copy.

Admission Criteria

- 1.3 Under the co-ordinated scheme, the LA, as the admission authority, will set and apply the oversubscription criteria for all maintained community and voluntary controlled schools. Academies, voluntary aided, free and foundation schools will set and apply their own oversubscription criteria.

2 Aims of the Secondary Scheme

- 2.1 Co-ordination schemes are intended to simplify the admissions process whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism that ensures that, as far as is reasonably practicable, every parent of a child living in a local authority area who has applied to a maintained school is sent a single offer of a school place by their local authority.
- 2.2 Co-ordination schemes do not affect the rights and duties of the governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools to set and apply their own admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria, nor for academies and free Schools to agree their own arrangements with the Secretary of State. Admission authorities do not have to determine the same or similar oversubscription criteria, but must ensure that their own admission arrangements are compatible with, and do not undermine, the co-ordination scheme for their area. These arrangements are required to:-
- Meet all statutory requirements relating to the co-ordinated admissions process;
 - Ensure that the needs of the child and the wishes of the parent(s) are the prime considerations;
 - Ensure that as many parents as possible gain a place for their child at one of their preferred schools;
 - Ensure that every child living in the LA area who has applied for a school place in the normal admission round is issued with an offer letter on the agreed offer letter date;
 - Specify how late applications should be dealt with and how applications that fall outside of the normal admission round should be dealt with;
 - Ensure that all parties to the admissions process work together to achieve the above aims, within the limits of the legislation relating to school admissions.

¹ The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements (England) Regulations 2012

3 The Scheme

3.1 The scheme shall:

- apply to all community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation and academy secondary schools in the LA area, except for the Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology (University Technical College);
- ensure that a fair and transparent system for the allocation of school places is achieved;
- require the LA to produce a guide for parents providing information about the secondary admissions process; the application procedure and containing information relating to the criteria by which every maintained secondary school, or Academy, in Cambridgeshire shall determine whether a child is to be granted, or refused, admission. This booklet will be available on the LA's website (www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions) no later than 12 September.
- provide a single on-line application form enabling a parent living in the LA area to apply for up to three secondary² schools, whether in the LA's area or not, to give reasons for those applications and to rank them in order of preference;
- provide a paper common application form upon request for parents/carers unable to make their application through the on-line facility;
- ensure that on the national offer date (1 March, or next working day, where this is a weekend or bank holiday) a single offer of a secondary school place is made by the LA to the parent of every child living within the LA area for whom an "on-time" application has been received within the published timetable;
- stipulate timetables for all aspects of the process;
- set out a procedure for determining any application made otherwise than in the course of a normal admission round, or where it is for admission during the normal round, any application submitted after the application deadline stipulated by the scheme;
- specify whether, in determining if a pupil is to be granted or refused a place at a school in the LA area, the LA will have regard to any information provided by another LA as to whether that pupil is to be granted a place in that LA's area.

4 The Process of Allocation

Normal admission round

- 4.1. This scheme will apply to all children resident in the LA area who are applying for a school place for the school's initial year of entry for the start of the relevant autumn term; that is Year 7 for all secondary schools and Year 9 to other local authority area upper schools
- 4.2. Applications received for children transferring to Secondary School will only be considered in the normal admission round where the year group applied for is the point of entry to the school. Applications received for schools where this is not the point of entry will be considered as an in year application and in accordance with the published in-year co-ordinated scheme.

² Within this scheme, 'secondary' refers to any school with an initial year of intake between Year 7 and Year 11.

- 4.3. For information regarding admission to these year groups and all other year groups after the start of the academic year please refer to “In Year Co-ordination – Admission Arrangements for all Maintained and Academy Schools” scheme.

