

Coordinated Admissions Scheme for first admissions to schools 2024-2025

Introduction

This scheme is made by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council under the provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021, and other guidance and law that affect admissions in England.

The Scheme

1. The scheme will be determined in accordance with the principles set out in Schedule 1 and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
2. The scheme will apply to every school and Academy in the Sandwell Local Authority (LA) area (except special schools) and will take effect from the commencement of the admissions round for 2024-2025.
3. In this scheme, where dates are specified the dates shall refer to admissions to Reception class in infant and primary schools, and admissions to Year 3 in junior schools.

Where dates are shown in brackets these relate to admissions to Year 7 in secondary schools.

Schedule 1

Part I – The Scheme

1. Sandwell Local Authority (LA) will devise a standard form known as a Common Application Form (CAF) which will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year (Reception class) of primary education, to Year 3 in junior schools or to the first year (Year 7) of secondary education.
2. Sandwell resident parents/carers will be encouraged to complete an online application. Paper forms will only be issued on request from the **School Admissions Team**.
3. Parents/carers of eligible children **who live** in Sandwell will be issued with details explaining the application process and timetable in September 2023 (July 2023).
4. The CAF must be used by Sandwell resident parents/carers as a means of expressing one or more preferences for their child to be admitted to any state funded school either **within** or outside the Sandwell LA area.
5. The CAF will provide the parent/carer with the opportunity to:
 - (a) provide their name and address and the name, address and date of birth of the child;
 - (b) apply for up to 6 schools whether or not any school for which the application is made is within the Authority's area;
 - (c) rank each application in relation to any other application.
6. The Sandwell LA prospectus will:
 - (a) explain that the parent/carer will receive a single offer of a school place on 16 April 2024 or next working day (1 March 2024 or next working day) and:
 - (b) state that all preferences will be considered as though they are first preferences and that in the event that it is possible to offer more than one preference a place will be offered at the highest-ranking preferred school for which they are eligible to be offered a place;
 - (c) specify the closing date;

- (d) identify for each school to which the scheme applies, whether it is the LA or the Governing Body who are the admission authority and whether the Admission Authority or another body will determine the order of priority of applications and if the body is a body other than the Governing Body, to identify that body. Where arrangements have been made by the Governing Body for another body to determine the order of priority that body must advise the LA of the determined order in such time as to comply with the timetable below.
7. If a place cannot be offered at a preferred school, a place will be offered at an alternative school which is nearest to the home address of the parent/carer and where there are places available and following consultation, if appropriate, with the Admission Authority.
 8. All preferences expressed on the CAF will be treated as equal preferences for the purposes of determining eligibility for the offer of a place unless alternative arrangements are published for specific schools.
 9. The LA, in the case of Community and Controlled schools or Governing Body of a school for which the LA is not the Admission Authority can require parents who wish to nominate, or have nominated, their school on the CAF, to provide additional information on a supplementary form **only** where the additional information is required to apply admission priorities to the application. Where a supplementary form is required it **must** be returned to the preferred school, by the parent/carer by the published closing date.
 10. If a school, where another LA or the Governing Body is the Admission Authority, receives a supplementary form it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed a Sandwell CAF and the school is nominated on it.

Processing of CAFs

11. Completed CAFs must be received by the LA by the date specified in the prospectus. For 2024-2025 the closing date is 15 January 2024 (31 October 2023).

12. Should schools which are their own admission authorities receive applications or supplementary information forms direct from parents/carers these will be passed to Sandwell LA without delay, to enable the LA (if necessary) to arrange with the parent completion of a CAF by the closing date.
13. In the event that Governing Bodies which are admission authorities decide or make arrangements for another body or organisation to decide by reference to the school's admission criteria, the order of priority of each application for their school they will notify the LA of the decision in respect of every application in time to comply with the timetable set out in this scheme.
14. Sandwell LA will provide to each LA full details of any preferences received from residents of the home LA for places **in their schools**. Notification will take place in accordance with the timetable set out in this scheme.

Determining Offers in Response to the CAF

The Process

15. Sandwell LA, as Admissions Authority for Community and Controlled schools in Sandwell will determine, (in accordance with the published admission priorities) whether the applicant can be offered a place in any or all of the Community or Controlled schools listed on the application form.
16. For applications for places in Community and Controlled schools in other LA's, the relevant LA will determine whether a place can be offered in any or all of those schools by applying its published admission priorities and inform Sandwell LA accordingly.
17. Where the Governing Body is the Admission Authority, the LA will forward details of the application, together with any supporting information to the Governing Body to enable the Governing Body to determine (in accordance with the published admission priorities), whether the applicant can be offered a place at their school.
18. Where no preferred school can be offered, the child will be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy after consultation with the admissions authority if appropriate.

Draft Timetable – Primary schools (Secondary school dates in brackets)

19. By 31 January 2024 (10 November 2023) the LA will notify every admission authority outside of Sandwell of all applications for school places in their area.
20. By 9 February 2024 (1 December 2023) the LA will notify every relevant Admission Authority within Sandwell of every nomination that has been made for that school and will forward any additional information supplied by the parent / carer.
21. By 23 February 2024 (15 December 2023) the Admission Authority for each school will have considered all applications for that school, having applied the school's admission priorities (if appropriate) and provided the LA (where it is not the Admission Authority) with a list of those applicants ranked according to the school's admission priorities.

