

## **Brighton & Hove School admission arrangements consultation in Brighton & Hove – Winter 2024**

### **General information**

The council is doing the annual consultation on what the school admission arrangements might be for the September in 18 months' time. The Government dictates the timeline for this. We need to complete a public consultation by the end of January 2025 to confirm what the arrangements will be for September 2026 entry to school.

Details of what is being proposed and the online survey can be found on the council's [YourVoice portal](#).

There are also some consultation events where you can come and ask questions. Details are given in the link above. Some of your questions might already be answered in the FAQ document also published on [YourVoice](#) (in background information tab).

Some areas of the council's arrangements are proposed to stay the same. These are:

- What we call the 'relevant area' when it comes to school admissions. The council is required to define this to identify which schools must be consulted on any possible changes to other schools – we use the boundary line of Brighton and Hove and are not proposing any changes. This is not connected to any proposals around catchment areas.
- The council is required to have a published 'Coordinated scheme for school admissions'. We have one for primary phase admissions and one for secondary phase admissions. These written guides are important as they set out how and when we work with voluntary aided (church) schools, academies and other councils on how to coordinate school applications. We are proposing no changes to our published coordinated schemes other than updating the dates for 2026.

### **Proposed changes to secondary school admission arrangements.**

These proposed changes apply to the city's community schools – Patcham High, Hove Park, Blatchington Mill, Dorothy Stringer, Varndean and Longhill High.

The council is proposing some changes to admission arrangements into those schools to help with two problems in the city:

- The issue of falling pupil numbers. This matters because schools get funded by how many children they take in, so we are exploring ways in which we can help all schools in the city survive and thrive by having enough pupils every year
- Providing more families with greater opportunities to go to a school they like. Currently people living in central Brighton or central Hove have two schools in

their catchment area, whereas people living outside of the central areas have only one.

We also know that children from disadvantaged homes are less likely to do well at school and that can be made worse when more disadvantaged children all go to school together. We are looking at options for how we can help the city manage that issue better, including through our school admissions arrangements.

The changes we are proposing are:

- Reducing the numbers of children that can go into some schools when they start in year 7. We're suggesting that 30 fewer children go to Dorothy Stringer and Blatchington Mill schools because we think this helps us address the issue of falling pupil numbers in the city. We are also changing Longhill High School's number to more accurately reflect how many children attend the school.
- Setting the Free School Meal (FSM) priority (introduced for September 2025) at 30% of places, instead of keeping it at the city average. We think the figure of 30% of places available is close to what the city average will be for the coming few years and we think it makes it easier for schools and parents and carers to understand how that admission priority might be used.
- Changing the catchment area boundaries between Longhill High School and the catchment area of Dorothy Stringer and Varndean schools. It is proposed that the BN2 5 north area above Manor Way and Manor Hill is moved into the Dorothy Stringer & Varndean catchment area. It is proposed that the Kemp town area BN2 1 and BN2 5 (south) is moved into the Longhill High School area. There is a picture below which shows what that new catchment area might look like. The pink shading on the right shows the proposed area for Longhill and the yellow shading on the left is the proposed area for Dorothy Stringer and Varndean. You can see full details including a list of [postcodes here](#).



- Introducing a new priority into the admission arrangements. We are calling this 'Open Admission' and the proposal within the consultation is that 20% of the places at our community secondary schools are open to children who live in a single school catchment area, i.e. Patcham High, BACA, PACA or Longhill High.

This means that the following number of places would be available at schools under this new proposed admission priority:

Dorothy Stringer – 60 places  
Varndean – 60 places  
Blatchington Mill – 60 places  
Patcham High – 45 places  
Hove Park - 36 places  
Longhill - 42 places

The reason the council is suggesting this new priority is to give more opportunities for families that live in areas of the city with only one catchment area school to have a greater possibility to obtain a place at a different school to their single catchment school.

- We are proposing that we increase the number of preferences parents and carers can put down on their application form from 3 to 4 schools. We think this will help give parents confidence to use the new criteria for those not living in a school's catchment area explained above.

Therefore, we are suggesting that school admission priority order for entry in September 2026 may look like this:

1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children
2. Compelling medical or other exceptional reasons for attending the school
3. A sibling link applied for those living within the designated catchment area only
4. Children living within the designated catchment area and eligible for Free School Meals up to the city average (The city average will be taken as 30%).
5. Other children eligible for Free School Meals up to the city average
6. Children living outside the school's catchment area but within the catchment area for BACA, PACA, Patcham or Longhill up to 20%.
7. Pupils living in the designated catchment area for the school(s).
8. Other children.

We know that families are keen to understand what impact these proposed changes might have on their child's chance of getting into a school of choice.

We are not able to give a percentage estimate of what your child's chances will be. The Council can never guarantee a school place will be offered to any child although it is often the case that all children applying under the first 3 categories will get a place. Each year how parents state their preference affects how places are allocated. We can only assume how families may use the new admission priorities and we don't know how the applications to King's School and Cardinal Newman Catholic School, who do not have catchment areas, will affect the places in schools with catchment areas.

Each year about 130-140 secondary school places can change after the allocation day because places are not taken up, families get a new place through the

reallocation pool and some families are successful when appealing to an independent panel about the place they have been given. This also makes estimating who will get what place difficult to calculate.

We will continue to look at the data we have available including the applications for September 2025. This helps us further understand how the proposed arrangements for 2026 will be implemented.

There is a [FAQ document on YourVoice](#) that might help if you have questions about our proposals.

[Here](#) are details of planned consultation events where you can come and hear about the proposals and ask questions if you wish to.

If you need any help understanding our proposals, help with completing the survey or have further questions you can contact us on [schoolorganisation@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@brighton-hove.gov.uk)