Common Application Form and the Admissions Information Booklet

- 4.4. Parents are expected and encouraged to apply online. We will, therefore, limit the availability of a paper version of the common application form; instead signposting the on-line access to as many applicants as possible.
- 4.5. The LA will provide a brief guide to the application process and information on applying for a school place in advance of the application process opening to all:
- Primary Schools in respect of admission to Year 7; and
 - Secondary schools in respect of admission to Year 9 or 10 at a University Technical College.
- 4.6 This information will allow schools to support the parents of children who are due to start or transfer to the school in the following September. Electronic copies of the Admissions Information booklets, (composite prospectus) will include information and guidance explaining the operation of the co-ordinated scheme and advice on completing the application form, will be available on the council’s website. Hard copies are available on request.
- 4.7 The LA will identify those Cambridgeshire pupils in Year 6, attending schools in Cambridgeshire, through data exchange with Cambridgeshire schools and through information held on council databases about children attending schools in other local authority areas. Neighbouring local authorities will be asked to provide records of Cambridgeshire children attending schools in their areas so that application information can be sent directly to their parents. The LA, will in return, provide information to other local authority admission teams about any of their residents attending Cambridgeshire schools.
- 4.8 The on-line facility is available at: **www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions**
- 4.9 The on-line facility, or the common application form, (whichever is used by the applicant) will collect the basic pupil/parent data required by all LAs to process the application. This will include the child’s name, date of birth, address, telephone number, applicant details, primary school attended (where applicable), sibling details, nationality and whether or not the child is Looked After or was previously looked after, in England, or overseas, but ceased to be so by reason of adoption, a care arrangements order or special guardianship order, or has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- 4.10 The application form will allow parents to express a preference for up to three schools, to rank the preferences in order and to provide reasons for their preference.

Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

- 4.11 Admission authorities, other than the LA may have their own Supplementary Information Form (SIF) for the collection of any necessary additional information from parents to enable them to apply the school’s oversubscription criteria when considering their application. This will include any criteria relating to church attendance.

- 4.12 A SIF must not ask:
- personal details about parents and families, such as maiden names, criminal convictions, marital, or financial status;
 - for any financial contribution, voluntary or otherwise;
 - details of parents' achievements, educational background or whether either the parents' or the child's first language is English;
 - details about parents' or children's disabilities, special educational needs or medical conditions;
 - about parents' or children's interests, hobbies or membership of societies;
 - for parents to agree to support the ethos of the school in a practical way; or
 - for both parents to sign the form, or for the child to complete the form.

4.13 Information on which schools may require a SIF will be provided in the LAs composite prospectus. Copies of the SIF will be available for download from the Council's website and will be available from the school.

4.14 All parents making applications for a school requiring the completion of a SIF must still complete an online/paper common application form. All SIFs must be returned directly to the school at which a place is being sought by the national closing date. Any forms, which are submitted to the LA, will be date-stamped and forwarded to the relevant school.

Processing Applications

4.15 The LA will co-ordinate all applications and the offer of places for all school places in the Cambridgeshire County Council area (being the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools and acting as a co-ordinator for all other own admission authority schools within the Cambridgeshire County Council area).

On time applications

4.16 An "on-time" application is an online, or emailed, application submitted and received by the local authority admissions team, no later than 23:59 on the National Closing Date (see timetable in **appendix 1**), or a hand-delivered or posted, paper application received at the local authority offices, or a Cambridgeshire school, within office opening hours of Monday – Thursday 9am – 5pm and Friday 9am – 4.30pm on, or before, the National Closing Date, where this falls on a weekend.

Late Applications

4.17 Any application for the normal admission round received after the national closing date will be deemed 'late'. Late applications will be dealt with after all on-time applications have been processed and places allocated. Late applications will be processed in "rounds" and places will be allocated in accordance with the published timetable.

Verification of Data

4.18 Parents may be asked to provide proof of address by the LA at the data processing stage.

Request to Change Preferences

4.19 Once an application form has been received no changes can be made to that application after the National Closing Date has passed, unless there is a genuine reason for the change (such as a change of address or siblings have changed schools). A second deadline date (see timetable) applies for such changes.

- 4.20 Parents or carers wishing to amend preferences after the closing date, will need to complete a “Change of Preference” Form, which will be available from the school admissions webpages, or by contacting the School Admissions Team. The new application will replace any previous application. This means that parents must include any schools from previous applications if they would like them to remain as a live preference. If a school is no longer included on the most recent application form the parent, or carer, will be agreeing they are refusing any previous offer made for that school and any right of appeal against refusal of a place at that school. The parent will also be agreeing to their child’s name is to be removed from any Continuing Interest list for any school refused that is not included on a preference on the most recent application form. This ensures that a parent will have a maximum of three live preference for the normal year of entry at any one time.

Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces)

- 4.21 Applications received for children of UK Service Personnel will be accepted in accordance with the requirements of 2.18 of the School Admissions Code. Applications submitted after the national closing date will be accepted and treated as having been received “on-time” where this is received with documentation specified in 2.18 of the School Admissions Code provided this received by the second deadline date specified in the timetable in **appendix 1**.

Applicants Moving into Cambridgeshire

- 4.22 Applications submitted after the closing date will only be accepted and treated as having been received “on time” where a parent can demonstrate they have made an on-time application to the local authority admissions team in which they previously lived.

All Preferences Equal

- 4.23 Parental preferences will be ranked by the relevant authority within the LA area according to the oversubscription criteria for the relevant school. The numerical order of the preference will not affect this ranking as the system operated is one where ‘all preferences are equal’.
- 4.24 Own admission authority schools, who have chosen not to buy-back the validation service from the LA, will receive, through the Schools Portal, information about all preferences received for their school and will be asked to rank these preferences in accordance with the published timetable. Children will be ranked according to the school’s determined over-subscription criteria and not by the order of their preference. These schools will provide the LA through the Schools Portal how these applications have been ranked in accordance with their admission policy and return this to the LA in accordance with the published timetable.

Allocation of Places

- 4.25 The LA, using preference and oversubscription criteria rankings (including those supplied by own admission authority schools), will allocate places according to each parent’s preference ranking, as follows:
- Where a parent’s first preference can be met, a place will be allocated at that school. The LA will then ‘discard’, i.e. not consider, any lower ranked preferences.

- Where a parent's first preference cannot be met, but the second preference can, a place will be allocated at the second preference school. The child's name will be placed on the Continuing Interest list for the first preference school ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. The third preference will be 'discarded' i.e. not be considered.
- Where a parent's first and second preference cannot be met, but the third preference can, a place will be allocated at the third preference school. The child's name will be placed on the Continuing Interest list for the first and second preference schools ranked according to their oversubscription criteria.
- Where none of the parent's preferences can be met, a place will be allocated at the next nearest school to the home address with available places (if the child resides in the Cambridgeshire County Council area). The LA will, where possible, work with another LA to offer places where the next nearest school with a place available is located outside of the LA in which the applicant resides. The child's name will be placed on the Continuing Interest list for first, second and third preference schools ranked according to their oversubscription criteria.

Co-ordination with Other Local Authorities

- 4.26 The LA will, wherever possible, take account of higher preference offers that can be made by another local authority where notification of these is received in accordance with the published timetable.

Offer Letters

- 4.27 Parents will receive one offer of a school place. Offer letters will provide parents with the reasons for refusing their child at their first, second or third preference schools (if applicable). It will explain that they have the right to appeal against those refusals. Parents will also be able to log back into their online accounts after the National Offer date to see the school allocation if an online application was made.

Reply to an offer

- 4.28 Parents are required to accept/refuse the allocation of a school place within 10 school days of the offer letter being sent, or posted. During that period the allocated school will attempt to contact parents to confirm if the place offered is to be accepted, or refused. No later than, ten working days after the national offer date the LA will send a chaser letter to all parents who have not confirmed their admissions decision. If, after a further 5 working days from this date, no decision has been received from the parent, the place may be withdrawn and will be included and offered as part of the "second" round of allocations.

Refusing an offer

- 4.29 **Parents should not refuse the offer of a place unless they are certain of a place at an alternative school.** (This does not remove a parent's right of appeal, but should ensure that all children have a school place.)

Co-ordination after allocation day (1 March)

- 4.30 The School Admissions Code (page 37 “The Admissions Timeline”) clarifies that parents must continue to apply to their home local authority for “late” applications for the normal admissions round (i.e. between 1 March and 31 August for Year 7 places for September in the same year). The LA will continue to co-ordinate the offers for places to the point of entry of a school during this period, liaising with other LAs and own admission authority schools in their area. This will ensure that places which become available are re-allocated effectively and duplicate offers are avoided.

