Rotherham Admission to Secondary School – Legal requirements

School Admissions Code 2021

The purpose of the Code is to ensure that all school places for maintained schools and Academies (excluding maintained special schools and special academies) are allocated and offered in an open and fair way. The Code has the force of law, and where the words '**must**' or '**must not**' are used, these represent a mandatory requirement. Admission authorities and local authorities **must** also comply with the regulations and legislation set out in the Appendix to the Code.

In drawing up their admission arrangements, admission authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear, and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily

Admission authorities **must** set ('determine') admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority **must** first publicly consult on those arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they **must** be consulted on at least once every 7 years.

Consultation **must** be for a minimum of 6 weeks and **must** take place between **1 October** and **31 January** of the school year before those arrangements are to apply (the determination year).

<u>For example:</u> for arrangements which are to apply for entry in September 2025, consultation **must** be completed by 31 January 2024.

This consultation period allows parents, other schools, religious authorities, and the local community to raise any concerns about the proposed admission arrangements.

Once all arrangements have been determined, arrangements can be objected to and referred to the Schools Adjudicator. Objections to admission arrangements **must** be referred to the Adjudicator by **15 May** in the school year before those arrangements are to apply (the determination year).

<u>For example:</u> for arrangements which are to apply for entry in September 2025, objections **must** be referred to the Adjudicator by 15 May 2024.

Any decision of the Adjudicator **must** be acted on by the admission authority and admission arrangements amended accordingly. The local authority will collate and publish all the admission arrangements in the area in a single composite prospectus.

A parent can apply for a place for their child at any state-funded school in any area. If a school is undersubscribed, any parent that applies **must** be offered a place. When oversubscribed, a school's admission authority **must** rank applications in order against its published oversubscription criteria and send that list back to the local authority.

All preferences are collated and parents then receive an offer from the local authority at the highest preference school at which a place is available. The offer is made on National Offer Day – this is **1 March** for secondary schools (or the next working day where 1 March falls on a weekend or bank holiday), in the year in which the child will be admitted.

Parents, and in some circumstances children, have the right to appeal against an admission authority's decision to refuse admission. The admission authority must set out the reasons for the decision, that there is a right of appeal and the process for hearing such appeals. The admission authority **must** establish an independent appeals panel to hear the appeal. The panel will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal. Where a panel upholds the appeal, the school is required to admit the child.

Further information is available on the Local Authority website:

https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/schools-schooling/school-admission-appeals.

Email schoolappeals@rotherham.gov.uk

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admission to other age groups on the grounds that they have already reached their PAN. They may, however, refuse admission where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

admissions.enquiries@rotherham.gov.uk