

# PRIMARY COORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME

Normal Point of entry 2026/2027



## Introduction

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, requires local authorities to formulate a scheme for coordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in their area. Academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges (UTCs) are required to participate in the coordinated scheme except that in the first year of opening, a free school, studio school or UTC may choose whether to participate in the local qualifying scheme.

This scheme is determined by Plymouth City Council, the local authority for Plymouth.

## Interpretation

### 1. In the scheme:

- **admission arrangements** mean the arrangements for a particular school or schools which govern the procedures and decision making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school;
- **admissions authority** in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the local authority and, in relation to an academy, foundation, free, trust or VA school, means the Board of Governors of that school or the multi academy trust where this applies;
- **eligible for a place** means that a child has been placed on a school's ranked list at such a point which falls within the school's published admission number (PAN);
- **in-year admission** means any application for a place in the first year of entry to an infant, primary or junior school that is received on or after the date specified in Schedule 2, and applications for a place in any other year group received at any time from the commencement of the scheme;
- **local authority (LA)** means the local council. The LA for Plymouth is Plymouth City Council;
- **nearest appropriate school** means the nearest appropriate school to the applicant's home address with a vacancy;
- **PAN** means the published admission number for the year of entry at a school;
- **school** means a maintained community, foundation, free, trust, voluntary aided (VA) school and voluntary controlled school or an academy studio school or UTC (but not a special school);
- **the specified year** means the school year 2026/2027, starting September 2026.

2. The scheme shall be determined and processed in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
3. This scheme applies to all types of state funded infant, primary and junior schools in Plymouth with the exception of special schools and boarding schools. State funded schools include

academies, foundation, free and voluntary aided schools. This scheme will take effect from September 2025 for admissions to primary and junior schools in September 2026.

4. The scheme shall be based on the **equal preferences** system.
5. Where a child is not resident with his or her parent/carer, parental responsibility must be conferred by the parent/carer directly on the person with whom the child is to reside and not on a third party or a commercial or charitable organisation. Where this involves a person who is not a close relative of the child, it is the responsibility of that person to refer the arrangement to social care as a private fostering arrangement.
6. In regard to admissions to schools, the Plymouth School Admissions Team will:
  - Act as champion for children and families;
  - Offer advice to parents and schools;
  - Monitor and challenge the admission arrangements of schools within Plymouth;
  - Operate an admissions scheme (this scheme) for normal point of entry to infant, primary and junior schools in Plymouth;
  - Operate a local in-year admissions scheme to coordinate admissions to school at points outside the normal point of entry in Reception to year 6;
  - Operate a Fair Access policy to ensure that outside the normal admissions round - unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible;
  - Act as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools,
  - Assist schools to rank their applications according to their oversubscription criteria;
  - Manage school waiting lists as required;
  - Support schools in the preparation and presentation of school admission appeals;
  - Liaise with other teams within Plymouth City Council and other LAs in the planning of school places;
  - Report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator on admissions for all schools in Plymouth for which we coordinate admissions;
  - Offer a traded service to academy schools to support them in the delivery of their responsibilities for school admissions.

## **SCHEDULE I**

### **PART I - THE SCHEME**

1. All parents seeking a school place will be required to make a written application for a school place using a common application form. The City Council will take measures to advertise the application process but the onus for making and submitting an application for a school place rests with the parent.
2. The common application form shall be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into:
  - the first year of an infant, primary or junior school
  - any other year group in the case of a new primary school for the first time in the admissions round leading up to the date specified in Schedule 2.

