

LOCAL IN-YEAR COORDINATION

Local In-Year Scheme of Admission 2027/2028



DRAFT

LOCAL IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS SCHEME 2027/2028

Introduction

1. In accordance with paragraph 2.23 of the School Admissions Code 2021, local authorities are permitted to coordinate in-year admission applications across schools within their area. While coordination is not mandatory, all admission authorities are required to cooperate with any local arrangements put in place.

All admission authorities must ensure their admission arrangements are:

- fair – free from bias and discrimination
- clear – written so it is easy for parents and carers to understand; and
- objective – based on published, transparent criteria that are consistently applied

This requirement is designed to enable parents and carers to be able to look at the arrangements and to understand how school places are allocated and to be able to make an informed decision.

Admission arrangements must comply with the legal requirements of the School Admissions Code, the Equality Act 2010, and other relevant legislation. Authorities must publish the admission arrangements annually (28 February) and make them readily available to the public.

2. The provisions outlined in the School Admissions Code relating to factors admission authorities may consider when assessing applications apply equally to:
 - in-year admission applications, and
 - applications at the normal point of entry.

Admission authorities must not allocate places based on the order of preference expressed by the parent or carer (i.e., 'first preference first' arrangements are prohibited). The allocation process must rely solely on the published oversubscription criteria.

When considering applications, admission authorities:

- must not take into account reports or information on the pupil's past behaviour, attendance, attitude, or achievement, except where the pupil exhibits "challenging behaviour" as defined in the relevant Fair Access Protocol.
- are prohibited from placing any conditions on the consideration or acceptance other than those explicitly stated in the published oversubscription criteria.
- applications must be considered without undue delay

The local authority must provide a suitable application form for the purpose.

3. Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to inform parents and carers, upon request, of any available school places across all schools within their area. This ensures that families have access to accurate and up to date information when making decisions about school admissions.

To support the local authority in maintaining accurate numbers, schools must:

- promptly inform the local authority of any arrivals or leavers that affect pupil numbers.

This will enable the local authority to provide reliable advice to parents and carers and will help identify and address any local capacity issues.

4. The local authority will administer the locally agreed admission scheme on behalf of participating schools within its area thereby relieving schools of the administrative burden associated with informing the local authority of all applications received and making formal responses to those applications in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code and the School Appeals Code. This centralised scheme enables the local authority to monitor pupil movement across the city effectively, supporting its role in overseeing the fairness and effectiveness of admission arrangements, school place planning, and identifying children missing education. Applicants for schools that do not participate in the scheme will be referred to apply directly to those schools, which will manage their own admissions processes independently.

Interpretation

5. In the scheme:
- **ACE** refers to the Alternative Complementary Education Services;
 - **admissions authority** in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the local authority and, in relation to an academy, foundation, free, studio, trust, VA school or UTC, means the Board of Governors of that school or the Multi Academy Trust where this applies;
 - **admission arrangements** refers to the arrangements for a particular school or schools which govern the procedures and decision making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school;
 - **eligible for a place** refers to a child that has been placed on a school's ranked list at such a point which falls within the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) or other agreed limit;
 - **in-year admission** refers to any application for a school place in the first year of entry to an infant, primary, junior, key stage 4 or secondary 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)** refers to the local council. The local authority for Plymouth is Plymouth City Council;
 - **NoR** refers to the number of pupils on roll at a school in a particular year group;
 - **other agreed limit** refers to a number agreed with the City Council;
 - **AN** refers to the Admission Number for the year group;
 - **PAN** refers to the Published Admission Number for the year of entry at a school;
 - **participating school** refers to any state funded school for which the local authority is the admission authority, or any other state-funded school that has formally opted into locally co-ordinated in-year admissions scheme administered by the local authority.
 - **the specified year** refers to the school year 2027/2028, starting September 2027;
 - **school** refers to a maintained community, foundation, free, trust, voluntary aided (VA) and voluntary controlled school or an academy, studio school or UTC (but not a special school);
 - **UTC** refers to University Technical College.

