

Proposed Changes to Bolton Council's Admissions Policy for 2018 admission

Proposal One

Under the current admission arrangements the final category is based on proximity where a ranking value is determined based on the following algorithm

Distance to preferred school minus distance to nearest or next nearest school + 100 = Ranking Value.

All distances are measured by the shortest walking route from the address point to the designated main school gate

All voluntary-aided schools are excluded as nearest/next nearest schools

The ranking values are then ranked from lowest to highest to determine priority for places.

This method is difficult to explain and more difficult for parents, carers and independent appeal panel members to understand. The walking routes are often challenged and disputed by parents at appeal and through the Local Government Ombudsman.

This method of determining a priority based on proximity to the preferred school is unique to Bolton as other Local Authorities and voluntary-aided schools and academies apply a single distance measurement based either on straight line distance or shortest walking route.

It is proposed that the proximity criteria is amended to determine priority based on the straight line distance between the home address and the designated main school gate with those living closer to the school having highest priority for a place. This method is much clearer and simpler to explain and understand. It also eliminates potential challenge regarding walking routes and it complies fully with the School Admissions Code and is commonly used by other local and national admission authorities.

Proposal Two

Bolton Council currently have a priority criteria for "vulnerable children" as follows

"Children who are considered as "vulnerable" whose application for the preferred school is supported by the Assistant Director this will include

- ***Children for whom there is a child protection plan or has been within a 12 month period***
- ***Children who have had a period in care within 2 years of the admission application and are still receiving social care services***
- ***Children who are at risk of becoming looked after***
- ***Children living in temporary accommodation due to fleeing domestic violence and the area for rehousing has been identified"***

This criteria has never been used to offer a place to any child in the normal admission rounds and therefore obviates the need for it to remain particularly as the School Admissions Code now requires all admission authorities to give highest priority to "Looked After Children" and "Previously Looked After Children" and the in-year fair access protocols would apply whenever necessary.

It is proposed therefore to limit this to “***Children for whom there is a child protection plan or has been within a 12 month period***”

Proposal Three

The Council’s current in year admission arrangements currently allow all parents to apply at any time for their child to change school as part of the In year Admission Arrangements.

A recent review panel of the secondary Fair Access protocols recommended that a restriction be placed on changing school in Year 10 and Year 11. It was considered that to move school at this stage of a child’s education is not beneficial educationally to the child concerned or the school receiving the new child.

It is therefore proposed that applications for Year 10 and Year11 will be limited to those new to Bolton or those permanently excluded.

**BOLTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
PROPOSED ADMISSION POLICY FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY-CONTROLLED
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Council will admit all children with an Education, Health and Care Plan, in whose Plan the school is named

The proposed policy for admission to community and controlled primary schools is as follows.

If the school is over-subscribed the following criteria will be applied to all applications in priority order.

1. Children in Public Care (Looked after children) including adopted children who were previously in care and children who leave care under a special guardianship or residence order. A "Looked after Child" is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.
2. Children for whom there is a child protection plan or has been within a 12 month period
3. Children who will have older siblings in years Reception to Year 6 of the preferred school at the time of application and at the date of admission. Sibling includes full, step, half, foster and adopted brothers and sisters living at the same address.
4. Children who have strong Church connections where the school is a Church school.

Parents must complete the supplementary form attached to the application form as evidence that the family and the child are active worshipping members at the church to which the school is affiliated. Active worshipping members of the church will be those persons who worship at least once a month sustained over a period of a year prior to the closing date for applications.

5. Children who suffer from some medical condition or disability, which makes it, better for them to attend that school rather than another. Places will only be offered under this criterion if the child has a certified medical condition with strong professional supporting evidence confirming that existing exceptional problems with the child's health would be seriously exacerbated if a place were not made at the preferred school. Parents applying under this criterion must provide a letter from the child's GP/Consultant setting out the reasons why the school is the most suitable school and details of the child's medical condition. Medical evidence must be submitted by 15th January 2016. Evidence received after this date will not be taken into consideration
6. Proximity (Where you live).

Children who live nearest the school (geographical proximity). Under this category, the remaining places will be offered to children who live nearest to the preferred school. The distance will be measured in a straight line using Routefinder, a computerised mapping system which measures from the point on the highway nearest to the centre of the home property and the designated main entrance to the school.

Tie-breaker

If category (2), (3) or (4) is oversubscribed, geographical proximity (as set out in category (5)) will be used as the 'tie-breaker' to decide between the remaining cases. If after measuring distances it is still not possible to decide on the child/ren to be offered admission (for example two children living in the same block of flats or in the same house) the Local Authority's system of a random draw will determine which of the children can be offered a place. The draw will take place at the Local Authority's offices and the name(s) will be drawn by a Local Authority Officer who is independent of the admissions process.

Priority for Twins/Multiple births

Where a single place remains at a school and the application being considered is for twins (etc.) the Council will allocate above the admission number to accommodate each child.

**BOLTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
PROPOSED ADMISSION POLICY FOR COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Council will admit all children with an Education, Health and Care Plan, in whose Plan the school is named

The current policy for admission to community and controlled secondary schools is as follows.