3. The common application form shall be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences, in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 86, by parents/carers resident in Plymouth wishing to express a preference for their child to be admitted to a state funded school in Plymouth (including academy, foundation, free, trust and VA schools), or located in another LA's area (including academy, foundation, free, trust and VA schools).
4. The common application form and the written information that accompanies it shall:
  - a) invite the parent/carer to express up to three preferences by completing the form - including, where relevant, any schools outside the Plymouth area - in rank order of preference;
  - b) invite the parent/carer to give reasons for each preference;
  - c) explain that the parent/carer will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:
    - (i) a place will be offered at the highest ranking, nominated school for which the child is eligible for a place; and
    - (ii) if a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, a place will be offered at an alternative school; and
    - (iii) any refusal of a place applied for will explain clearly why a place has not been allocated and will explain the right and procedure for appeal;
  - d) specify the closing date and where it must be returned.
5. The City Council shall make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the common application form is available on the City Council's website in respect of admissions to year R and to year 3 of a junior school in Plymouth. The website will also display a guide for parents which provides a written explanation of the scheme.
6. The City Council shall make appropriate arrangements and take all reasonable steps to ensure that every parent/carer resident in Plymouth who has a child due to start infant or primary school or who has a child in their last year of infant education has access to a common application form and a written explanation of the application process.
7. All preferences expressed on the common application form are valid applications. The admission authority for a school may require parent/carers to provide supplementary information (SIF), only where the supplementary information is required for admission authority to apply its over-subscription criteria to the application and where the information is not already collected on the common application form.
8. When a school receives supplementary information, it shall not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent/carer has also completed either the City Council common application form or, if resident in another area, their home area's common application form, and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary information is received directly by a school, the school shall inform the City Council so that it can verify whether a common application form or neighbouring area's application form has been received from the parent/carer and, if not, contact the parent/carer to ask them to complete one.

**Applications outside of the chronological age group**

9. Places will normally be offered in the year group according to the child's date of birth, but a parent/carer may submit an application for a year group other than the child's chronological year group. A decision will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent/carer's views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. The admission authority will also take into account the views of the headteacher of the school(s) concerned. Parent/carers must not assume that the decision of one school will transfer with the child to a different school as the decision rests with the individual admission authority.
- (i) In respect of schools for which the City Council is the admission authority or in respect of own admission authorities who have delegated the function to the local authority:
- a decision will be made in conjunction with the School Admissions Support Manager, as to whether an application would be accepted for out of age cohort transfer reviewing the educational, social, and physical needs of the child as demonstrated by the case made;
  - where a request is refused there will be no right of appeal, but the parent may submit a complaint under Plymouth City Council's published Complaints Policy if the parent does not believe that the request was carefully considered, or the decision of the admission authority was reasonable or fair;
- (ii) In respect of other own admission authority schools:
- a decision will be made by the admission authority as to whether an application would be accepted for out of age cohort transfer reviewing the educational, social, and physical needs of the child as demonstrated by the case made;
  - where a request is refused there will be no right of appeal, but the parent may submit a complaint under school's published Complaints Policy if the parent does not believe that the request was carefully considered, or the decision of the admission authority was reasonable or fair;

Where an application is accepted out of age cohort, it will be considered in accordance with the normal admission arrangements.

Parents must not assume that an admission authority's decision to educate out of age cohort will be accepted by another admission authority and that potentially, there may be issues should the child change school.

**Processing common application forms**

10. The closing date for the City Council to receive applications for Year R of an infant or primary school and year 3 of a junior school is as specified in Schedule 2.
11. Completed common application forms for children who live in Plymouth shall be returned to the City Council direct.
12. In the case of duplicate submissions, the later application submitted by the parent/carer will overwrite an earlier submission.

13. Where conflicting preferences are received from more than one parent/carers, the City Council will contact both parties and request that they reach agreement on the school preferences for the child either through mediation or a court order. Neither the admission authority nor the local authority should intervene in the dispute. In the absence of provision of a court order (or other legal grounds) preventing access, the City Council will inform the parent that an application has been made and the schools that have been named as preferences as both parents are entitled to an involvement in decisions about their children. In the unlikely event that no agreement can be reached, and an offer is made to each parent, an offer will not be held open once the child has been physically admitted to another school. Where the outcome of preferences for more than one parent would result in duplicate offers being made for the same school, only one place will be offered for the child.
14. Changes of preference must be submitted in writing; verbal changes will not be accepted. Changes can be made up until the close date for application for inclusion in the first allocation round on 16 April 2026.