6. The in-year admissions scheme for participating schools shall be determined, administered, and processed in accordance with the procedural requirements outlined in Schedule 1, and in line with the timescales set out in Schedule 2. These schedules form an integral part of the scheme and ensure consistency, transparency, and compliance with statutory requirements
7. The scheme shall apply to all participating infant, primary, junior and secondary schools within Plymouth, including academy schools, studio schools and University Technical Colleges (UTCs), but excluding special schools and independent schools. The scheme shall take effect for all in-year admissions from September 2027 onwards.
8. The primary coordinated admissions scheme and the secondary coordinated admissions scheme cover the admission of children to school at the normal point of entry (e.g. starting reception/foundation, junior school in year 3, secondary school in year 7 and Year 9 or 10 at a key stage four school such as a UTC or studio school). However, a number of children will require admission to school at other times and these admissions, known as in-year admissions will be covered under this scheme with the exception of admissions to nursery schools and years 12 and 13, which are outside the scope of these arrangements.
9. Applications for admission to nursery schools and years 12 and 13 should be submitted to the school(s) direct and must be considered in accordance with the admission arrangements appropriate to that entry point.
10. Where a child is not resident with their parent or legal guardian, parental responsibility must be conferred directly on the individual with whom the child will live, rather than on a third party, commercial body or charitable organisation.

If the person whom the child is to reside is not a close relative, the arrangement constitutes a private fostering arrangement. In such cases, it is the responsibility of that person to notify the local authority's children's social care department of the arrangement, in accordance with the requirements of the Children's Act 1989 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005.

11. The Local Authority reserves the right to request documentary evidence to verify that information given in an application is accurate and genuine. The Local Authority may seek confirmation from schools, other council departments, or relevant agencies such as the health authority. Parents or carers may also be required to provide supporting evidence when requested.
12. The scheme shall be based on an **equal preferences** system. The PAN set for a particular year of entry will normally be maintained as that year group progresses through the school.

Where a school or its admission authority decides to increase the schools Admission Number (AN), the revised number shall remain in effect for the remainder of that academic year.

Any such increase will not affect the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) commitment, including the agreed 3% that all schools have undertaken to accept under the terms of the Protocol.

13. 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;

- Comply with the Law, and ensure that participating schools comply with the Law;
- Operate an admissions scheme (this scheme) for admissions other than at the normal point of entry normal point of entry to infant, primary, junior, secondary and key stage four schools in Plymouth;
- Operate an admissions scheme for normal point of entry to primary, junior, secondary and key stage four schools in Plymouth;
- 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 local authority's 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 the common application form available on the Local Authority's website known as the 'In-year application form'.
2. The common application form shall be used by all applicants' wishing to apply for a school place at a participating school in Plymouth other than at the normal point of entry. Parent or carers seeking a school place in-year in another Local Authority should contact that LA for advice on how to submit an application for a school place.
3. The scheme comes into force from the date specified in Schedule 2. Any requests for admission received directly by a participating school – whether from other admissions authorities, parents or carers, or other Local Authorities - must be forwarded to Plymouth City Council without delay.

The common application form (CAF) must be used by parents or carers wishing to express one or more preferences for their child's admission to a school in Plymouth, in accordance with Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. This includes applications to academies, foundation, free, studio, trust or VA schools, or University Technical Colleges (UTCs).

Parent or carers submitting an application through the Local Authority may specify up to three school preferences on their application.

4. The common application form and the written information that accompanies it shall:
 - a) invite the parent or carer to express up to three preferences in the rank order of preference;

- b) invite the parent or carer to give reasons for each preference;
5. The website will also display a guide for parents which provides a written explanation of the scheme.
 6. The admission authority for a school may require a parent or carer to provide supplementary information, only where the supplementary information is required for the admission authority to apply its over-subscription criteria to the application and where the information is not already collected on the common application form.
 7. When a participating school receives supplementary information, it shall not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent or carer has also completed the City Council common application form (CAF). If a supplementary information is received directly by a school in the absence of a common application form, the school shall inform the City Council so that it can verify whether a common application form has been submitted by the parent or carer and, if not, will contact them to ask them to complete one.
 8. It is essential that the information held to the City Council regarding Number on Roll (NoR) for each year group is accurate and up to date.

