London Borough of Bexley

Consultation and Determination of Admission Arrangements 2027/2028

Information and Guidance for all Own Admission Authority Schools and Academies

All admissions arrangements **must** be in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the **School Admissions Code 2021**, which is available at the below link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001050/School_admissions_code_2021.pdf

It is essential that all admissions authorities read and understand the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and relevant legislation in relation to how admissions works and their roles and responsibilities. If there are any questions, please email:

doreen.pendergast@bexley.gov.uk

Consultation/Determination for 2027/2028 admission arrangements:

Consultation and determination of admissions arrangements **must** be undertaken in accordance with **section 1 (paragraphs 1.45-1.53)** of the School Admissions Code 2021.

If a school/admission authority is looking to make any changes to their arrangements for the 2026/2027 admissions year (other than an increase of PAN or changes to meet mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021), then consultation of such changes must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and the below timetable.

Task	Date
Consultation period ***(consultation must run for at least 6 weeks during this period)*** ***(latest date that a consultation can begin to meet 6 weeks is 21 December 2024)***	Between 1 October 2026 and 31 January 2027
Arrangements **must** be determined	By 28 February 2027
Determined arrangements (plus any Supplementary Information Form (SIF) if applicable) **must** be provided to London Borough of Bexley	By 15 March 2027

Do you need to consult?

- You **must** consult if you are making **any** changes

NB: *the only exceptions to this is an increase to the Published Admission Number (PAN). For increases of PAN, admissions authorities* ***must*** *inform the local authority (LBB) of any intention to increase PAN, in accordance with paragraph 1.4 of the School Admissions Code 2021*

- If you have had the same arrangements for 7 years, you must still consult even if you are not making changes.

When you do not need to consult?

- If you are not making any changes, you needn't consult. You must still determine a set of arrangements for 2027/2028 (ensuring relevant dates, etc. are updated) in accordance with the dates above.

As part of any consultation, please ensure that London Borough of Bexley is provided with a copy of your consultation document (which must include the start and finish dates and how responses can be made) as soon as your consultation starts. This is mandatory.

Once you have determined your 2027/2028 arrangements you must ensure that London Borough of Bexley is provided with a copy of the final determined arrangements no later than 15 March 2025

If you are not consulting this year and just re-determining the same arrangements, we would ask that you provide determined arrangements as soon as they are available, but no later than 15 March 2027. This must include any supplementary information form if your school uses such a form to gather information.

Please email all admissions arrangements documents to:

Doreen.pendergast@bexley.gov.uk

Mandatory requirements for Admission Arrangements

All schools and academies must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school. These must be set and determined in strict accordance with the requirements of the School Admission Code 2021.

The LA will monitor compliance with the following requirements for all Bexley schools

Groups with whom consultation must be undertaken:

Admission Authority type	Who to consult with

All admission authorities	1) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen (this can be covered by an advert in a local paper) 2) A copy of the proposed arrangements must be published on the school's website 3) parents of pupils currently attending the relevant school [e.g., through pupil mail] 4) Home Local Authority (London Borough of Bexley) 5) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions; 6) all other admission authorities within the relevant area
	(except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools) Bexley LA will share this information through the strategic education partnership website; 7) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority (Bexley LA will share this; and 8) in the case of faith schools, the body representing the religion or religious denomination.
In addition to the above:	
Church of England Voluntary Aided Governing Bodies	• The Diocesan Board before consulting anyone else • Any other LA within 5 miles of a secondary school or 2 miles if a primary school • Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in Bexley (primary schools need only consult with other primary schools, secondary schools must consult primary and secondary schools)
Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Governing Bodies	• the body or person representing their religion or religious denomination. • Any other LA within 5 miles of a secondary school or 2 miles if a primary school • Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in Bexley, Academy; Foundation, VA and community. Primary schools need only consult with other primary schools, secondary schools must consult primary and secondary schools.
Foundation Governing Bodies	• Any other LA within 5 miles of a secondary school or 2 miles if a primary school • Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in Bexley, Academy; Foundation, VA and community. Primary schools need only consult with other primary schools, secondary schools must consult primary and secondary schools.

Academies (including Free Schools)	• Any other LA within 5 miles of a secondary school (or 2 miles if a primary school) Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in Bexley, Academy; Foundation, VA and community schools. Primary schools need only consult with other primary schools, secondary schools must consult primary and secondary schools. • If you are a multi-academy Trust, the local governing bodies (or if there is no local governing body, the advisory body) of any academies within the Trust located in the relevant area.