### **Determining offers in response to the common application form**

15. The City Council shall act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the common application forms. The City Council shall decide to offer or refuse a place only in response to any preference expressed on the common application form where:
- a) it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or
  - b) an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or
  - c) an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent/carers has nominated.

The City Council shall allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 15 of this Schedule.

16. By the date specified in Schedule 2, where a parent/carers has nominated a school outside Plymouth, the City Council shall also notify the relevant authority by this date.
17. By the date specified in Schedule 2, in the case where the admission authority is undertaking the ranking of applications against the admission criteria, the City Council shall notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, free, trust and VA school of every nomination that has been made for that school. The City Council will forward a report detailing the relevant information contained in the common application form and any supplementary information received by this date, which schools require in order to apply their over-subscription criteria.
18. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the admission authority for each school undertaking the ranking of applications against the admission criteria, shall consider all applications for its school, apply the school's over-subscription criteria (if appropriate), and provide the City Council with a list of those applicants ranked according to the school's over-subscription criteria. Schools who are their own admission authority may, subject to agreement by the City Council, defer this task to the City Council.
19. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the City Council shall match this ranked list against the ranked lists of the other schools nominated and where the child is:
- eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school shall be allocated to the child;

- eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, he or she shall be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference;
  - not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, he or she shall be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.
20. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the City Council shall inform each the infant, primary and junior schools in their area of the pupils to be offered places at the school and inform other LAs of places in Plymouth schools to be offered to their residents.
21. Once the allocation procedure has started, it will not be possible to consider any changes to an application. Any changes would be considered in the next allocation round.
22. On the National Allocation Date (16 April each year or the next working day should 16 April fall on a non-working day), parent/carers shall be notified that they are being offered a place at a school. The notification will include:
- the name of the school at which a place is offered;
  - if appropriate, the reasons why the child is not being offered a place at the other schools nominated on the common application form;
  - if appropriate, information about the statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
  - information about school waiting lists;
  - via the website information on statutory school appeals;
  - a requirement to notify the City Council whether the applicant intends to accept or decline the place allocated to the child.

Allocation emails will be issued by the City Council on behalf of all schools until the date specified in schedule 2 as the end of the coordinated scheme. Individual schools must not send allocation letters/emails. After the co-ordinated scheme ends, the local in-year coordinated scheme comes into force.

23. By the date specified in Schedule 2, parent/carers must notify acceptance of a school place. Failure to notify acceptance may result in withdrawal of the place offered. Parents/carers declining the offer of a place should notify in writing the educational arrangements they plan to provide for their child.
24. Neither the City Council nor any school shall inform any parent/carer before the national allocation date of whether a place will be or has been allocated at any school to any child who is the subject of an application.
25. There is an expectation that each child will start at their allocated school on the first day of term, or, in the case of children starting in the Reception year, the deferred date as agreed between the parent/carer and the school. If they do not enrol and there are no proven medical reasons which prevent attendance, the place will be revoked and reallocated to someone else.

### **Children and young people who are LBGTQ+**

26. Children and young people who are LBGTQ+ should feel able to apply to a school without any restrictions. Where a school or college is co-educational, the gender a person associates with

has no bearing on an admissions application. Plymouth's application forms ask for the child's gender. At this point, the gender appropriate to the birth certificate should be entered. Further information relating to gender identity and the reasoning for selection of a particular school can be given on the application form.

27. In the case of transgender applicants, where a parent selects a placement in a single sex school opposite to the birth gender, the application will be considered, and a decision made on the individual circumstances of the case. As part of the case consideration, we would seek evidence from the family that they have thought through the issues carefully and in most cases, would expect them to be able to provide us with some independent evidence from a medical professional or other worker who has been involved in the situation.