In accordance with the Children Missing Education (CME) statutory guidance, schools are legally required to notify the City Council immediately when a pupil is placed on roll of removed from roll. Similarly, the School Admissions Code, admission authorities must notify the local authority of every application received and the outcome of each application.

To ensure compliance and promote effective safeguarding, all Plymouth schools must notify the School Admissions Team without delay of any pupil movements – including pupils leaving or joining the school - so that vacancies can be accurately identified and pupil's whereabouts appropriately monitored.

9. Plymouth schools that are not participating in this co-ordinated admission scheme are legally required to notify the Local Authority upon receipt of all applications for admission. They must also inform the Local Authority of the outcome of each application and to respond to requests for information by the Local Authority as soon as reasonably practical, but ideally within two school days.
10. Immediate provision of pupil tracking information by schools to the Local Authority is a legal requirement under the Children Missing Education (CME) Regulations and the School Admissions Code.

Instances of non-compliance will be raised with the school in the first instance. Where concerns remain unsolved the matter may be referred to the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) or the Department for Education (DfE), as appropriate.

Applications outside of the chronological age group

11. Children are ordinarily offered a place in the year group corresponding to their date of birth. However, parents may request admission to a year group outside their child's chronological age range.

Each request will be considered individually, with decisions made in the best interests of the child. The admission authority will consider a range of factors, including:

- The parent's views
- The child's academic, social, and emotional development
- Relevant medical history and the views of a medical professional

- Whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group
- Whether the child may have naturally fallen into a lower age group if not born prematurely
- The views of the headteacher of the school(s) concerned

If a request is refused, there is no statutory right of appeal. However, parents who feel their request was not properly considered, or believe the decision was unreasonable or unfair, may submit a complaint under the school's published Complaints Policy.

- (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 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 properly 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 properly 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 or carers must not assume that an admission authority's decision to educate outside their chronological age cohort will be accepted by another admission authority. There may be implications if the child subsequently changes school.

Children being considered for admission to a grammar school are required to undertake the relevant grammar school selection tests.

Processing application forms

12. In respect of participating schools any parent or carer approaching a school with a view to admission must be referred to the City Council for the City Council to act upon the admission request. Should an application be received by the Local Authority for a non-participating school, the applicant will be referred to the school direct.
13. If a participating school is approached by a parent or carer seeking admission and determines that the admission request is on behalf of a vulnerable child who requires priority admission and the school has room in the year group, the school should arrange for the parent or carer to complete the common application form and immediately notify the City Council. The City Council will, where possible, prioritise that application by establishing whether the admission could cause prejudice to other applications received and notify the school without delay of the outcome. This measure should streamline the process for urgent admission requests. Note, however that any

admission request could not be considered until the day following receipt due to the admission scheme close date for application and possible prejudice.

14. The close date for applications under this admission scheme will be midnight each day.
15. In the case of duplicate submissions, the later application submitted by the parent or carer will overwrite an earlier submission.
16. Changes of preference must be submitted in writing via email, verbal changes will not be accepted.
17. Applications will normally be accepted no more than six school weeks before the date that the school place is required, and the applicant will normally be expected to take up the place within two weeks of allocation of that place or within six weeks from the date of application whichever is the later. Failure to start at the school within the expected time may lead to withdrawal of the allocated place.
 - In the case of UK service personnel this application period may be extended up to 12 school weeks if the application is accompanied by an official government letter which declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address this area.
 - In the case of children attending a specialist unit at a Plymouth school or a child with an EHCP, the application period will be extended to 12 school weeks to allow enhanced transition processes.
 - In the case of a child currently in the care of the local authority, the application period will be extended to 12 school weeks to allow a smooth transition.

Determining consideration of the common application form

18. Where a school is full, any admission request will be reviewed in accordance with the City Council's Fair Access Protocol (FAP). All schools are required to participate in the Fair Access Protocol, regardless of whether they take part in the local in-year coordinated scheme.

