



Moving up to Secondary School in September 2026

Useful Information for parents and carers

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Key dates

1 September 2025	Applications for school places open
5 September 2025 (midday)	Deadline to register for the Grammar School test
14 September 2025 (23:59)	Deadline to register for Poole High School's Expressly Academic Class test
20 September 2025	Grammar School test date
27 September 2025	Expressively Academic Class test date (Poole High School)
31 October 2025	Deadline for applications to be submitted to BCP Council
2 March 2026	Date of allocation results – online results available and letters posted

Deciding which schools to name

How do I decide which schools to name?

You should be aware that there is currently heavy demand for secondary school places. We recommend that you seriously consider naming your nearest school. There is no guarantee that a place will be available at your local school if you do not name it as it may fill with families who requested it on their application. This means that if you do not name your nearest school, and none of your named schools can offer a place, you may be offered a school further away.

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 will be attending this school for at least five years and you will need to be sure they will be able to get there for the entirety of this time.

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 of places](#). This shows how many applications were made for each school, and how many places were

refused. The allocation data should only be used as a guide. You can find these statistics by clicking on the link above or by going to the BCP Council website.

You can only apply for a school which has a point of entry in Year 7 or is a school with an intake at year 7. Broadstone Middle School, Livingstone Academy Bournemouth and St Peter's School all have an intake in year 7 and can be named as a preference alongside the secondary schools in the area. 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.

Please note that independent (fee-paying) schools and special schools are not part of the school application process. You will need to contact independent schools directly or liaise with your SEND Case Officer. You will not be able to add them to your BCP Council application form.

If you are not sure if a particular school is part of our process, please contact the School Admissions Team to check.

What has happened in previous years?

You can find detailed statistics for the main allocation for children transferring to secondary school in September 2025 online at bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions. The categories correspond with those in the admissions policies (criteria/categories) for 2025-26 which may differ from those in effect in 2026-27. Each school will have their admission policy on their website and you can also find links to the policies on the BCP Council website.

Please remember that this information should only be used as a guide. The allocation 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 any of the allocation data, please contact us.

Can I name schools outside of BCP Council?

Yes. You can list any schools on your BCP Council application, including those outside of the BCP Council area. Please make sure that the school you are interested in is one which has a point of entry into Year 7.

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 any 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. You can add it as your final preference if you prefer other schools.

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 do.

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.

If you are unable to come to a mutual decision about your child's application (including the schools or the order they are named), you will need to seek legal advice prior to the closing date. BCP Council will not process applications where we are aware of a parental dispute, and no concessions will be made if an application is late for this reason.

Any application for Home to School Transport assistance will be considered based on the address used for the purpose of submitting an application for secondary school.

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.

You can also read our Parent's Guide, which will be available online at bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions from 1 September 2025.

How to apply

How do I apply for my child's secondary school place for September 2026?

If you are a BCP Council resident you must apply to BCP Council, either online or using a paper form. All applications from BCP Council residents (online and paper) must be submitted by 31 October 2025.

Please ensure that you apply using your child's legal name, and not a 'known-as' name.

Please take your time. Places are not allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and it does not matter when you apply, as long as you meet the closing date. Please do not submit your application until you are sure of your preferences.

Online applications may be made at [the Parent Portal](#) from 1 September 2025. You will need an email address to create an online account.

Paper applications can be requested from BCP Council from 1 September 2025 and can be emailed to school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk or posted to the following address:

School Admissions and Transport Team
BCP Civic Centre
Bourne Avenue
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

The online system will automatically close after 23:59 on 31 October and no further applications will be accepted. Paper forms will need to arrive by email by 23:59 on 31 October, or in the post by 31 October, to be considered on-time.

What is a Supplementary Information Form (SIF)?

If you are applying to a school with religious criteria, you may need to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) or provide additional evidence 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 2025**. The form will explain where it should be returned.

Please remember that half term is Monday 27 October 2025 until Friday 31 October 2025 as the schools will not be open to accept any forms between these dates.

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

If you are not a BCP resident, you must apply to the local authority where you live (this will be the council you pay your council tax to). You can apply for schools located within the BCP Council area on another authority's form if you wish. Our neighbouring local authorities are Dorset Council and Hampshire County Council.

How will I know if you have received my application?

