

SECONDARY COORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME

Normal Point of Entry – 2027/2028



DRAFT

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.

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 the readily available to the public.

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

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

Interpretation

I. In the scheme:

- **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;
- **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 or VA school or a UTC, means the Board of Governors of that school or the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) where this applies;
- **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 limited;
- **in-year admission** refers to any application for a school place in the first year of secondary education or entry year to a studio school or University Technical College (UTC) 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;
 - **nearest appropriate school** refers to the nearest appropriate school to the applicant's home address with a vacancy;
 - **PAN** refers to the Published Admission Number for the year of entry at a school;
 - **school** refers to a maintained community, foundation, free, trust or voluntary aided (VA) school or an academy, studio school or UTC (but not a special school);
 - **the specified year** refers to the school year 2027/2028 starting September 2027.
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. The scheme applies to all types of state funded secondary and key stage four schools in Plymouth with the exception of special schools and boarding schools. State funded schools include academies, foundation, free, studio, trust and VA schools and a UTC. Applications for entry to a sixth form are not administered under this scheme – applications must be made directly to the individual school. This scheme will take effect from September 2026 for admissions to secondary schools in September 2027.
 4. The scheme shall be based on the **equal preferences** system.
 5. 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.

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 secondary and key stage four schools in Plymouth;
 - Operate a local in-year admissions scheme to coordinate admissions to school at points outside the normal point of entry in Year 7 to Year 11;
 - 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 (OSA) 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 and carers seeking a school place will be required to make a written application for a school place using the Common Application Form (CAF) available on the Local Authority's website. 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 and carer.
2. The common application form shall be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into:
 - the first year of secondary education (Year 7) or the first year of entry to a studio school or UTC (Year 9 or 10 as appropriate).
 - any other year group in the case of a new secondary or key stage four school opening or where an existing school extends its age range to admit children into a year group for the first time in the admissions round leading up to the date specified in Schedule 2.
3. The Common Application Form (CAF) 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 or 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, studio, trust or VA school), or located in another Local Authority's area (including academy, foundation, free, studio, trust or VA school or a UTC).
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 by completing the application form - including, where relevant, any schools outside the Plymouth area - in rank order of preference;
 - b) invite the parent or carer to give reasons for each preference;
 - c) explain that the parent or carer will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:
 - (i) a place shall 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 shall 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 ensure that the Common Application Form (CAF) is made available and accessible on the City Council's official website for the purpose of applications to:
 - Admissions to Year 7 of a secondary school; and

- The entry year of a studio school or University Technical College (UTCs).

The City Council shall ensure that the website includes a comprehensive guide for parents, providing a clear written explanation of the scheme and the application process.

6. The City Council shall take reasonable steps to ensure that every parent or carer resident in Plymouth who:
 - Has a child in their final year of primary education; or
 - Has a child due to complete Year 8 of secondary school

Is provided with access to the Common Application Form (CAF) together with a written explanation of the application process.

7. All preferences expressed on the Common Application Form (CAF) shall be treated as valid. An admission authority may require a parent or carer to provide supplementary information, only where such information is necessary for the admission authority to apply its over-subscription criteria to the application, and only where the information is not already collected on the Common Application Form (CAF).
8. Where a school receives supplementary information, such information shall not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent or carer has also completed either the City Council Common Application Form (CAF) or, if resident in another area, local authority area, their home authority's Common Application Form (CAF), and the school is nominated on that form. Where supplementary information is received directly by a school, the school shall notify the City Council so that the Council can verify whether a Common Application Form (CAF) or neighbouring authority's Common Application Form (CAF) has been submitted by the parent or carer and, if not, contact the parent or carer to request completion of the appropriate form.

Applications outside of the chronological age group

9. 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 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 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.

Processing common application forms

10. The closing date for the City Council to receive applications for Year 7 or the entry year to a Studio School or University Technical College (UTC) is as specified in Schedule 2.
11. The completed Common Application Form (CAF) for children residing in Plymouth shall be returned directly to the City Council.
12. In the event of duplicate submissions, the later application submitted by the parent or carer shall take precedence and shall overwrite any earlier submission.
13. Where conflicting preferences are received from more than one parent or carer, the City Council shall contact both parties and request that they reach agreement on the school preferences for the child, either through mediation or by obtaining a court order. Neither the admission authority nor the local authority shall intervene in such disputes.

In the absence of a court order (or other legal grounds) preventing access, the City Council shall inform each parent that an application has been made and of the schools named as preferences, as both parents are entitled to be involved in decisions concerning their child's education.

In the event that no agreement can be reached, both applications shall be processed, and an offer shall be made to each parent. An offer of a school place will not be held open once the child has physically been admitted to another school. Where the outcome of preferences from 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 1 March 2027.