5. Continuing Interest Lists

- 5.1 Continuing Interest lists for all oversubscribed schools will be maintained and held by the LA until 31 December of the year of admission, or 31 August, where the school manages their own in-year admission process. Continuing Interest lists are held in strict oversubscription criteria order. Applicants will be ranked according to each individual school’s oversubscription criteria and the LA will continue to coordinate with own admission authority schools to allocate places from those lists, if places become available.
- 5.2 After the offer date there will be no distinction between ‘on-time’ and ‘late’ applications on continuing interest lists.
- 5.3 Schools must advise the LA when a place becomes available. The LA will then offer the place to the child who is at the top of the continuing interest list.
- 5.4 Parents will be asked to confirm that they wish to stay on a higher preference school’s continuing interest list when accepting an offer of a place at a lower preference school. A child’s details will not be added to a school’s continuing interest list if a higher preference school has been offered. Refusal of a place when offered a preference school will automatically remove them from the continuing interest list.
- 5.5. If, after a child is offered a place at a lower preference school which they have not yet started, a place becomes available at a higher preference school and their name has been added to the continuing interest list for that school, the original offer will be withdrawn and a new offer is made. The reason for this is that the child will not yet have started or placed on roll at that lower preference school and we are obliged to meet a parent’s highest preference. If a parent is happy to accept and keep the lower preferred offer, they must inform the LA to remove them from the higher preference school’s continuing interest list, or the offer for the lower preference will be withdrawn and their place (at the lower preferred school) will be offered on to the child who is top of the continuing interest list for that school.
- 5.5 After the offer date, if a parent wishes their child to be considered for an alternative school, a new application form must be completed listing the new order of preferences.

Appendix 1 – Secondary Admissions Timetable for Admission September 2021

| DATE | EVENT |
|-------------------------|---|
| September | Autumn Term starts |
| On 10 September | Application process goes live. On-line application facility opens, Copies of composite prospectus are available on-line and in hard copy. Hard copy application forms are available on request. |
| September/ October | Schools open evenings/visits are held |
| 14 October | Email sent to all Cambridgeshire primary and junior schools with reminder wording and information to be sent to all Year 6 parents via parent-mail, or equivalent |
| 25-29 October | Half Term |
| 31 October 2020 | CLOSING DATE FOR ALL APPLICATION FORMS & SIFS (to be classed as “on-time”) |
| 1 November | Any applications received from this date will be clearly marked/noted as ‘late’ and dealt with accordingly i.e. not considered until after the National Offer Day as part of the second allocation round. |
| By 9 November | All application forms sent direct to schools must reach the LA. Schools and the LA to check applications for any anomalies (such as addresses or pupils names). |
| 22 November | Final date change requests linked to change of addresses and applications from UK Service Personnel will be accepted (Second Deadline) with MOD evidence. |
| 30 November | LA sends details of on-time applications to other LA’s where the preferred school is located out of the resident’s LA area |
| 10 December | LA notifies each own admission authority schools in Cambridgeshire, who rank their own admissions, with details of applications for ranking against their published over-subscription criteria (through Provider Portal). |
| 20 Dec | Notification received from SAT Team of schools which have been named in children’s EHCPs. |
| 7 January | LA sends details of all on-time applications to own admission authority schools who choose to buy back the validation service from the LA admissions team to enable them to check and report any anomalies in the ranking which has been carried out. |
| 13 January | Deadline by which all own admission authority schools are to have reviewed the ranking applied, or to have ranked the preferences received according to their published over-subscription criteria. |
| 17 – 31 January | Data exchange with other LAs |
| 3 February | LA processes applications following exchange of data with other LA’s and own admission authority schools’ criteria ranking and begins allocation process. |
| By 11 February | Statutory Assessment Team must have informed children of the Secondary School named in their EHCP. All allocations complete |
| 15 February (Half Term) | LA sends final allocation lists to neighbouring LAs. LA begins printing all offer letters. |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| 25 February | <p>LA publishes final allocation lists to all Cambridgeshire Secondary Schools in Provider Portal.</p> <p>Allocation information is available to all Cambridgeshire Primary and Junior schools through the Provider Portal.</p> |
| 1 March | <p>NATIONAL OFFER DATE</p> <p>Offer letters sent by email to parents who made their application on-line and by Second Class post via Royal Mail to those who made paper applications. Allocation information published on the LA website</p> <p>Parents must email the admissions team if they do not wish to take up the offered place and give details of alternative education. Parents also informed of their right of appeal against any refusal.</p> |
| 15 March | Reminder email and letter sent to parents who have not yet responded to the offer letter sent. |
| 26 March | Parents submit appeal forms in order to ensure these can be heard by the 14 June (National Secondary Appeals deadline). |
| 2 – 31 March | Vacancies arising as a result of offers being refused by parents will be offered to children on Continuing Interest lists for schools in order of ranking following National Offer Date |
| 31 March | No further changes to preferences will be processed, or allocations made from Continuing Interest lists until offers have been made as part of Second Round. |
| 1 April | All offers for whom no response has been received from parent will be withdrawn. |
| 1 April | LA processes applications received between 1 November and 31 March. (Second Round) |
| 27 April | LA issues offer letters by 2 nd class post to those parents whose application was considered in Second Round including places to children on a Continuing Interest list where a place has become available. |
| 28 April – 31 August | LA processes all late applications received after 31 st March on an individual basis in order of the date the application was received. |
| 31 May | LA sends reminder letter and application form to all Cambridgeshire children known to them for whom an application has not been received or for whom a school place has not been accepted. |
| 14 June | Statutory deadline by which appeals lodged by 26 March must be heard. |
| 29 June | LA publishes revised allocation lists to all schools via Schools Portal |
| 31 August | In Year Co-ordination commences |