Online applicants will receive an automatic email confirming the application has been received. This email will list your schools in the order you named them. Please check the preference order is correct. If you do not receive this email, please contact us to check you have submitted your application correctly.

Once your online application has been uploaded by the school admissions team you will receive a second email. Please check your spam and junk folders if you do not receive either of these emails in your usual inbox.

Academic Testing

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

If you want your child to be considered for a place at one of the grammar schools, you must name the grammar school as one of your preferences on your Local Authority preference form and submit it by **31 October 2025**. 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 5 September 2025**. Registration forms can be downloaded from the schools' websites or requested from the schools directly.

The grammar schools use the same test, so if you are interested in any of the grammar schools within BCP Council, your child only needs to sit the test once. You should register with the school where you would prefer him/her to sit the test in September.

The tests will take place on Saturday **20 September 2025**, where pupils will be tested in Maths, English and Verbal Reasoning. Results will be posted by the school mid-October 2025 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?

If you want your child to be considered for a place in the Expressly Academic class, you must name Poole High School as one of your preferences on your Local Authority preference form and submit it by **31 October 2025**. Sitting and passing 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 **14 September 2025**. No late registrations to sit the test are accepted by the school after this time.

The test takes place on Saturday **27 September 2025**. 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 the tests and is limited to 10% of the school's intake in Year 7. Expressly Academic places are allocated to the 32 children who receive the highest marks in tests and who have not been made a higher preference offer by another school.

It is not possible to name a preference **only** for the Academic class at Poole High School. All applicants who are ranked outside the top 32 places offered in the Expressly Academic class are automatically then considered for one of the non-Expressly Academic places.

Late Applications

What happens if my application is late?

If your application is not received by the closing date of 31 October 2025 it will be classed as late.

This means all applications received by 31 October 2025 will be considered before yours and the chance of getting the place you want will be reduced.

For any application received after 31 October 2025 and by 23 January 2026, parents will be notified of the outcome on 25 March 2026.

Applications received after 23 January 2026 will be processed from April onwards, depending on the date of receipt.

Notification Day

When will I receive the outcome of my application?

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 2 March 2026. Online applicants will be able to log in to their accounts from 10am on 2 March 2026 and accept the offer online.

Letters will be posted on 2 March 2026 to all applicants who have not provided a valid email address.

You can accept a place online or by email. 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 receive your notification letter by email on 2 March 2026. You do not need your password to open your emailed letter.

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

If you have not been offered your preferred school(s), please note the following:

All schools will hold a waiting list. Your offer letter will provide further information on this.

You also have the right to appeal against any school's decision to refuse a place. Again, your offer letter will provide you with further details.

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 we have been unable to offer your child 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 home. If you are not a BCP Council resident, you will need to speak to your home Authority to find out what will happen in these circumstances.

We strongly recommend that you accept the school offered 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.

Is it possible to lose a school place once it has been offered?

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

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

Home to School Transport

How will my child get to school?

Most children and young people living in the BCP Council area are not eligible for home to school transport assistance because they have access to a suitable school within a reasonable distance from their home.

This means that families do not normally receive free travel to school because there is often a school within a reasonable distance from their home address. Where

families send their child to a school further away, free transport assistance will not be provided unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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.

Transport assistance is not normally provided to attend a grammar or faith school because there is normally a suitable school nearer home.

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

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

My child has an Education, Health and Care Plan – who do I apply to?

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

You may also contact SENDiass on 01202 128181, they are independent and confidential and offer guidance on issues relating to SEND, exclusions and school admissions appeals.

Useful contact details

Children's Information Service (CIS)	School Admissions and Transport Team
BCP Council Civic Centre Bourne Avenue Bournemouth BH2 6DY Tel: 01202 123222 cis@bcpcouncil.gov.uk bcpcouncil.gov.uk	BCP Council Civic Centre Bourne Avenue Bournemouth BH2 6DY Tel: 01202 127963 school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk bcpcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions
Dorset Council School Admissions	Hampshire County Council School Admissions
Dorset Council County Hall, Dorchester DT1 1XJ Tel: 01305 221060 admissions@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/schooladmissions	Children's Services Dept Elizabeth II Court North Winchester SO24 8UG Tel: 0300 555 1377 Admissions.team@hants.gov.uk hants.gov.uk/admissions