

Moving up to Secondary School: FAQs and Useful Information



Key Dates

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| 1 September 2021 | Applications for school places open |
| 10 September 2021 | Deadline to register for the Grammar School test (midday) |
| 17 September 2021 | Deadline to register for Poole High School's Expressly Academic Class test (midday) |
| 25 September 2021 | Grammar School test date |
| 2 October 2021 | Expressively Academic Class test date |
| 31 October 2021 | Deadline for applications to be submitted to BCP Council |
| 1 March 2022 | Date of allocation results – online results available and letters posted |

How do I apply for my child's secondary school place for September 2022?

The deadline to submit your application is **31 October 2021**

If you are a BCP Council resident you must apply to BCP Council, either online or using a paper form.

Online applications may be made at <https://bcp.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/parentportal/> from 1 September 2021. You will need an email address to create an online account.

Paper applications can be requested from BCP Council or collected from the Customer Contact Centre, St Stephen's Road in Bournemouth or the Welcome Area, above Poole Central Library, Dolphin Centre in Poole, once the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted. There will also be some available from your child's primary school.

If you are applying to a school with religious criteria, you will need to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) in addition to your application to prove your religious commitment and be considered on these grounds. These can be found on each individual school's website. They need to be completed and returned by **31 October 2021**. The form will explain where it needs to be returned to.

How do I decide which schools I should apply for?

Firstly, you should be aware that there is currently heavy demand for secondary school places. We recommend that you seriously consider naming your catchment or nearest school, even if it is not your first preference, because there is no guarantee that a place will be available there if you do not name it and none of your named schools can offer you a place.

We strongly suggest that you name four schools and that you think carefully about the order you request them as this can have an impact upon which one you may be offered. The school you want the most must be named as your first preference.

Consider how you will get your child to school and the potential costs involved. Your child may be attending this school for five years and you will need to be sure they will be able to get there for the entirety of this time.

Remember the deadline for submitting your application form: **31 October 2021**

If you apply for and are offered a place at a school which is not your local school, you will not usually qualify for free transport and will have to take on the costs yourself.

You may find it useful to look at Ofsted reports and the websites for the schools you are considering. You can also look at the breakdown of last year's allocation. This shows how many applications were made for each school, and how many places were refused. However, this should only be used as a guide. You can find these statistics on the BCP website.

You can only apply for a school which has a point of entry in Year 7. If you are interested in a school where Year 7 is not the typical point of entry for the school, you will need to check how to apply.

When do I need to return my application?

All applications from BCP Council residents (online and paper) must be submitted by

31 October 2021

The online system will automatically close after 11:59pm on 31 October and no further applications can then be submitted. Paper forms will need to arrive in the post on 31 October to be considered on-time.

Paper forms can be returned to the following addresses:

- School Admissions Team, Town Hall, Bournemouth, BH2 6DY
- School Admissions Team, Dolphin Centre, Poole, BH15 1SA

Am I guaranteed a place at one of the schools I name?

No. The law is clear that parents have the right to express a preference for a school they wish their child to attend. Preference is not the same as choice. The law does not give parents the right to choose a particular school for their child and to have this choice met.

It is possible that you will not be offered a place at one of the schools you name, for example if you do not live near any of them, or (for church schools) you do not fulfil the school's religious criteria, or (for grammar schools) your child does not pass the entrance test.

This is why we always recommend that you consider naming your catchment or nearest school as one of your preferences.

If none of your requested schools can offer you a place, and you live within the BCP Council area, your child will be offered a place at another school with vacancies. If you live outside of the BCP Council area, you should contact your home Local Authority to find out what they will do in this event.

How do I apply for a place at a Grammar School?

You must name the grammar school as one of your preferences on your Local Authority preference form and submit it by **31 October 2021**. Sitting and passing the test is not an application for a place.

If you are applying for a place at one of the grammar schools in Bournemouth or Poole, your child will need to sit a test. You will need to register her/him for testing. The deadline to register for testing is **12 noon on 10 September 2021**. Registration forms can be downloaded from the schools' websites or requested from the schools directly.

The tests will take place on Saturday **25 September 2021**, where pupils will be tested in Maths, English and Verbal Reasoning. Results will be posted in the third week of October 2021 so you will know if your child has passed the test before you need to submit your application.

How do I apply for a place for the Expressly Academic Class in Poole High School?

You must name the school as one of your preferences on your Local Authority preference form and submit it by **31 October 2021**. Sitting the test is not an application for a place.

If you want your child to be considered for the Expressly Academic Class at Poole High School you will need to register your child for them to sit the test. The deadline for this is **midday on 17 September 2021**. No late registrations to sit the test are accepted by the school after this time.

The test takes place on Saturday **2 October 2021**. Children will be tested in Maths, English and sit a Reasoning Test. For more information about the tests, please contact the school direct.

The Expressly Academic Class comprises students who have been selected as a result of tests taken in the September preceding the year of entry and is limited to 10% of the school's intake in year 7. Places are allocated to the 32 who receive the highest marks in tests and who have not been made a higher preference offer by another school.

I'm a BCP Council resident, am I able to apply for schools outside of the BCP Council area?

Yes. You can list any schools on your BCP Council application, including those outside of the BCP Council area.

Where do I apply if I am not a BCP Council resident?

