Cambridgeshire County Council

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA)

DETERMINED SCHEME FOR CO-ORDINATION OF PRIMARY ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

1 Introduction

1.1 All local authorities (LA) are required[1] to formulate a scheme to co-ordinate admissions during the normal admission round to maintained primary and secondary schools (including academies but excluding special schools and maintained nursery schools) within their area.

Co-ordination for September 2025

1.2 Cambridgeshire County Council (LA) will notify the Secretary of State for Education by 28 February 2024 that agreement to its co-ordinated scheme for admissions has been secured and has provided them 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 continue to set and apply their own oversubscription criteria.

2 Aims of the Primary 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) Regulations2012 No.8

3 The Scheme

3.1 The scheme shall:

- apply to all maintained including community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation and academy primary schools in the LA area;
- 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 primary admissions process, the application procedure and containing information relating to every Cambridgeshire maintained primary, infant and junior school, specifying the criteria by which the admission authority for each school shall determine whether a child is to be granted, or refused, admission. This guidance will be available on the LA website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions no later than 11 September;
- provide a single on-line application form enabling a parent living in LA area to apply for up to three primary[2] 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 (16 April, or next working day, where this is a weekend or bank holiday) a single offer of a primary 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 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 Cambridgeshire, the LA will have regard to any information provided by another LA (co-ordination) 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 Cambridgeshire 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, either Reception Year (for all infant and primary schools); Year 3 (for all junior (KS2) schools) or Year 5 to other local authority area Middle Schools – the normal admission round. This scheme will apply to all admission authorities in the LA area. (Note Cambridgeshire does not have any Middle Schools).

4.2. Applications received for children transferring to Reception, Junior or Middle 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 should apply when the transfer group opens.

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."

[2] Within this scheme, 'primary' refers to any school with an initial year of intake between Reception and Year 6.

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:

> Early Years Settings, Primary and Infant schools in respect of admission to Reception; and Infant schools in respect of transfer to Junior school

4.6 This information will allow settings and schools to support the parents of children who are due to start or transfer to the school the following September. The Admissions Information is available online and will include information and guidance explaining the operation of the co-ordinated scheme and advice on completing the application form.

4.7 The on-line facility is available at: **www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions**

4.8 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, and whether or not the child is Child in Care (CiC) or was previously a Child in Care (PCiC), but ceased to be so by reason of adoption, a care arrangements order or special guardianship order, or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

4.9 The application form will allow parents to express a preference for up to three schools, to rank the preferences in order.

Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

4.10 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. This will include any criteria relating to church attendance.

4.11 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.

4.12 Information on which schools may require a SIF will be provided in the guide for parents and on the website, where copies of the SIF will be available for download from the school websites.

4.13 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 being applied for by the national closing date. Any forms, which are submitted to the LA, will be forwarded to the relevant school.

Processing Applications

4.14 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

4.15 An “on-time” application is an online, postal application or emailed application/preference change, submitted and received by the local authority admissions team, or a Cambridgeshire school by 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.

Late Applications

4.16 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

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

Request to Change Preferences

4.18 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 in appendix 1) applies for such changes.

4.19 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 LA webpages, or by contacting the School Admissions Team. The new application will replace any previous application(s) made. 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 waiting 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)

4.20 Applications received for children of UK Service Personnel will be accepted in accordance with the requirements of 2.21 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 2.21 of the

School Admissions Code provided this received by the second deadline date specified in the timetable in **appendix 1**.

Applicants Moving into Cambridgeshire

4.21 Applications submitted after the closing date but before the second deadline, will only be accepted and treated as having been received "on time" where a parent can demonstrate a valid reason for not meeting the closing date in accordance with recommendations within the School Admissions Code. This will include parents moving into the LA area from other parts of England and Wales, who have made an on-time application to the local authority admissions team in which they previously live.

All Preferences Equal

4.22 Parental preferences will be ranked by the relevant authority within the LA area according to the oversubscription criteria for the relevant school. The order of preference will not affect this ranking as the system operated is one where 'all preferences are equal'.

4.23 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

4.24 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 waiting 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 waiting 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 child's name will be placed on the waiting list for first, second and third preference schools ranked according to their oversubscription criteria.