Applications will normally be considered up to PAN or another agreed limit. Looked After Children can be admitted to the school even if it is above PAN or any other agreed limit, unless the Virtual School provides written agreement that, in very exceptional circumstances, admission would not be in the child's best interests.

Certain categories of children, including those with behavioural challenges, may require additional consideration and support. Others may be considered as particularly vulnerable.

Further details of the Fair Access Protocol for both primary and secondary schools are available on the City Council website:

[Primary Fair Access Policy](#) [Secondary Fair Access Policy](#)

Requests for transfer of school between participating schools

19. Parent or carers are entitled to request a change of school at any time during the year. However, a school transfer should not be undertaken lightly, particularly mid-year, as many children may become unsettled by a new school environment and could be affected emotionally and academically.

Transfers should be avoided once examination options have been selected, which may be as early as Year 9, as it can be difficult for alternative schools to accommodate chosen options and exam boards.

As part of the application process, the headteacher of the child's current school will be notified of the request, as they may wish to provide information to support consideration of the application. The requested school will be provided with an adapted copy of the application form to enable them to rank the application appropriately.

Children and young people who are LBGTQ+

20. Children and young people who are LBGTQ+ should feel able to apply to a school without any restriction. In co-educational schools or colleges, the gender with which the child identifies has no bearing on an admissions decision.

Plymouth's application forms requests the child's gender. At this stage, the gender as stated on the birth certificate should be entered. Additional information regarding gender identity and any reasoning for selection of a particular school can be provided on the application form.

21. In the case of transgender applicants, where a parent requests a placement in a single-sex school that does not correspond with the child's birth gender, the application will be considered on an individual basis.

These decisions are complexed, and not all children may be able to make such decisions independently at the time of transfer. As part of the consideration process, the Local Authority may seek evidence from the family demonstrating that the issues have been carefully considered. In most cases, this would include independent evidence from a medical professional or another relevant professional who has been involved with the child.

Parent or carer responsibility

22. Any person with legal parental responsibility for a child is entitled to be involved in all major decisions affecting that child, including decisions regarding school placement.

When an application is submitted for a school place, the person signing the application form is confirming that all individuals with parental responsibility has been informed of the application.

Where objections are subsequently raised by a person with parental responsibility, the Local Authority shall advise parents or carers to resolve disputes through agreement, mediation or the courts. Neither the Local Authority nor a school shall intervene in or adjudicate upon parental disputes.

Mode of attendance

23. Children are entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. Where parent or 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.
24. Once a place has been allocated to a child in the foundation year, parent or carers may choose to defer their child's admission until later in the same school year. However, deferral cannot extend beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age or, for children born between 1 April and 31 August, beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Arrangements for deferred entry must be made directly with the school. Deferred admissions will normally take place from the start of the January or April term as appropriate. If the child does not start at the agreed deferred start date, the place offered may be withdrawn and may be reallocated to another applicant.

Determining offers in response to the common application form for participating schools

25. All requests for a school place under this admission scheme will normally be dealt with within 15 school days. For applications to grammar schools, additional time may be required for the assessment of the pupil's ability through the relevant selection tests. Similarly, where an application is referred to the Fair Access Panel for consideration, there may be delays due to the scheduling and timing of panel meetings. Therefore, it may not always be possible to meet the 15-school day turnaround in every case.

26. In all cases, the eligibility of an application will be determined in accordance with the school's published admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria applicable to the year of entry. Decisions will also take into account the current number on roll at the requested school, and will be made in line with the provisions of the School Admissions Code and all relevant legislation regulations.

27. Within 10 school days of receipt of the application:

- a. the City Council will ascertain availability of place(s) at any nominated community or VC school for which it is the admission authority;
- b. the City Council will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, free, studio, trust or VA school or UTC of every nomination that has been made for that school, and if requested, forwarding a report detailing the relevant information contained in the common application form or a copy of the common application form (without the rank order of preference) and any supplementary information received which schools require in order to apply their over-subscription criteria;
- c. the school that the applicant currently attends will be informed of the request to transfer and will be asked for information that will help in the consideration of the transfer request;
- d. where a parent or carer has nominated a school outside Plymouth, the City Council shall refer the applicant to the Local Authority in that area for advice on the application process.