Appendix 2

SECONDARY ADMISSION AUTHORITIES IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE - Please check the Council's website for the most up-to-date information on status of an individual school.

| School | Status |
|---|---|
| Abbey College, Ramsey | Academy |
| Bassingbourn Village College | Academy |
| Bottisham Village College | Academy |
| Cambourne Village College | Academy |
| Chesterton Community College, Cambridge | Academy |
| Coleridge Community College, Cambridge | Academy |
| Comberton Village College | Academy |
| Cottenham Village College | Academy |
| Cromwell Community College, Chatteris | Academy |
| Ely College | Academy |
| Ernulf Academy, St Neots | Academy |
| Gamlingay Village College | Academy |
| Hinchingbrooke, Huntingdon | Academy |
| Hampton Gardens | Academy. This is Peterborough school - catchment school for Cambridgeshire children living in Yaxley. |
| Impington Village College | Academy |
| Linton Village College | Academy |
| Littleport Community College | Academy |
| Longsands Academy, St Neots | Academy |
| Melbourn Village College | Academy |
| Neale-Wade Community College, March | Academy |
| Nene Park Academy | Academy. This is a Peterborough school - catchment school for Cambridgeshire children living in the catchment area of Elton Primary School. |
| Netherhall, Cambridge | Academy |
| North Cambridge Academy | Academy |
| Northstowe Academy | Academy |
| Parkside Community College, Cambridge | Academy |
| Sawston Village College | Academy |
| Sawtry Community College | Academy |
| Sir Harry Smith Community College, Whittlesey | Academy |
| Soham Village College | Academy |
| St Bede's Inter-church, Cambridge | Academy |
| Stratton Upper School | Academy. A Central Bedfordshire school - catchment school for Cambridgeshire children living in Gamlingay. |
| St Ivo, St Ives | Academy |
| St Peter's, Huntingdon | Academy |
| Swavesey Village College | Academy |
| Thomas Clarkson Community College | Academy |
| Trumpington Community College | Academy |
| University Technical College, Cambridge | University Technical College |
| Witchford Village College | Academy |

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The School Admissions Code is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

The School Admissions Regulations 2012 are available at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/8/contents/made>