1 Coordinated admissions

For admissions to schools in the 2011 / 2012 academic year onwards, the local authority must co-ordinate all applications to maintained schools from parents in their area, whenever received, and for whichever age group, under one scheme.

2 Co-ordinated primary admission scheme

All Local Authorities are required to have in place a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained primary schools within their area. The purpose of co-ordinating admissions is to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that every parent of a child living in the local authority area who has applied for a school place in the normal admission round receives an offer of one, and only one, school place from their local authority. For the September 2011 admissions round, offers of places will be sent out on 26 April 2011.

3 School provision

There are four types of maintained primary school in Birmingham:

1. Community
2. Voluntary Controlled
3. Voluntary Aided
4. Foundation

The criteria for admission to community schools are given later in this document.

4 Date for starting school

By law, parents must ensure that their children are receiving suitable full-time education at the beginning of the term after their 5th birthday. However, in Birmingham, children are admitted to the reception year in the September at the start of the academic year in which they reach five years of age.
Alternatively, parents would need to make a separate application for a place at the beginning of the new academic year.

5 Attendance at a Nursery Class

If your child attends a nursery class, this does not mean that he or she will automatically get a place in the infant school to which the nursery is linked or attached. Parents with children in a nursery class must apply for a reception year place at the school in the same way as other parents.

6 Parents’ right to apply for a school

Birmingham City Council, as a local authority must enable parents and carers to say where they would prefer their child to go to primary school. The law does not give parents a right to “choose” which school their child will attend.

It is the local authority’s duty to carry out parents’ wishes as far as possible.

Exceptions

The law recognises that it may not always be possible to carry out parents’ wishes, for a number of reasons:

- because this would “prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources”, e.g. because a particular school may be full (i.e., it has already admitted pupils up to the Published Admission Number for the child’s year group);

- because the school’s statutory infant class size limit of 30 has been reached;

- because the child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools and the most recent of the exclusions took place within the last two years.

7 September 2011 Reception Class and transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 admission arrangements

7.1 September 2011 Reception Class Admissions

7.1.1 Parents’ information booklets and application forms will be published and available at the beginning of October 2010.

Health Service data is provided to the local authority’s Admissions and Appeals Service indicating children who live in Birmingham who are due to start school in September 2011.
7.1.2 In October 2010 the parents of those children will be sent a letter and a pre-printed preference form advising parent/carers of how to apply for a reception school place and of where to obtain the primary information booklet. Copies of the booklet will be available at all Birmingham primary schools, Libraries, Heath Centres, Children Centres and Doctors Surgeries, private and Community Nurseries and also electronically etc.

7.1.3 Parents can either apply on-line or by completing a Local Authority Preference form which should be completed by 3 December 2010. Proof of address will be required to be provided to the Admissions and Appeals Service. The Admissions and Appeals Service will accept online applications and other applications until 17 January 2011. Applications received after this date will be treated in accordance with the procedure for late applications.

7.1.4 Primary schools will verify the child’s date of birth at the time of acceptance of the offer/induction day. Offers will be conditional on providing valid proof of date of birth.

7.1.5 Parents will be allowed to express up to three preferences and rank them in order of preference.

7.1.6 The Admissions and Appeals Section will obtain a list of all looked after children within that age range from the local authority’s Looked After Children Education Service (LACES).

7.1.7 Applications on behalf of children with Statements of Special Educational Needs will be considered by the Special Educational Needs Assessment Service (SENAS), in accordance with parental preference and each child’s individual needs, taking account of Birmingham City Council’s inclusion policy and any consultation required with school governing bodies.

7.1.8 Admissions and Appeals staff will input preferences plus religious and other information (including addresses where necessary) between December 2010 and January 2011.

7.1.9 Ranked preferences for schools within Birmingham are required to be received electronically from surrounding Local Authorities by 31 January 2011.

7.1.10 Ranked preferences for schools outside Birmingham will be forwarded electronically to the Local Authorities concerned by 31 January 2011.

7.1.11 Preferences from surrounding authorities will be merged into Birmingham’s database.
7.1.12 Unranked preferences will be sent electronically to the local Schools on 10 February 2011. The preferences will include electronic home to school measurements.

7.1.13 Copies of sibling reports will be sent to Community Schools by 10 February 2011 for verification and return by 3 March 2011.

7.1.14 Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled and Foundation Schools are required to inform Admissions and Appeals by 3 March 2011, of the order in which those children whose parents expressed a preference for their schools ranked in accordance with their admission criteria.

7.1.15 Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs will have their needs considered individually by the Special Educational Needs Assessment Service (SENAS) who will undertake any appropriate consultation and provide Admissions & Appeals with names of children to be considered for mainstream places by the end of February 2011.

7.1.16 Admissions and Appeals Service will compare ranked parental preferences for each school. All ranked preferences will be given equal consideration against schools’ admission criteria. If the child meets the admission criteria for two or more schools and could therefore potentially be offered a place at either school, the school the parent ranked highest will be offered.