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 Form (CAF). The City Council shall decide to offer or refuse a place only in response to any preference expressed on the Common Application Form (CAF) 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 nominated by the parent or carer.

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

By the date specified in Schedule 2, where a parent or carer has nominated a school outside Plymouth, the City Council shall also notify the relevant authority by this date.

16. By the date specified in Schedule 2, where the admission authority is undertaking the ranking of applications against its admission criteria, the City Council shall notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, free, studio, trust or voluntary aided (VA) school or University Technical College (UTC) of every nomination that has been made for that school. The City Council shall forward to each such school a report detailing the relevant information contained in the Common Application Form (CAF) together with any supplementary information received by that date, which the school requires in order to apply its over-subscription criteria.
17. 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, where 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.

18. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the City Council shall match each ranked list against the ranked lists of the other schools nominated. Allocation of places shall be determined as follows:
- where a child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school shall be allocated to the child;
 - where a child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, the child shall be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.
 - where a child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, the child shall be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.
19. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the City Council shall inform each secondary school and Key Stage 4 schools within its area of the pupils to be offered places at that school. The City Council shall also inform other local authorities of places in schools within Plymouth to be offered to their residents.
20. Once the allocation procedure has started, it shall not be possible to consider any changes to an application. Any changes shall be considered only in the next allocation round.

21. On the National Allocation Date (1 March each year or the next working day should 1 March fall on a non-working day), parent and carers shall be notified of the offer of a place at a school. The notification shall include:
- the name of the school at which a place is offered;
 - where appropriate, the reasons why the child is not being offered a place at the other schools nominated on the Common Application Form (CAF);
 - where appropriate, information regarding the statutory right of appeal against decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
 - information about school waiting lists;
 - information via the City Council's website on statutory school appeals; and
 - 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 co-ordinated scheme. Individual schools must not issue allocation letters or emails. After the co-ordinated scheme ends, the local in-year co-ordinated scheme shall come into force.

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.

22. Neither the City Council nor any school shall inform any parent or carer prior to the National Allocation date, whether a place shall be or has been allocated at any school to any child who is the subject of an application.
23. There is an expectation that each child shall commence at their allocated school on the first day of term, or the deferred date as agreed between the parent or carer and the school. Where a child does not enrol and there are no proven medical reasons preventing attendance, the place shall be revoked and may be reallocated to another applicant.

Children and young people who are LBGTQ+

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

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 the reasoning for selection of a particular school can be provided on the application form.

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.

These decisions are complex, 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.

Parental responsibility

25. 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 placements.

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

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

Waiting Lists

26. For the duration of this scheme, the City Council shall maintain waiting lists and re-allocate any places that become vacant after the allocation date specified in Schedule 2 to applicants who have not yet been offered a place, including, late applicants whose preferences have not yet been considered.

With the exception of Devonport High School for Boys, a child shall 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 (CAF) than the school originally offered.

By submitting a change of preference, a child may join a waiting list for a school not previously requested. In the case of Devonport High School for Boys, eligibility to join the waiting list is dependent upon score attained in the selection examination. Each added child shall require the list to be ranked in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria.

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

- at the parent or carer's first ranked preference school, the child shall not be considered for re-allocation;
- at the parent or carer's second ranked preference school, the child shall 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, the child shall 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 (CAF), the child shall be placed on the waiting lists of any schools that were nominated.

Where a parent or carer does not wish their child to remain on a particular waiting list, this must be confirmed in writing to the City Council. In such cases the parent or carer may be required to amend the school preference order.

28. Waiting lists shall be maintained until the date specified in Schedule 2. From that date, the procedures set out in the in-year co-ordinated scheme apply, and, where appropriate, waiting lists will be transferred to schools that are their own admission authority.

Selection assessments and tests

29. For entry in to Year 7 at a Grammar school a selection examination forms part of the school's admission arrangements. Parent and carers will be invited to register their child for the examination.

Once registration has been completed, the child will participate in the 11-plus examination. Following this, the admission authority will notify the parent or carer of the outcome of the 11-plus examination before the closing date for submission of the Common Application Form (CAF).

It is important to note that receiving the outcome of the 11-plus examination does not a guaranteed place at a selective school. The results simply indicate whether the child has met the required standard for consideration under the school's admission criteria.

30. Where a parent or carer fails to complete the registration process their child for the selection examination, the child will not be included in the examination process for the allocations on the national allocation date in March. Late requests for selection examination will only be considered on exceptional grounds for inclusion in the first allocation round. In such a case, parent or carer will need to make a case as to why it was not possible for them to have reasonably been aware of the examination process.