Co-ordination with Other Local Authorities

4.25 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

4.26 Parents will receive one offer of a school place. Offer letters or emails, 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

4.27 Parents are required to accept/refuse the allocation of a school place within 10 school days of the offer 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. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that contact is made with the applicant.

Refusing an offer

4.28 **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 (16 April)

4.29 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 17 April and 31 August for reception places and junior/middle transfer). This will ensure that places which become available are re-allocated effectively and duplicate offers are avoided.

5. Waiting Lists

5.1. Waiting lists for all oversubscribed primary schools will be maintained by the LA until 31 December. Waiting lists are held in strict oversubscription criteria order. Applicants will be ranked according to each individual school's oversubscription criteria. Own admissions authority schools who process their own 'in year' admissions will from the 1st September take over the waiting lists and allocate directly.

5.2 After the offer date there will be no distinction between 'on-time' and 'late' applications on waiting 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 waiting list.

5.4 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 waiting list for that school, the original offer will remain and the new offer will be provisional until accepted. 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 within 10 days to remove them from the higher preference school's waiting list.

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

Primary Admissions – Timetable for Admissions 2025-2026

DATE	EVENT
By 11 September	Application process goes live. On-line application facility opens, composite prospectus are available on-line and in hard copy on request. Hard copy application forms are available on request.
	LA Admissions Team sends information to all registered Early Years settings in Cambridgeshire information to be forwarded to the parents of children due to start school in the 2025-2026 school year.
By 9 December	Email to Cambridgeshire Infant schools and Early Years Settings with reminder letter to be issued to all children due to start school or to transfer to Junior school
On or by 6 January	Email to Cambridgeshire Infant schools with reminder letter to be issued to all children due to start school or to transfer to Junior school
15 January 2025	**CLOSING DATE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS AND SIFS (to be classed as 'on-time')** Please see point 4.15
24 January	All applications collected by schools must be received by the LA Admissions Team.
31 January	Final date change requests linked to changes of address and applications from UK Service Personnel will be accepted (Second Deadline)
17 February	LA sends details of all applications to neighbouring LA's
3 March	LA sends details of all applications to own Admission Authority Schools with non- standard criteria.
	Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academy schools send reminder letters to parents who have not submitted any required SIF, apply their own criteria and rank the preferences received.
17 February	SAT Team must have informed pupils with an EHCP of the school named in their statement.
17 March	Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academy schools send the LA their lists ranked according to criteria.
2 April	Final data exchange with other LAs
7 April	LA processes applications following exchange of data with other LAs and criteria ranking and begins final allocation process
10 April	All allocations completed.
	LA notifies final allocation details are on the portal to all Cambridgeshire primary Schools
	Infant schools receive details via portal of which Junior Schools their children have been allocated
	LA prints all offer letters via post room.
16 April 2025	**NATIONAL PRIMARY OFFER DATE** Email confirmation/Offer letters sent to parents via Royal Mail by 2nd class post, or by email in cases where the parent has applied online
	Parents asked to return a reply slip if they do not wish to take up the offered place.
	Parents also informed of right of appeal against any refusal and to whom to appeal. Places declined by parents are allocated to those on the reserve list in order of ranking.
17 April 2025	Vacancies arising as a result of offers being refused by parents will be offered to children at top of reserve lists created following National Offer Date

1 May 2025	**No further changes to preference or allocation from reserve lists will be processed or made until offer have been made as part of Second Round**
2 May	LA processes applications received between 16 January and 2 May 2025 (Second Round)
14 May	Deadline for parents to submit appeal forms in order to ensure appeal is heard within 40 school days
19 May	LA issues offer letters by 2nd class post to those parents whose application was considered in Second Round including places to children on a reserve list where a place has become available.
20 May – 31 August	LA processes all late applications received after 3 May 2025 on an individual basis in order of the date the application was received.
3 June	Junior/Y3 only Offers are sent by 2nd class post to parents of children who are known to the LA for whom an application has not been submitted.
15 July	Statutory deadline by which all appeals submitted by 14 May 2025 must be heard.
	Allocation list available on the school's portal.
1 September	In Year Co-ordination commences

