

School Admissions Newsletter

Myths of Admissions

Applying for Secondary School

Year 7, September 2023

01 March 2023 - Every parent has marked it on their calendar - the day they find out if their child has been accepted into their preferred secondary school.

The admission process that has led to this moment can cause a huge amount of stress for parents and several myths often emerge as a result.

To help straighten things out, Bracknell Forest School Admissions Team have produced this newsletter to help verify which rumours around the process are actually just myths.



Listing one preference, or the same school three times will increase your chances of obtaining a school place - MYTH

Many parents believe that by putting only 1 school down on their application, and leaving the other spaces blank, their child will be guaranteed a place. Others believe that putting down the preferred school for all three preferences means they will be considered for the school multiple times.

FACT - This approach really limits your options if your child doesn't obtain a school place at your preferred school.

Each application for a place is considered individually and in line with the school's admission criteria. The number of preferences listed has no effect on the offer of a school place.

Schools will only look at children whose parents have named them as first preference - MYTH

Many parents believe that a school will only consider their application if they name that school as a first preference. It has also been brought to our attention for some schools to relay this information to parents however this is incorrect

FACT - The order of your preferences is not considered when ranking applications for school places. Preferences are processed as per the *Equal Preference Scheme*.

So how does the order of preferences work?

The Equal Preference Scheme was introduced to prevent admission authorities being able to give higher priority to children who listed a school as their first preference.

When you apply for a school place you are advised to list 3 schools. The school that you name as your highest preference would be the one you want the most, regardless of what criteria you meet for the school.

For Instance

- 1st Preference - Is your most wanted school
- 2nd Preference - Is your catchment/designated area school
- 3rd Preference - Is another school local to you

All the preferences have been collated and put on to our admissions system, the admission arrangements for each school are applied to your child's application alongside all the other applications for the same school. (At this stage, it doesn't matter whether you have listed the school as preference 1st, 2nd or 3rd, that is not considered as all applications are considered equally.) All applications will be ranked using the school's admission criteria, and it is where your child is placed within this ranking that determines if a school place can be offered.

Once your application has been ranked equally against the admissions criteria for each of the school's listed as preferences on your application only then will the order of your preference be considered.

For example, after ranking your application for all of your preferences

- 1st Preference - Is unable to offer a school place
- 2nd Preference - Is able to offer a school place
- 3rd Preference - Is able to offer a school place

Only now is the order of your preferences used. School Admissions can only offer 1 school place; therefore, the 2nd preference will be offered, the school place at the 3rd preference will be withdrawn and allocated to another applicant and your child will be placed on a waiting list for your 1st preference.

Applications are processed on a first come first served basis - MYTH

FACT - All applications are treated equally, regardless of when they are received. All that matters is that they are received before the closing date.

Living in the catchment/ designated area for multiple schools - MYTH

Many parents believe that a school being local to your home address, your neighbours attending the school or a school simply being within Bracknell Forest means it is your catchment/designated area school.

FACT - Although some addresses in Bracknell Forest may have multiple catchment/designated areas, the majority do not. Please take the time to check which school/s your address is in the catchment/designated area for by using our useful checker:

[CLICK HERE to check which school is your catchment/designated area school.](#)

Rejecting the school place offered will increase the chances of getting into another school - MYTH

Many parents believe that if they refuse the school place they've been offered it will increase their chances of getting their preferred school or result in their application being reconsidered.

FACT - When you refuse a school place this results in the offer being withdrawn, this does not advantage your application for your preferred schools or result in your application being reconsidered for a school place at the preferred schools.

What does refusing the school place offered mean?

Refusing an offer will not:

- advantage your application for another school
- change your child's waiting list position for your preferred schools
- advantage you in appeal
- allow for your application to be re-considered

Refusing the school place offered will result in the offer being withdrawn, this school place may then be offered to another child. Once you have refused the

school place offered, there is no guarantee this place will still be available should you change your mind.

If we are unable to make an offer at a preferred school from a waiting list or if your appeal is not successful, refusing the school place offered will result in your child not having a school place. You will be responsible for making sure your child receives education.

If you refuse the school place offered, you must inform School Admissions of the alternative arrangements you have made for your child's education.

If there are no confirmed alternative arrangements for your child's education, your details will be passed to Education Welfare.

What does accepting the school place offered mean?

If you accept the school place offered, it will not:

- affect your child's position on any waiting list for your preferred schools
- affect your chances of being offered a school place at your preferred schools
- affect an appeal that you may wish to make

If we are unable to make an offer at a preferred school from a waiting list or if your appeal is not successful, accepting the school place offered will make sure your child has a school place.

Siblings of existing pupils are automatically guaranteed a place - MYTH

There's no automatic right to a place at a school already attended by a sibling.

FACT - Although having a sibling at the same school is considered in most school's admission arrangements the priority of the sibling criterion can vary, which means not all schools will prioritise admission to siblings. School places, regardless of criterion can never be guaranteed.

Attending a 'Feeder' primary school guarantees a place at a particular secondary school - MYTH

FACT - There are no feeder schools in Bracknell Forest. Attending a particular primary school does not prioritise or guarantee admission to a particular school.

You cannot apply for a faith school if you do not practice that faith, or your child is not baptised - MYTH

Not being of a faith, practicing that faith or baptised does not mean that you cannot apply for a faith school.

FACT - If a faith school receives more applications than there are available places, then offers will be made in line with the admission criterion for the school and those applicants who are practicing that faith or have been baptised may then be ranked as a high priority within this admission criterion.

The admissions criterion is published within the school's admission arrangements.

You think your preferred school will be oversubscribed, so there is no point applying - MYTH

FACT - You should always list your preferences in your preferred order. The demand for places at schools changes every year. If you do not apply you will not be considered.

You are guaranteed a place at your catchment/designated area school even if you don't name it as a preference - MYTH

FACT - You must name your catchment/ designated area school as a preference if you want your child to be considered for a place there.

If none of your preferences can be offered School Admissions will look to allocate the next nearest school with available places after all preferences for all applications have been considered. This may not be your catchment/ designated area school if it is not the closest school or if this school is full from applicants who did name it as a preference.



It is common for parents to talk about admissions; however, you should never base your application or knowledge of the admission process on what happened to a friend, neighbour, colleague etc. All of the **FACTS** and information you need to apply is within **The Guide to Secondary Education 2023.24** which is published online now.

[Click here to read The Guide](#)

If after reading this myth buster, you wish to amend your online application you can do so by logging back into your application through the Citizens Portal, before midday on 31 October 2022.

[Please ensure you re-submit your application.](#)

School Admissions Webpage

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