For the duration of the consultation period, the admissions authority must**:**

- publish a copy of their full proposed admission arrangements (including the proposed PAN) on their website together with details of the person within the admissions authority to whom comments may be sent and the areas on which comments are not sought.
- Admissions authorities **must** also send, when requested, a copy of the proposed admissions arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed above inviting comment. Failure to consult effectively will deem the admission arrangements non-compliant with the Code which may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals.

Determination

The Governing Body for each admissions authority **must** meet and minute the determination of the admission arrangements by 28 February every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required.

Publication

Once determined, admission arrangements **must** be published on the school website by 15 March 2027 and **must** be displayed for the whole year to which they apply (e.g., currently the 2027/2028 arrangements must be published from at least 15 March 2026 until the end of the 2026/2027 school year).

You **must** also send a copy of your full, determined arrangements for 2027/2028 to the London Borough of Bexley (at the email address provided above) as soon as possible but **no later than** 15 March 2027.

You **must** also notify the bodies listed above at 1 to 8 in the table above.

Admission authorities for faith schools **must** also send a copy of their arrangements to the body or person representing their religion or religious denomination.

Changes to PAN (Published Admission Number)

Individual admission authorities are not required to consult on their PAN where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN.

All admissions authorities **must** consult where they propose a **decrease to the PAN.**

Where an admission authority has determined a PAN that is higher than in previous years, they **must** notify the local authority that they have done so.

If, at any time following determination of the PAN, an admission authority decides that it is able to admit above its PAN, it **must** notify the local authority in good time to allow the local authority to

deliver its co-ordination responsibilities effectively. The Council should be informed at the earliest opportunity when a decision is taken to admit over PAN, so there can be sufficient time for it to be adjusted on the system in time to be included in the admissions coordination process.

Admission authorities may also admit above their PAN in-year. Any admissions above the PAN as set out in the previous sentence will not constitute an increase to the PAN. However, primary and Infant schools **must** be aware of class size regulations for key stage one where classes **must** not be more than 30.

What must be consulted on:
Admission authorities (if required to consult), **must** consult on the full details of the admission arrangements they propose to determine which **must** be consistent with the co-ordinated scheme operating in the area for that year.

Oversubscription Criteria

Paragraph 1.6 of the School Admissions Code 2021 states:
*"The admission authority for the school **must** set out in their arrangements the criteria against which places will be allocated at the school when there are more applications than places and the order in which the criteria will be applied. All children whose Education Health and Care Plan names the school **must** be admitted. If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants **must** be offered a place (with the exception of designated grammar schools – see paragraph 2.8 of this Code)."*

Paragraph 1.7 of the School Admissions Code 2021 states:
*"All schools **must** have oversubscription criteria for each 'relevant age group' and the highest priority **must** be given, unless otherwise provided in this Code, to looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order). All references to previously looked after children in this Code mean such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Oversubscription criteria **must** then be applied to all other applicants in the order set out in the arrangements."*

A relevant age group to which children are normally admitted, i.e. Reception; Year 3 admittance for Junior Schools; Year 7 for Secondary Transfer and Year 12 (sixth form). Each relevant age group **must** have admission arrangements, including an admission number and the highest priority **must** be given, unless otherwise provided in the School Admissions Code, to CLA (see below).

Paragraph 1.8 of the School Admissions Code 2021 states:
*"Oversubscription criteria **must** be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. Admission authorities **must** ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs, and that other policies around school uniform or school trips do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their*

*child. Admission arrangements **must** include an effective, clear, and fair tie-breaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated."*

Child looked after (CLA):
A 'child looked after' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order (90) including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Section 90 An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Suggested CLA Definition –

"A Child looked after (CLA) is:
a) in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. These children **must** still be "CLA" when the child starts school unless (b) applies, or
b) a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order (90) including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted."

Paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2021 states:

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

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

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

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

introduce any new selection by ability;

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 schoolrun nursery are given priority for admission to Reception;

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;

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;

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;

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 character22 may take account of religious activities, as laid out by the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination23);

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;

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 below;

name fee-paying independent schools as feeder schools;

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;

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

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

The Admission Code does not give a definitive list of acceptable oversubscription criteria.
It is for admission authorities to decide which criteria would be most suitable to the school according to the local circumstances. Set out below are the most common, but please note these are not mandatory.

Medical and Social:
A large proportion of Governing Bodies of Academies; Voluntary Aided; and Free Schools in Bexley already include this as a criterion in their admission arrangements.