Fraudulent applications/withdrawal of allocated school places

31. The School Admissions Code allows an offer of a school place to be withdrawn if:

- it has been offered in error
- 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.

Appeals

32. Parents or carers are entitled to lodge a statutory appeal for a place at any school for which their application has been refused.
33. If a place becomes available before the appeal is heard, the case would be considered alongside 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.
34. A foundation, free, trust or voluntary aided school, studio school, UTC or an academy may have their own appeal arrangements. Further details are available directly from the school.
35. Appeals will be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging appeals where possible or with 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
36. A timetable for appeal will be published on the City Council's website by 28 February each year.

PART II - LATE APPLICATIONS

37. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is specified in Schedule 2. As far as is reasonably practicable, applications received after this date may still be accepted if there is a good reason for the delay and if the application was submitted before the start of the allocation procedure (also specified in Schedule 2).

38. Circumstances that will normally be regarded as good reason include:

- a single parent or carer being unwell for an extended period, or coping with the death of a close relative;
- a family moving into the area or is returning from abroad (in such cases, proof of property ownership or tenancy in Plymouth will be required);
- other exceptional circumstances, which will be considered individually by the City Council with each case decided on its own merits.

39. Applications received after the start of the allocation procedure (date specified in Schedule 2), but before the start of the in-year admissions procedure (date specified in Schedule 2), will normally be considered once the allocation procedure has concluded (the date specified in Schedule 2)

Where possible, late applicants will be offered a school place on the notification date set out in Schedule 2. If this is not, feasible, a place will normally be offered within four weeks of the City Council receiving the application.

40. Late applications must be made directly to the City Council. Where a school receives only the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) it shall notify the City Council without delay so that the City Council can verify whether a Common Application Form (CAF) has been received. If not, the City Council will contact the parent or carer and request that one be completed.

The City Council will then record that application details on its central database and, following consultation with the relevant admission authority, will offer a place at the highest in the parent or carer's stated order of preference that has a vacancy. If no preferred school has a vacancy, a place will be offered at the nearest appropriate school with available places.

PART III – IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

41. Applications received on or after the first day of the first school term of the admission year will be treated as in-year applications. The same applies to applications for admission to an age group other than the relevant entry age group. Please note that a separate scheme governs in-year admissions.

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

SCHEDULE 2

Timetable for admissions to the first year of secondary education (Year 7) or the first year of entry to a studio school (Year 9 or 10 as appropriate)

Monday 27 April 2026 – Monday 31 August 2026	11-plus registration takes place for Plymouth grammar schools
From Thursday 3 September 2026	Availability of guide for parents and relevant application forms.
Saturday 12 and Saturday 19 September 2026	11-plus selection examinations take place for grammar schools
Friday 9 October 2026	11-plus results issued for boys (post)
Thursday 15 October 2026	11-plus results issued for girls (email)
By Saturday 31 October 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common application forms are submitted to the City Council. ▪ Supplementary information, as required, are sent direct to the relevant local authority, academy, foundation, free, studio, trust, UTC and VA school.
By Friday 4 December 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council sends details of relevant applications received to other Local Authorities. ▪ The City Council will forward details of applications to each relevant academy, foundation, free, studio, trust, UTC and VA school. Each school will rank the applications in accordance with its published admission criteria. ▪ The City Council notifies each Plymouth secondary and key stage four school of the number of first, second and third preference applications for the school.
By Friday 8 January 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academy, foundation, free, studio, trust, UTC and VA schools shall provide the City Council with a completed list of ranked applicants, prepared in accordance with their published admission criteria.
Friday 29 January 2027	The allocation procedure starts.
By Friday 12 February 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council has matched the ranked lists of all schools and allocated places. ▪ The City Council notifies other local authorities of applicants from their areas who will be offered places in Plymouth schools.
By Friday 26 February 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council notifies each school of the applicants who will be offered places at the school.
Friday 26 February 2027	The allocation procedure ends
Monday 1 March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council sends allocation notifications to parent and carers.

By Monday 8 March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parent and carers to respond to allocation notifications. ▪ Latest submission date for applications to be included in the 2nd allocation round.
Wednesday 11 March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council sends updated acceptance list to schools.
By Thursday 25 March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Late 11+ Testing, results to be issued on 2nd round of allocations
By Thursday 25 March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council sends a further updated acceptance list to schools.
Friday 23 April 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City Council notifies each school of the applicants who will be offered places at the school.
Friday 23 April 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2nd round of allocations - The City Council sends allocation notifications to parent and carers
Friday 30 April 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parent and carers to respond to allocation notifications in respect of the 2nd allocation round.
From Wednesday 1 September 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applications for Year 7 or the first year of entry to a Studio School or UTC are treated as in-year admissions.