7.1.17 Surrounding Local Authorities will be sent electronic lists, of pupils living in their authorities who have been provisionally offered places in Birmingham schools on 10 March 2011 (1st cycle).

7.1.18 Potential offers that could be made by other Local Authorities will be considered against the rankings made by the parents concerned and the highest ranked school for which the child meets the admission criteria will be provisionally offered.

7.1.19 Birmingham and surrounding Local Authorities will send each other further offer information on 21 March 2011 (2nd cycle).

7.1.20 Birmingham and surrounding Local Authorities will send each other their final offer information on 31 March 2011.

7.1.21 Children who live in Birmingham that have not been offered one of their parents’ three preferences will be offered a place at one of their closest schools with a vacancy.

7.2 Transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 for September 2011

7.2.1 If a child attends an infant school it is necessary for the child to transfer to a different school for his/her junior education. Parents will be required to complete a Local Authority Preference Form to request a Year 3 place at
a linked Junior School or any other primary school. Application forms will be available from infant schools, junior schools and the Local Authority.

7.2.2 If a child already attends a primary school, it is not necessary for him / her to transfer to a different school.

7.2.3 Birmingham Local Authority will send out offer letters to all parents living in Birmingham on Tuesday 26 April 2011. Offer letters regarding Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools will be sent by the Local Authority on behalf of their Governing Bodies.

7.2.4 Parents who have been offered a Community or Voluntary Controlled school or a school in another Local Authority will be required to inform the Admissions and Appeals Service whether or not they accept the offer by 11 May 2011. Those that do not respond by this date risk losing the offer made.

7.2.5 Parents who have been offered a Birmingham Voluntary Aided or Foundation School will be required to inform the school whether or not they accept the offer by 11 May 2011. Those who do not reply by this date risk losing the offer made.

7.2.6 Immediately following the offer of places, Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools will administer waiting lists according to their own admission criteria. The Admissions and Appeals Service will maintain the waiting lists for all Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools until 31 December 2011.

8 Over-subscription criteria

8.1 Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

The local authority is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools. For each Foundation and Voluntary Aided School the governing body is the admission authority and decides its own over-subscription admission criteria. Children are admitted to schools in accordance with parental preference as far as possible. However, where there are more applications than there are places available, places at Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools will be offered based on the following order of priority:

8.1.1 Children in care: This includes any child / young person who is subject to a Full Care Order, an interim Care Order, accommodated under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, is remanded or detained into Local Authority accommodation under Criminal Law or who has been placed for adoption.

8.1.2 Children (siblings) with a brother or sister already at the school and who will still be in attendance at the time the sibling enters the school.
Siblings (brothers or sisters) are considered to be those children who live at the same address and either:

i. have one or both natural parents in common;

or  
ii. are related by a parent’s marriage;

or  
iii. are adopted or fostered by a common parent.

Unrelated children living at the same address, whose parents are living as partners, are also considered to be siblings.

Children not adopted or fostered or related by a parents’ marriage or with one natural parent in common, who are brought together as a family by a same sex civil partnership and who are living at the same address, are also considered to be siblings.

Separate boys’ and girls’ schools are not considered to be linked for the purposes of sibling claims.

8.1.3 Children whose parents have made applications on denominational grounds in the case of Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary Schools. This will be confirmed by a letter from the Vicar of the relevant Church.

8.1.4 Children who live nearest the school.

Within each of these categories, priority is given to those who live nearest to the school.

For these purposes, distances are calculated on the basis of a straight-line measurement between the applicant’s home address and a point decided by the school (usually the front gates). The Local Authority uses a computerised system, which measures all distances in metres. Ordnance Survey supply the co-ordinates that are used to plot an applicant’s home address and the address of the school.

In a very small number of cases it may not be possible to decide between the applications of those pupils who are the final qualifiers for a place, when applying the published admission criteria.

For example, this may occur when children in the same year group live at the same address, or where there are twins, or if the distance between the home and school is exactly the same, for example, blocks of flats. If there is no other way of separating the application according to the admissions criteria and to admit both or all of the children would cause the Published Admission Number for the child’s year group to be exceeded, the Local Authority will use a computerised system to randomly select the child to be offered the final place.
In the event of this occurring with twins or other multiple birth applicants, schools will be asked to admit over their Published Admission Number to accommodate the pupils.

Admission to a nursery school or nursery class does not give the child priority or an extra right to transfer to the reception year of the primary school to which the nursery is linked or attached.

8.2 Chilcote Primary, Hall Green Infant and Hall Green Junior schools

Chilcote Primary, Hall Green Infant and Hall Green Junior schools each have catchment areas. At these schools the order of priority for admission is as follows:

1. Children in Care

2. Children living within the catchment area of the school who will have a brother or sister in attendance at the school at the time of admission.