Where this is included, or if a school wishes to consult on including this as a criterion, the LA suggests the following wording be used:

"In exceptional circumstances there is discretion to admit children on the grounds of their or their family's acute medical or social need for that particular school and who would not otherwise qualify for admission. The application must be supported by a letter from a hospital consultant, the special support service, social worker or similar professional, setting out the reasons why the school is the only one to meet the child's needs, before an admission decision is made. The admission decision will be considered by the relevant school/academy. Supporting evidence must be provided no later than the closing date for applications".

Siblings at the school:
Sibling criterion is not mandatory, but Admission authorities must state clearly in their arrangements what they mean by "sibling" (e.g., whether this includes step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address or siblings who are former pupils of the school).

The Council would advise that the sibling should be on roll of the school at the time of application and at the time the younger child starts the school. For example, you may want to not include Year 6 siblings for a primary/junior co-ordinated admissions, as they will not be at the school when the younger child starts the following September,

The example definition in the School Admissions Code is:

"Sibling is defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers and sister, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters."

Feeder Schools:
Some schools give priority to siblings of pupils attending another state funded school with which they have close links (for example, schools on the same site, i.e., Infant to Junior). Where this is the case, this priority must be set out clearly in the arrangements.

Admission authorities may wish to name a primary or middle school as a feeder school. The selection of a feeder school or schools as an oversubscription criterion must be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.

Selection by ability or aptitude:
All selective schools must publish the entry requirements for a selective place and the process for such selection.

Children of staff at the school:
Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children of staff but can only be in either or both of the following circumstances:

- where the member of staff has been employed at the relevant school (and not part of a multi academy group) for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or

- the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Please note:
The DfE advise that children of staff can only be applied to the relevant school and NOT across a number of schools within the trust. This has recently been confirmed in an Adjudicator decision.

Distance from the school:
Admission authorities must clearly set out how distance from home to the school will be measured, making clear how the "home" address will be determined and the point in the school from which all distances are measured.

The following statement can be included to further define the arrangements especially in cases where parents have shared responsibility for a child following the breakdown of their relationship and the child lives for part of the week with each parent:

"Home" being where the child normally resides as their only or principal residence. Addresses involved in child minding (professional or relatives) will not be considered. Parents will be asked to provide documentary evidence to confirm an address and parental responsibility. The child's principal residence should be where they sleep for the majority of the school nights and where the child is registered as living – i.e. Doctors or if relevant benefits.

The following must be included in the Admission Arrangements for all admissions authorities, to ensure you meet the consultation requirements of the Code.

Admission of Children outside of their normal age group.
Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child has experienced problems such as ill health.

The School/Academy/Trust will consider applications outside of the child's normal age group on an individual basis taking into account any information about the child's academic, social, and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. Schools should particularly consider whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group. Parents wishing to apply for a place outside of the normal age group should apply with their chronological age group but write separately to the Head teacher to explore the options for admissions outside of the normal age range. Further advice is available from the local authority.

In addition, **Infant and Primary Schools only must** include:

Summer born children (deferring entry to Reception until September 2027)
The term "summer born children" relates to all children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August).Parents of "summer born children" may decide that they want to delay their child starting school until the September after the child has reached compulsory school age (CSA) into

Reception Year instead of Year 1. There is no automatic right to this, but when schools consider requests, they must make decisions in the best interest of the child. Recent Ombudsman cases have ruled favourably where parent/carer requests have been denied due to the fact it is rarely in a child's best interest to miss a year of education.

The key point is that the Parent has a right to decide when their child starts school if this is before statutory school age, and the admission authority decides which year group is in the best interest of the child. Government guidance states admission authorities must make decisions based on a child's individual needs and abilities and consider whether these can best be met by them starting school in reception or year one. Governing bodies should also take account of the potential impact of being admitted into year one without first having completed the reception year. The main issue is "in the best interest of the child" which is difficult for governing bodies to assess as they have no prior knowledge of the child. Therefore, it is recommended that governing bodies give greater consideration to these requests.

Suggested inclusion

Admission of Summer Born Children outside of their Normal Age Range

Parents of summer born children may request that their child is admitted the following year outside of his or her normal age range into Reception Year instead of Year 1, however there is no automatic right to this. Any place already achieved for the child in Reception Year in the usual way cannot be deferred (i.e. held for that child) for the duration of that school year, and if deferral is agreed parents will need to re-apply for admission the following year.