### **Parental responsibility**

28. Any person with legal parental responsibility for a child is entitled to be involved in all major decisions affecting the child(ren) which includes where the child attends school. When an application is submitted for a school place, the person signing the application form is also confirming that everyone with parental responsibility is in agreement with the application. Occasionally, objections are later raised by a person with legal parental responsibility.

Where this happens, we will ask parents to resolve parental disputes which cannot be resolved by agreement between themselves through either mediation or court. Neither the local authority nor a school should intervene in the dispute.

### **Mode of attendance**

29. Children are entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. Where parent/carers wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. Arrangements should be made with the school direct.
30. Once a place has been allocated, parent/carers can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age or, for children born between 1 April and 31 August, not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made. Deferred entry is arranged with the school direct. Deferred admissions will take place at the start of the January or April term as appropriate. If the child does not start at the agreed date, the place may be revoked and may be reallocated to someone else.

### **Waiting Lists**

31. For the duration of this scheme, the City Council shall maintain waiting lists and re-allocate any places that may have become vacant since the allocation date specified in Schedule 2 to applicants who have not yet been offered a place, for example, late applicants whose preferences have not yet been considered. A child will automatically be placed on a waiting list, to be re-allocated a place if one becomes available after the notification date, at any school ranked higher on the common application form than the school that was offered. By change of preference, a child may join a waiting list for a school not previously requested. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria.
32. Accordingly, where a child has been allocated a place:
- at the parent/carer's first ranked preference school, he or she will not be considered for re-allocation;

- at the parent/carer's second ranked preference school, he or she may be placed on the waiting list of the first ranked preference school, but not the third;
- at the parent/carer's third ranked preference school, he or she may be placed on the waiting lists of the first and second ranked preference schools;
- at a school that the parent/carer did not nominate on the common application form, he or she may be placed on the waiting lists of any schools that were nominated.

If the parent/carer does not wish their child to be on a particular waiting list, this must be confirmed in writing to the City Council. The parent/carer may need to amend the school preference order in such a case.

33. Waiting lists shall be kept up until the date specified in Schedule 2 as the start of the in-year admissions procedure. From that date, the procedures outlined in the in-year coordinated scheme apply and where appropriate, waiting lists will be passed to own admission authority schools.

### **Fraudulent applications**

34. The LA reserves the right to ask parents for proof of address. A child's home address is the address where they are normally resident. Any allegations received by the admission authority of people providing false accommodation addresses when applying for school places shall be fully investigated and, if found to be true, it could lead to a criminal prosecution and withdrawal of an allocated place.

### **The right of appeal**

35. Parents/carers are entitled to lodge a statutory appeal for a place at any school for which their application has been refused. However, where the refusal is based on class size limits (the law requires that no Key Stage 1 [infant] class [where the majority of children will have reached the age of 5, 6 or 7 by the end of the academic year] shall be a class of more than 30 pupils for any normal lesson with their teacher), the grounds for appeal are strictly limited to:
- whether the child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been properly implemented; or
  - whether the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had not been contrary to mandatory provisions in the School Admissions Code and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; and/or
  - whether the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.
36. If a place becomes available before the appeal is heard, the case would be considered alongside any other appeals, those on the waiting list, and any late applications, in accordance with the published admission criteria. If the child is allocated to that place, the appeal will be cancelled.
37. A foundation, free, trust or voluntary aided school or an academy may have their own appeal arrangements. Further details are available direct from the school.
38. Appeals will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged. A timetable for appeal will be published on Plymouth City Council's website by 28 February each year.