28. Secondary Schools: Within five school days of receiving application information from the City Council, the relevant admission authority must confirm to the City Council whether a place can be offered to the applicant.

Primary Schools: Within three school days of receiving application information from the City Council, the relevant admission authority must confirm to the City Council whether a place can be offered to the applicant.

The decision must be based solely on Number on Roll (NoR) or other agreed limit, and the school's published oversubscription criteria. The City Council may ask the school to confirm NoR and Admission Number (AN).

29. Within 15 school days of receipt of the application, the City Council shall match the application to the 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, they 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 and is unable to access their current educational provision, they will normally be allocated a place at an alternative school, usually

the nearest appropriate school with an available vacancy.

30. Within 15 school days of receipt of the application, the City Council shall inform each school of the pupils to be allocated places at the school.
31. Within 15 school days of receipt of the application, the City Council shall notify all parent or carers by email the outcome of their application. This correspondence will include:
- the name of the school at which a place is offered;
 - the reasons why the child is not being offered a place at each of the schools nominated on the common application form;
 - information about the statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the nominated schools;
 - information about the school's waiting lists;
 - a requirement to notify the City Council whether the applicant intends to accept or decline the place offered to the child;

In respect of applications handled by the City Council, offer emails for this scheme will be issued by the City Council on behalf of participating schools.

32. Within two school weeks of the date of the offer email, parent or carers must notify acceptance of a school place. Failure to notify acceptance may result in withdrawal of the place offered. Parent or carer is declining the offer of a place should notify the educational arrangements they plan to provide for their child.
33. Where a child is offered a school place following an in-year application, and the offer is accepted, the school must make arrangements for the child to start as soon as possible and certainly before the Last Admission Date (LAD), particularly where the child is out of school.

If the parent does not admit the child to the school by the Last Admission Date (LAD), the offer of the place may be withdrawn.

Fraudulent applications/withdrawal of allocated places

34. The School Admissions Code allows an offer of a school place to be withdrawn if:
- it has been offered in error or
 - a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time or
 - it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. An example of this would be knowingly using an incorrect home address for a child. In these cases, the application would be considered using the information that the local authority believes to be correct, for example using the home address where the local authority considers that the child actually lives.

All suspected fraudulent applications will be investigated and if a case is found, it could lead to criminal prosecution.

Waiting Lists

35. Each admission authority shall maintain waiting lists with a view to re-allocation of any places that may become available. Participating own admission authority schools may delegate this task to the Local Authority if they wish. The list will be kept in the order of the oversubscription criteria. Each child added will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription

criteria. Priority must not be given to children based on the date their application was received, or their name was added to the list. In respect of schools for which the City Council holds a waiting list, a child may be placed on a waiting list to be re-allocated a place if one becomes available after the original allocation, at any school ranked higher on the 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 as long as the change or additional preference is received within the same term as the original application.

In the case of own admission authority schools, parent or carers will need to contact the school direct to discuss the procedure for waiting lists. In the case of Devonport High School for Girls, Plymouth High School for Girls and Devonport High School for Boys, eligibility to join the waiting list is dependent upon relevant selection tests.

36. Accordingly, where a child has been allocated a place:

- at the parent or carer's first ranked preference school, they will not be considered for re-allocation;
- at the parent or carer's second ranked preference school, they may be placed on the waiting list of the first ranked preference school, but not the third;
- at the parent or carer's third ranked preference school, they may be placed on the waiting lists of the first and second ranked preference schools;
- at a school that the parent or carer did not nominate on the common application form, they may be placed on the waiting lists of any schools that were nominated;

37. The waiting list will maintained until the end of July, at which point all pupils will be removed from the list, except for those whose applications were submitted during the summer term or who are in Year 7.

It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to notify the Local Authority in writing if they no longer wish their child to remain on the waiting list. Likewise, it is the parent or carer's responsibility to submit a new application if they wish their child to remain on the schools waiting list beyond this point.