If you are not a BCP resident, you must apply to the Authority where you live (this would be where you pay your council tax). You can apply for schools located within the BCP Council area on another authority's form if you wish.

Where can I get help and advice about the process of applying for a secondary school place?

For information about schools in the BCP Council area you can speak to a member of the Children's Information Service (CIS) on 01202 123222 or email at cis@bcpcouncil.gov.uk, or the School Admissions Team on 01202 127963 or email school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

Our contact centres are currently closed to the public due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Please check our website for updates on when they may be open again.

You can also read our Parent's Guide, which will be available online at www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk from 1 September 2021.

What happens if my application is late?

If your application is not received by the closing date of **31 October 2021** it will be classed as late. All applications received by **31 October 2021** will be considered before yours and the chance of getting the place you want may be reduced.

How will I know if you have received my application?

Online applicants will receive an automatic email confirming the application has been received. Once the application has been uploaded you will receive another email to confirm this. Please check your spam and junk folders if you do not receive one in your usual inbox. If you apply on paper you can telephone or email to find out if your application has been received.

What happens if my child lives part time with each parent?

Only one application and address can be considered for each pupil. If parents are separated, you must come to an agreement about the schools you apply for. Where a child lives at more than one address you will need to check each school's admission policy to see how they will decide which address to use.

When will I hear?

All on time applicants who provided a valid email address will receive an email containing a link to a PDF copy of their offer letter on 1 March 2022. They will be able to download and print this letter and return the reply slip by post or email. Online applicants will be able to log in to their accounts mid-morning on 1 March 2022 and complete the reply online.

Letters will be sent on 1 March 2022 to all applicants who have not provided a valid email address.

You can accept a place online, by email or by returning the paper reply slip. Details will be provided in the offer letter.

What if I forget the password to my online account?

BCP Council are unable to help with forgotten passwords so it's important that you remember the one you choose.

All passwords contain at least one upper case and at least one lower case letter, and at least one number.

If you are unable to log in to your account, you will still have your notification letter emailed to you on 1 March 2022. You do not need a password to open your emailed letter.

We are not usually able to give results on the telephone.

What if I do not get offered the school I want?

If we are unable to offer you any of the schools you have requested and you are a BCP Council resident, we will offer you a place at a school with vacancies. This may not be close to your house.

If you are not a BCP Council resident, you will need to speak to your home Authority to find out what action they take in these circumstances.

You will find out from your offer letter how the waiting lists work for the schools that have refused your child a place. You may also request additional preferences at this stage if you wish. These will be dealt with after all the late applications have been processed.

If you decide to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place, you will need to contact the schools who have refused your child a place, to ask about their appeal process.

We strongly recommend that you accept whatever school is offered to you, as it may not be available again if you decline it straight away. If you are offered a different school at a later date (such as at appeal or from the waiting list), you can **then** decline the original offer. Accepting a place at one school will not affect any waiting lists, applications or appeals for any other schools.

Will a place offered to my child ever be taken away?

An offered place may be withdrawn if you do not respond to the offer within a reasonable timescale. The deadline to respond to the offer will be included on the letter you receive.

We may also withdraw a place if it was offered based upon a fraudulent or misleading application, such as under a false address.

My child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) – who do I apply to?

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you should speak to the SEN Inclusion Team on 01202 128880.

If your child has SEN but no EHCP, you should talk to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator or the Headteacher at your child's current primary school.

You may also contact SENDiass, they are independent and confidential and offer guidance on issues relating to SEN, exclusions and school admissions appeals (see back page for contact details).

How will my child get to school?

You may also wish to consider how you will get your child to school each day. If you apply for and are offered a place at a school which is not your catchment or nearest school, you will not usually qualify for free transport and will have to take on the costs yourself.

BCP Council is fully committed to promoting walking, cycling and, for longer distances, greater use of buses for the school journey wherever possible.

What has happened in previous years?

You can find detailed statistics for the main allocation for children transferring to secondary school in September 2021 online at www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions. The categories correspond with those in the admissions policy (criteria/categories) for 2021-22 which may differ from those in effect in 2022-23. These can also be found on the BCP Council website.

Figures from previous years are available on request. Categories for previous years may have been different so you should check the school's past policy for the correct information.

Please remember that this information should only be used as a guide. The figures differ from year to year, for example if there are more/fewer children living in a particular area. Changes in the popularity of a school (or a neighbouring school) can also affect the number of applications a school receives.

If you are unsure about anything within these tables, please contact us.

Useful contact details

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| Children's Information Service (CIS) Customer Contact Centre St. Stephen's Road Bournemouth BH2 5EB Tel:01202 123222 cis@bcpcouncil.gov.uk www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk | Admissions Team Dolphin Centre Poole BH15 1SA Tel:01202 127963 school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions |
| Dorset Admissions Dorset Council County Hall, Dorchester DT1 1XJ Tel: 01305 221060 admissions@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk | Appeals Officer, Democratic Services BCP Council Town Hall, Bourne Avenue Bournemouth BH2 6DY Tel: 01202 118911 www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schoolappeals |
| Special Educational Needs Inclusion Team Tel: 01202 128880 | SENDIASS Tel: 01202 128181 sendiass@bcpcouncil.gov.uk |