## PART II - LATE APPLICATIONS

39. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is specified in Schedule 2. As far as is reasonably practicable, applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for good reason shall be accepted provided they are received before the date specified in Schedule 2 as the start of the allocation procedure. What will be considered as good reason include:
- when a single parent/carer has been ill for some time, or has been dealing with the death of a close relative;
  - where a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a property in Plymouth will be required in these cases);
  - the City Council will also consider other circumstances and decide each case on its own merits.
40. Applications received after the date specified in Schedule 2 as the start of the allocation procedure, but before the date specified in Schedule 2 as the start of the in-year admissions procedure, shall normally be considered after the allocation procedure has ended, the date for which is also specified in Schedule 2. If possible, late applicants will be offered a school place on the notification date specified in Schedule 2 but, if not, normally within four weeks of the City Council receiving the application.
41. Late applications need to be made direct to the City Council. Where only the supplementary information form is received, the school shall inform the City Council without delay so that it can verify whether a common application form has been received from the parent/carer and, if not, contact the parent/carer and ask them to complete one. The City Council shall enter the details onto its central database and, after consultation with the relevant admission authority, offer a place at the school highest in the parent/carer's order of preference that has a vacancy or, if not, at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

## PART III - IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

42. Applications received on or after the first day of the first school term of the admission year will be treated as an in-year application as will an application for admission to an age group other than the relevant age group. Note that a separate scheme applies to in-year admissions.

Children who are the subject of a direction to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over any child on a waiting list.

## PART IV - MANAGING COMPLIANCE WITH THE INFANT CLASS SIZE DUTY

43. Section 1 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002) and the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 limit the size of an infant class during an ordinary teaching session.
44. Infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) **must not** contain more than 30 pupils with a single schoolteacher. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The excepted children are:

- a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) specifying the school;
- b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- c) children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process;
- d) children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
- e) children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

45. Schools are required to accurately complete Census returns for submission to the LA. The LA has a duty to check these returns before submitting to the Department for Education. Schools that do not comply with infant class size restrictions will be required to take qualifying measures in order to comply with the class size limit.

## SCHEDULE 2

### Timetable for admissions to Year R in an infant, primary or junior school

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>From Monday 17 November 2025</b> | <b>Availability of guide for parents and relevant application forms.</b>  |
| <b>By Thursday 15 January 2026</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Common application forms are submitted to the City Council.</li> <li>▪ Supplementary information, as required, is sent direct to the relevant LA, academy, foundation, free, trust or VA school.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>By Friday 6 February 2026</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The City Council sends details of relevant applications received to other Local Authorities.</li> <li>▪ The City Council notifies each relevant academy, foundation, free, trust and VA school of the number of applications for the school so that the school can rank applications against the admission criteria.</li> <li>▪ The City Council notifies each Plymouth school of the number of first, second and third preference applications for the school.</li> </ul> |
| <b>By Friday 27 February 2026</b>   | Academy, foundation, free, trust and VA schools provide the City Council with ranked lists of applicants.   |
| <b>Monday 2 March 2026</b>          | <b>The allocation procedure starts.</b>   |

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>By Friday 3 April 2026</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The City Council has matched the ranked lists of all schools and allocated places.</li> <li>▪ The City Council notifies other LAs of applicants from their areas who have been offered places in Plymouth schools.</li> </ul> |
| <b>By Monday 13 April 2026</b>       | The City Council notifies each school of the applicants who have been offered places at the school and each school to confirm any amendments.  |
| <b>Wednesday 15 April 2026</b>       | Allocation procedure ends  |
| <b>Thursday 16 April 2026</b>        | <b>The City Council sends allocation notifications to parent/carers.</b>   |
| <b>By Thursday 23 April 2026</b>     | <b>Parent/carers to respond to allocation notifications.</b>   |
| <b>Thursday 23 April 2026</b>        | Latest submission date for applications to be included in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> allocation round.  |
| <b>Friday 24 April 2026</b>          | The City Council sends updated acceptance list to schools.   |
| <b>Thursday 21 May 2026</b>          | The City Council notifies each school of the applicants who will be offered places at the school.  |
| <b>Friday 22 May 2026</b>            | <b>The City Council sends allocation notifications to parent/carers in respect of the 2<sup>nd</sup> allocation round.</b>   |
| <b>Friday 29 May 2026</b>            | <b>Parent/carers to respond to allocation notifications in respect of the 2<sup>nd</sup> allocation round.</b>   |
| <b>From Tuesday 1 September 2026</b> | Applications for Year R or Y3 are treated as in-year admissions.   |