Appeals

38. 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;

39. If a place becomes available before the appeal is heard, the case would be considered alongside others on the waiting list in accordance with the published admission criteria. If the child is allocated to that place, the appeal will be cancelled.

40. A foundation, free, trust or voluntary aided school, studio school, UTC or an academy may have their own appeal arrangements. Further details are available direct from the school.
41. Appeals will be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging appeals where possible, or within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
42. Information about the appeals process will be available from the City Council or the relevant admission authority as appropriate.

PART II - 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 school teacher. 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 an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) specifying a 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 need 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 Local Authority. The Local Authority has a duty to check these returns before submitting to the Department for Education (DfE).
46. 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 in-year admissions to a participating Plymouth school**

From 1 September 2027	In-year admission scheme commences.
Up to six school weeks before the date a school place is required. Extended to 12 school weeks for the following category of applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UK service personnel if the application is accompanied by an official government letter which declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address in this area; ▪ Children attending a specialist unit at a Plymouth school; ▪ A child with an EHCP; ▪ A child currently in the care of the local authority. 	Application forms accepted from parent/carers.
Within ten school days of the initial receipt of an application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council ascertains availability of place(s) at nominated schools. ▪ The City Council notifies the admission authority for each academy, foundation, free, studio, trust or VA school or UTC of every nomination that has been made for that school.
Within five school days of receipt of the application information from the City Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The relevant admission authority will confirm to the City Council whether a place can be offered to the applicant based solely on NoR or other agreed limit and the oversubscription criteria. ▪ The City Council may ask the school to confirm NoR and PAN.
Within 15 school days of receipt of the application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council shall inform each school of the pupils to be allocated places at the school. ▪ The City Council shall notify all parent/carers by email that they are being offered a place at a school.
Within two weeks of the date of the application response email.	Parent/carers to respond to application response letters direct to the City Council.
Within two school weeks of the date of allocation or six school weeks of the application for a school place whichever is the later.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child should start at the allocated school or, in the case of child entering the Reception/Foundation year who is below compulsory school age and whose parent/carer wishes to defer entry, deferred arrangements must be agreed with the school.
By the 15 May 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council will write to all schools requesting confirmation of their Published Admission Number (PAN) and Admission Numbers (ANs), as well as details of how the schools intend to organise their class groups for the forthcoming academic year.
By the 26 May 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The relevant admission authority will inform the City Council of their Published Admission

	Number (PAN) and Admission Numbers (ANs), as well as details of how the schools intend to organise their class groups for the forthcoming academic year
--	---

DRAFT

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

Escalation process

BACKGROUND

Plymouth City Council (the local authority or LA) operates a local in-year coordinated admission scheme, which is available to all own admission authority schools. It is assumed that all academies who purchase the School Admissions Package are participating in the scheme, and that all other own admission authority schools are part of the scheme unless they formally opt out by administering their own admissions directly.

The local scheme includes a timetable for in-year admissions, allowing secondary schools five school days and primary schools three school days from the date of receipt of the application to respond to the Local Authority, indicating whether the request for admission is accepted or rejected. Any refusal must be made in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code. Where a place is refused, the applicant must be formally notified and offered the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Where a school does not participate in the local coordinated admissions scheme, the Local Authority retains a responsibility to ensure the fair allocation of school places and to champion the interests of parent and carers where it appears that a child has been unfairly denied a school place.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

All schools are required to provide the Local Authority with information relating to school admissions and school place availability.

Paragraph 2.30 of the School Admissions Code 2021 places a duty on own admission authority schools to notify the Local Authority of an application for a school place and its outcome in order that the Local Authority can maintain data on school place availability.

The Children Missing Education statutory guidance dated September 2016 requires that all schools (including academies and independent schools) notify the Local Authority when removing a child from a school register other than at normal transition point. Schools must also notify the addition of a pupil within 5 days.

REFUSAL OF A SCHOOL PLACE

The School Admissions Code 2021 is very clear on the grounds for refusing admission to an applicant.

Paragraph 2.8 specifies that with the exception of designated grammar schools, all maintained schools, including schools designated with a religious character, that have enough places available **must** offer a place to every child who has applied for one, without condition or the use of any oversubscription criteria.