All parents will be provided with an application form on which they will be asked to express 3 preferences in order of priority for a primary school. Places will be allocated up the published admission number for each school.

If the school is over-subscribed the following criteria will be applied to all applications in priority order.

1. Children in Public Care (Looked after children) including adopted children who were previously in care and children who leave care under a special guardianship or residence order. A "Looked after Child" is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.
2. Children for whom there is a child protection plan or has been within a 12 month period
3. Children who will have older siblings in years 7 to 11 of the preferred school at the time of application and the date of admission. Siblings can include full, step, half, foster and adopted brothers and sisters living at the same address.
4. Children who suffer from some medical condition or disability, which makes it, better for them to attend that school rather than another. Places will only be offered under this criterion if the child has a certified medical condition with strong professional supporting evidence confirming that existing exceptional problems with the child's health would be seriously exacerbated if a place were not made at the preferred school. Medical evidence MUST be provided at the time of application. Parents applying under this criterion must provide a letter from the child's GP/Consultant setting out the reasons why the school is the most suitable school and details of the child's medical condition. Medical evidence must be submitted by 31st October 2015. Evidence received after this date will not be taken into consideration
5. Proximity (Where you live).

Children who live nearest the school (geographical proximity). Under this category, the remaining places will be offered to children who live nearest to the preferred school. The distance will be measured in a straight line using Routefinder, a computerised mapping system which measures from the point on the highway nearest to the centre of the home property and the designated main entrance to the school

Tie-breaker

If category (2) or (3) is oversubscribed, geographical proximity (as set out in category (4)) will be used as the 'tie-breaker' to decide between the remaining cases. If after

measuring distances it is still not possible to decide on the child/ren to be offered admission (for example two children living in the same block of flats or in the same house) the Local Authority's system of a random draw will determine which of the children can be offered a place. The draw will take place at the Local Authority's offices and the name(s) will be drawn by a Local Authority Officer who is independent of the admissions process.

Priority for Twins/Multiple births

Where a single place remains at a school and the application being considered is for twins (etc.) the Council will allocate above the admission number to accommodate each child.

Proposed Scheme for the Coordination of In-Year Admissions to Primary Schools – September 2017

1. Applicants should contact the Local Authority or the school where they are seeking admission
2. Applications forms are available from:
 1. Pupil & Student Services
 2. Bolton Council website
 3. Schools
3. For Voluntary Aided, Free Schools and Academies applicants may need to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) obtainable from the school which should be returned together with the application form
4. Parent/carer must return the completed application form to the preferred school or the Local Authority (Pupil & Student Services) together with any documentation to support the application.
5. If the application form is returned to the Local Authority the LA will liaise with the school to determine if a place can be offered.
6. If the application is returned to the school and a place is available in the relevant year group the school must contact the Local Authority (Pupil & Student Services) before offering a place so that all applicants can be given due consideration.
7. If the application is returned to the school and the school is full in the relevant year group the school must forward the application to the Local Authority.
8. All applications must be processed within 5 to 10 school days of receipt
9. Where a place can be offered then the school must agree a start date with the parent /carer to admit the student within 5 to 10 school days of the offer being made
10. Where schools are full in the relevant year group, parents must be referred to the Local Authority (Pupil & Student Services). The pupil's name will be added to the waiting lists which will be maintained by the Local Authority. Waiting lists will be prioritised in accordance with the schools published admission criteria
11. The Local Authority (Pupil & Student Services) will provide parents with relevant advice and guidance of the appeals procedures.
12. Schools and academies must inform the Local Authority of the outcome of all applications for admission.
13. All schools and academies must inform the Local Authority of places as and when they become available so that places can be offered to children from the waiting lists

Proposed Scheme for the Coordination of In-Year Admissions to Secondary Schools – September 2017

1. Applicants should contact the Local Authority
2. Applications forms are available from:
 1. Pupil & Student Services
 2. Bolton Council website
3. For Canon Slade School, St James CE Secondary School and Bolton Muslim Girls School applicants may need to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) obtainable from the school which should be returned to the relevant school.
4. Parent/carer must return completed application form to Pupil & Student Services together with any documentation to support the application.
5. The Local Authority will liaise with the school to determine if a place can be offered
6. All applications will be processed within 5 to 10 school days of receipt
7. If a place can be offered then the Local Authority will forward the application details to the school. The school must agree a start date with the parent/carer to admit the student within 5 to 10 school days of the offer being made
8. Where schools are full in the relevant year group, the Local Authority will provide parents with relevant advice and guidance of the appeals procedures.
9. Schools, academies and Bolton UTC must inform the Local Authority of the outcome of all applications for admission.
10. All schools, academies and Bolton UTC must inform the Local Authority of places as and when they become available so that places can be offered to children from the waiting lists
11. Applications for admission into Year 10 and Year 11 will only be considered for those families who have moved into Bolton or those pupils who have been permanently excluded from their school or are placed under the Fair Access Protocols.