The school/academy will make a decision, having taken into account the circumstances of each case, together with the opinion of the Head teacher. Where the request is agreed by the academy, the application will be considered with all other applications in the usual way, applying the oversubscription criteria as necessary.

Other points to note and consider:

1. Waiting lists

Each admission authority must maintain a waiting list for at least one term in the academic year of admission. This arrangement is published through The Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements for both Primary and Secondary.

Schools **must** include the fact it will do this in their school's published admission arrangements, making clear that children will be ranked in the same order as the published oversubscription criteria.

Where schools do not intend to maintain a waiting list for age groups outside of the main admission years (i.e. Reception, Year 3 for Junior Schools and Year 7) they must publish how applications will be considered. They must still apply their oversubscription criteria and tie break as published in the published admissions policy. It cannot apply subjective considerations such as a child's 'need' for a place – this would breach the requirement in paragraph 14 of the Code for an admission policy to be clear, fair and easily understood by parents.

2. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are dealt with under a separate process by the Special Educational Needs team.

Appeals for Children with an EHCP are dealt with by a SEN Tribunal.

Admissions arrangements should make it clear that children with an EHCP will be admitted to the school and the PAN reduced accordingly prior to the application of oversubscription criteria. Consequently, pupils with an EHCP should not be included in the over subscription criteria.

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 states that schools must take into account the EHCP pupil numbers and adjust their PAN accordingly. Therefore to avoid any challenge in the future, it is recommended that the following statement should be included in the Admissions arrangements for all schools.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are dealt with under a separate process by the Special Educational Needs team. All pupils with an EHCP naming the school will be admitted. The Pan will be reduced by the number of pupils with an EHCP naming the school and the oversubscription criteria will be used to prioritise the applications for the remaining places.

3. Fair Access

In addition, all admission authorities are advised to include the following statement in their school admission arrangements, again this is to protect schools from any challenge especially at appeal:

Children directed via the Fair Access Protocol or those children in local authority care without a school place, will take precedence over any child already on the school waiting list, and this includes admitting children over the published admission number where appropriate.

4. Allocating places

Admission authorities must allocate places on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, and a decision to offer or refuse admission must not be made by one individual in an admission authority. Where the school is its own admission authority the whole governing body, or an admissions committee established by the governing body, must make such decisions.

5. Appeals

All schools must include details on how to appeal against not offering a place.

Suggested inclusion

Appeals Should a parent/carer wish to appeal against the Governors' decision not to admit their child they should register their intention to do so, by sending a letter addressed to the School c/o The Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel.

6th Form Arrangements:

Following recent cases considered by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator the following details are advised to be included in your arrangements.

Suggested Inclusion:

Admission to Year 12

The capacity for Year 12 students is [ ] places. Places will be automatically offered to current students who wish to continue to 6th form, who meet the general Sixth Form entry requirements of at least [ ] at GCSE; these students do not need to complete an application form. The minimum number of places available for external candidates (i.e., the PAN) is [ ].

When current students take up places elsewhere or do not meet the academic standard required for entry to A level courses, additional places will be offered to external candidates up to the Year 12 capacity of in accordance with the required general Sixth Form entry requirements of at least [ ] at GCSE.

In order to achieve entry into our Sixth Form, both internal and external students must meet the general entry requirements of [ ] at GCSE and in addition the required entry criteria for each of the courses they wish to study in the Sixth Form. In most cases this will be at least a [ ] in their chosen subjects. Please see the Sixth Form Prospectus for entry criteria for individual courses. Students studying other qualifications should contact the school for guidance.

In the event of over-subscription, the criteria set out above at (admission criteria for Year 7) will apply.

Students and their parents have a statutory right of appeal against the decision to refuse them admission to the Sixth Form. Those wishing to appeal should register their intention to do so, by sending a letter addressed to the School c/o The Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel within 30 days of the GCSE results day.

Objections to Admission Arrangements:

Anyone may object to a school's admission arrangements. The 'objection period' runs until **15 May 2027**. Objections are made directly to the Schools Adjudicator, with objectors setting out their arguments against the proposed changes. The Adjudicator has discretion to consider late objections. Objections can be made to most aspects of the school's admission arrangements but no objections can be made to an increase in admission number or where it remains the same, nor to any derogation from the Code agreed between an Academy Trust and the Secretary of State which is written into an academy or free school's funding agreement.

Please refer to paragraphs 3.1–3.5 of the School Admissions Code 2021 for further information.

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