Paragraph 2.9 confirms that admission authorities **must not** refuse to admit a child solely because:

- a) they have applied later than other applicants;
- b) they are not of the faith of the school in the case of a school designated with a religious character;
- c) they followed a different curriculum at their previous school;
- d) information has not been received from their previous school; or e) they have missed entrance tests for selective places.

Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires that an admission authority comply with a parent's or carer's stated school preference, unless doing so would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Prejudice is unlikely to be established where the number of pupils in a relevant age group does not exceed the admission number determined for that group.

In schools where selection is wholly based on selection or aptitude, with a view to admitting only pupils with high ability or aptitude, a place may be refused where the application is incompatible with the school's selection, even if there are places available.

Where an applicant has been identified as having challenging behaviour, as defined in the Fair Access Protocol, the application should be considered in accordance with the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol.

ALLOCATION OF PLACES

The local coordinated scheme sets out a clear timetable for handling in-year admission requests.

As all schools have a legal obligation to comply with the provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Appeals Code, it is reasonable to expect that all schools keep the Local Authority informed of pupil mobility. This enables the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duty to monitor and report on school place availability.

Given the limited grounds for refusing a school place, it is reasonable for the Local Authority to make a provisional allocation of a school place in any case where it is known that the requested school has a vacancy in the relevant year group.

The Local Authority will confirm the allocation if no negative response is received from the school within:

- five school days of notice for secondary schools, and
- three school days of notice for primary schools.

ESCALATION

Where possible, escalation to an outside agency should be avoided, and every effort should be made to resolve any issues through local negotiation. In every case where a school place is refused, the parent or carer (and the student in the case of post-16 education) has the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. In this case, paragraph 3.5 of the Appeals Code requires that if a school has incorrectly/unlawfully applied its admission arrangements the panel must uphold the appeal – i.e.

‘... where it finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or had not been correctly and impartially applied, and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied’

A school that does not comply with the School Admissions Code or the School Appeals Code should be aware that taking a case to an independent appeal panel is likely to be unsuccessful. In such circumstances, the panel would generally find in favour of the applicant, which could damage the school's credibility and result in additional costs being incurred by the school.

The Local Authority has the power to direct the governing body of a maintained school for which they are the admission authority to admit a child in their area even when the school is full. The Local Authority can only make such a direction in respect of a child in the local authority's area who has been refused entry to, or has been permanently excluded from, every suitable school within a reasonable distance.

The Local Authority also has the power to direct the admission authority for any maintained school in England (other than a school for which they are the admission authority) to admit a child who is looked after by the local authority, even when the school is full. The Local Authority must not choose a school from which the child is permanently excluded but may choose a school whose infant classes are already at the maximum size.

- In the case of schools for which Plymouth City Council is the admission authority (community and voluntary controlled schools), the Local Authority has the right to instruct the school to admit a child;
- In the case of an academy school, the Local Authority can request that the Secretary of State intervene. The Secretary of State has the power under an Academy's Funding Agreement to direct the Academy to admit a child and can seek advice from the Adjudicator in reaching a decision. Escalation is by use of an online form available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-admission-request-form/academy-admission-direction-request-form>.
- In the case of all schools, the Secretary of State also has powers to direct maintained schools and LAs under section 496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996 when they have breached education law or acted unreasonably in applying it.

Once a provisional allocation has been made to a school, the school has five school days to raise objections.

- In the absence of an objection within this time period, the allocation will be confirmed to the parent.
- On receipt of a negative response within the five-school daytime period, the LA will open negotiation for a further five school days. If after this point in time, agreement for admission has not been reached, the application will be refused with the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel confirming the reasons for refusal as defined by the school. If the Local Authority believes that the reason for refusal of the admission request is not compliant with the Code, the case will be escalated as appropriate. This may necessitate a direction to admit the child or a referral to the Secretary of State and/MAT.

Escalation procedure

See chart below.

GLOSSARY

Term	Explanation
LA	Local authority.
School day	School's days are defined within term dates and exclude school holidays, public holidays, and weekends.