The LA will match this ranked list against the ranked lists of the other schools nominated and:

- Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the preferred schools, that school will be allocated to the child.
- Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the preferred schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these schools is the highest ranked preference.

Where it is not possible to offer the highest ranked school the next highest will be offered together with details of how the parent / carer may instigate an Independent Appeal for their first (or subsequent if applicable) preferred school(s).

Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the preferred schools the child will be nominally allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, and his / her parents / carers advised of their right to submit an appeal to the Sandwell or other relevant LA Independent Appeals Panel or appropriate Committee where the Governing Body is the Admission Authority.

22. By 31 March 2024 (9 February 2024) the LA will finalise the allocation of places.

23. On 16 April 2024 or next working day (1 March 2024 or next working day) parents/carers will be notified by e-mail (or by second class post if the application has been made on paper) making a single offer of a school place for their child. The letter will be sent on behalf of the LA in respect of schools for which the LA is the admission authority or on behalf of the Governing Body when the Governing Body is the Admission Authority. This letter will give the following information:
- 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 other schools nominated on the CAF (if ranked higher) and whether the refusal was on the grounds of class size prejudice.
 - Information about parents' statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools to the appropriate Authority's Independent Appeals Panel or appropriate Committee where the Governing Body is the Admission Authority.
 - Invite parents to indicate their wishes in respect of applications for other schools in the event that places may become available in schools they ranked higher than the school they have been offered and provide advice on the operation of waiting lists.
 - Contact details for the appropriate LA or Governing Body where it is the Admission Authority so that they can lodge an appeal.
24. **By 2 May 2024** (15 March 2024) parents/carers will be required to confirm acceptance (or rejection) of offers.
25. **By 26 May 2024** (31 March 2024) the LA will start to reallocate any places that may have become available since the offer date. Allocation of places will be based on the appropriate admission priorities.

Waiting Lists

26. Pupils will be placed on a waiting list for any places which may become available at any school they have ranked higher on their CAF than the school they were offered. Where a parent/carer receives a place at their highest ranked school they will not be considered for places at other schools and will not be included on any waiting list which might be established. Where a parent/carer has been allocated a place at their second preferred school, they may be placed on the waiting list for their first preference but will not

be placed on the waiting list for their third preference. Subsequent unsuccessful preferences will be treated in the same manner. Where a parent/carer has been offered a place at a school which they did not nominate on their CAF, they may be placed on the waiting list for all the schools they nominated.

27. Waiting lists for Sandwell Community and Controlled schools will be discarded by the end of the Autumn term in the admission year. The policy with regards to waiting lists for schools for which another LA or the Governing Body is the Admission Authority will be included in the admission arrangements for those schools.

Late Applications

28. The closing date for applications is 15 January 2024 (31 October 2023). It is published in the LA prospectus, on the LA website and announced in the local press. Applications for Sandwell schools received after the closing date will only be considered under the following circumstances:
 - (a) When the applicant has bought, rented or leased a residence and has moved after the closing date but before the allocation of places has been made.
 - (b) When the applicant has moved house to an address more than two miles from their previous address after the closing date but before the allocation of places has been made.
 - (c) When an application is made on behalf of a child who is in Public Care (looked-after) or previously in Public Care after the closing date but before the allocation of places has been made.
 - (d) When the applicant is a single parent and was prevented from submitting their application on time due to long term illness of more than 6 weeks duration from the date on which application forms became available.
 - (e) When a sibling (brother or sister) residing at the same address has been admitted to the preferred school after the closing date but before the allocation of places has been made.
 - (f) When the admission priorities determined by other LA's or Governing Bodies who are their own admission authorities provide for different circumstances to be considered.

29. Where no preferred school can be offered the child will be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy after consultation with the admissions authority if appropriate.

Mid-Year Admissions

30. Applications received for places in year groups other than the normal year of entry to primary school, will be treated as mid-year admissions and processed in accordance with the LA Coordinated Scheme for mid-year admissions.

Schedule 2

Timetable of Coordinated Scheme Reception and Year 3 (Year 7 dates in brackets)

15 January 2024 (31 October 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing date for return of application forms, together with any supplementary forms (as required) to the LA.
31 January 2024 (10 November 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of applications to be sent to other LAs.
9 February 2024 (1 December 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of applications to be sent to other admission authorities within Sandwell.
23 February 2024 (15 December 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Sandwell admission authorities who allocate own places to provide LA with list of applicants in criteria order.
1 March 2024 (5 January 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surrounding LAs to be sent lists of provisional offers.
15 March 2024 (19 January 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwell LA and surrounding LAs to share results of first cycle of results.
29 March 2024 (9 February 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwell LA and surrounding LAs finalise allocation of places.
16 April 2024 (1 March 2024) or next working day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer day.
2 May 2024 (15 March 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date by which parents must confirm acceptance of offers.
15 May 2024 (29 March 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any appeal should be received by this date (20 school days following notification that application was unsuccessful).
By 26 May 2024 (31 March 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any places that have become available are allocated to parents in priority order in accordance with the procedure specified in Schedule 1.

Dates subject to agreement with neighbouring Local Authorities.