Appendix 2

PRIMARY ADMISSION AUTHORITIES IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridgeshire LA	**On behalf of all community and voluntary controlled primary schools**
Abbots Ripton	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Alderman Jacobs, Whittlesey	Academy
All Saints, March	Academy Inter-church
Babraham	Academy
Bar Hill	Academy
Barton	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Bottisham	Academy
Bourn	Academy
Buckden	Academy
Burrowmoor, March	Academy
Bury	Academy
Cavalry	Academy
Chesterton, Cambridge	Academy
Cromwell Academy	Academy
Cromwell CC Primary	Academy
Crosshall Infant, St Neots	Academy
Crosshall Junior, St Neots	Academy
Ditton Lodge	Academy
Downham Feoffees	Academy
Earith	Academy
Elm P	Academy
Elm Road	Academy
Elsworth P	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Elton	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Ely St. Mary's Junior	Academy
Ermine Street, Alconbury Weald	Academy
Farcet	Academy
Fawcett, Cambridge	Foundation (in Federation)
Fen Ditton	Academy
Gamlingay VCP School	Academy
Girton Glebe	Academy
Glebelands	Academy
Godmanchester Community Academy	Academy
Godmanchester Bridge	Academy
Gorefield	Academy
Gt & Lt Shelford	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Great Staughton	Academy
Great Wilbraham	Academy
Guilden Morden	Academy
Guyhirn	Academy
Hartford I	Academy
Hartford J	Academy
Hatton Park, Longstanton	Academy

Histon & Impington Park Primary	Academy
Histon & Impington Brook Primary	Academy
Holme	Academy
Icknield	Foundation with a trust
Isle of Ely	Academy
Jeavons Wood, Cambourne	Academy
Kennett	Academy
Kimbolton	Academy
Kingsfield	Academy
Lantern	Academy
Leverington	Academy
Linton Infant	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Linton Heights J	Academy
Little Thetford	Academy
Marleigh Primary	Academy
Meadow, Balsham	Academy
Mepal and Witcham	Academy
Middlefield, St Neots	Academy
Millfield	Academy
Milton P	Academy
Murrow	Academy
Nene Infant, Wisbech	Academy
New Road, Whittlesey	Academy
Northstowe CC Primary Phase	Academy
Oakington	Academy
Offord	Academy
Orchards P	Academy
Park Lane P	Academy
Park Street, Cambridge	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Pathfinder P, Northstowe	Academy
Peckover, Wisbech	Academy
Petersfield, Orwell	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Queen Edith, Cambridge	Foundation (in Federation)
Queen Emma, Cambridge	Foundation (in Federation)
Ramnoth Junior, Wisbech	Academy
Ramsey J	Academy
Ridgefield, Cambridge	Foundation
Round House, St Neots	Academy
Sawtry J	Academy
Spinning I	Academy
St Albans, Cambridge	Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic
St Andrew's, Soham	Academy
St Anne's, Godmanchester	Voluntary Aided Church of England
St Helen's, Bluntisham	Foundation
St John's, Huntingdon	Academy
St Laurence, Cambridge	Academy
St Luke's, Cambridge	Academy
St Mary's, St Neots	Academy
St Paul's, Cambridge	Voluntary Aided Church of England

St Peter's Junior, Wisbech	Academy
St Philip's, Cambridge	Voluntary Aided Church of England
Somersham	Academy
Spaldwick	Academy
Stapleford	Academy
Stilton	Academy
Swaffham Bulbeck	Academy
Swaffham Prior	Academy
Teversham	Voluntary Aided Church of England
The Galfrid	Academy
The Shade, Soham	Academy
The Vine, Cambourne	Voluntary Inter Church Aided
The Weatheralls	Academy
Thomas Eaton P, Wimblington	Academy
Thongsley Fields	Academy
Thriplow	Academy
Trumpington Meadows	Foundation (in Federation)
Trumpington Park	Academy
Upwood	Academy
University of Cambridge	Academy
Warboys	Academy
Westwood	Academy
Wheatfields, St Ives	Foundation
William de Yaxley Junior	Academy
Winhills, St Neots	Academy
Wintringham	Academy
Wisbech St Mary	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