3. Children living within the catchment area of the school who live nearest the school.

4. Children living outside the catchment area of the school who will have a brother or sister in attendance at the school at the time of admission.

5. Children living outside the catchment area who live nearest the school.

8.3 Over-subscription criteria for Year 2 to Year 3 Transfers

1. Children in Care

2. Linked Schools: Children who will be attending the linked Infant School at the time of application and will still be in attendance in September 2011.

3. Children (siblings) with a brother or sister already at the Infant / Junior School and who will still be in attendance at the time the sibling enters the school.

4. Children who live nearest the school.

8.4 Over-subscription criteria for Year 2 to Year 3 Transfer - Hall Green Junior

1. Children in Care

2. Children attending Hall Green Infant School
   Children who will be attending the School at the time of the application and will still be in attendance in September 2011.
3. Children living within the catchment area of the school who will have a brother or sister in attendance at the school at the time of admission.

4. Children living within the catchment area of the school who live nearest the school.

5. Children living outside the catchment area of the school who will have a brother or sister in attendance at the school at the time of admission.

6. Children living outside the catchment area who live nearest the school.

8.5 All schools

Any child with a statement of special educational needs is required to be admitted to the school that is named in the statement. This gives such children overall priority for admission to the named school. This is not an oversubscription criterion.

9 Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools

For each Foundation and Voluntary Aided School the Governing Body is the admission authority and decides its own published over-subscription admission criteria.

10 Home addresses

A pupil’s home address is considered to be a residential property that is the child’s only or main residence and is either;

- Owned by the child’s parent(s), or the person with parental responsibility for the child;
- Leased to or rented by the child’s parent(s), or the person with parental responsibility under lease or written rental agreement of not less than six months duration.

Evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required, plus proof of permanent residence at the property concerned.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the week then the main residence will be determined as the address where the child lives the majority of the week. Parents may be requested to supply documentary evidence to satisfy the authority that the child lives at the address put forward by the parents.
If a school is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from a child’s normal and permanent home address, then that place is liable to be withdrawn.

11 Change of Preference

Once parent / carers have submitted their preferences they will not be allowed to change them without an exceptional change in their circumstances, for example, if the family has recently moved address or a sibling has changed schools.

All requests to change preferences should be made in writing to Admissions and Appeals Manager, Birmingham Local Authority.

Any parent / carer who submits an application for a change of preference for an oversubscribed school, without an exceptional change in their circumstances, will have that application refused.

Any request for a change of preference for a school that is undersubscribed will be accepted and a place offered in accordance with the admission criteria for that school.

12 Appeals

Where parents are not satisfied with the school offered, arrangements exist for appeals to be heard by an Appeals Panel, which is independent of the local authority and the City Council.

Parents can only appeal for schools that they have submitted as a preference.

Because infant classes have a legal limit of 30, Appeals Panels are limited in the matters they can take into account when considering Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 appeals. In these type of appeals an Appeal Panel can only uphold an appeal if it is satisfied that:

- the decision was not one which a reasonable admission authority would make in the circumstances of the case; or

- the child would have been offered a place if the published admission arrangements had been properly implemented.

Appeals in respect of Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools should be sent to the Admissions and Appeals Service.

Appeals in respect of Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools should be sent to the Governors of the schools concerned.
13 Waiting lists

Parents whose children have not been offered their preferred school will be informed of their right of appeal and will be added to their preferred schools waiting list.

Waiting lists for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools will not be fixed following the offer of places. They are subject to change. This means that a child’s waiting list position during the year could go up or down. Any late applicants will be added to each school’s list in accordance with the order of priority for offering places. The Admissions and Appeals Service will maintain waiting lists for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools until the end of the Autumn Term 2011.

If Community or Voluntary Controlled Schools need to offer from the waiting list Admissions and Appeals will make offers until the end of the Autumn Term 2011 in accordance with the admission criteria.

From 1 January 2012 each oversubscribed Community and Voluntary Controlled School is responsible for maintaining the waiting list. From that time parents should contact the school direct to be added to their waiting list.

Inclusion on a school’s waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available there. It may be that those already allocated places do not give them up and the school is unable to make further offers in the future.

14 Late applications

Birmingham Local Authority will only consider applications received after 15 January 2011 (the final closing date) in exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority will use its discretion when considering the individual circumstances. For example where;

- There were exceptional reasons which prevented the parent/carer from applying by the closing date.
- A child and the person with parental responsibility has moved home.

All late applications accepted and received after 15 January 2011, will only be considered for places after other applications received on time. Such applicants may be less likely to be offered a place at one of their preferred schools.

All applications received after the offer of places (26 April 2011) will be considered by Birmingham Local Authority.

In the event that a late application is made for a place at an undersubscribed school, a place will be offered.
15 Relevant area

In accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Birmingham Local Authority has determined its relevant area for 2010 / 2011 as that contained within the administrative area of the City of Birmingham. It is proposed that this arrangement will continue for 2011 / 2012.