

**Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools**

**2021-2022**

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Contact Information:

**Torbay Council Student Services**

Telephone: 01803 208908 Email: [pupil.services@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:pupil.services@torbay.gov.uk)

Address: c/o Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay TQ1 3DR

**Introduction**

This scheme has been developed in consultation with schools and admission authorities who want to work together to provide a co-ordinated in year application process to enable children to enter schools in Torbay.

Where the word ‘parent’ is used in this document, it also includes other people in the role of parent e.g. guardians or carers who have parental responsibility for a child needing a school place.

We may update this scheme after we have published it to comply with any changes to the School Admissions Code, or if there are legislative changes following the UK’s departure from the European Union.

This scheme describes the process for admitting children into Year 7 in secondary school. There is also a booklet, TIPS8 that summarises the admission process, and a secondary supplement that gives information about the way that each school prioritises its applications for places. These documents together make up the ‘composite prospectus’ that local authorities have to publish each year. They are available on the council’s website [www.torbay.gov.uk](http://www.torbay.gov.uk) or by telephoning Student Services.

**Who processes the admission applications?**

Torbay Council (the local authority or ‘LA’) processes the admission applications for all children living in Torbay who need a reception place either inside or outside of Torbay. Parents who live outside of Torbay but would like their child to attend a Torbay school must apply to the LA where they live.

Torbay Council’s Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team processes the admission applications for children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) because there is a separate statutory consultation process.

Parents of children who live outside England e.g. in Wales where there is a separate application process should apply directly to Torbay LA if they would like a place for their child in a Torbay school.

The LA does not get involved in the processing of applications for South Devon High School or for independent schools. Parents should contact them directly.

**How are parents told about the need to apply?**

The LA will do all it can to ensure that every Torbay parent who has a child in Year 6 is aware of the need to apply for a place in secondary school for the following September. The LA will provide a letter for schools to give to parents of Year 5 children in June 2020, giving details of the selective testing process and of open days and evenings for all Torbay secondary schools. The LA will also give schools a letter to pass to parents in September 2020 explaining how to apply for a secondary school place. Wherever possible, these letters will be sent electronically. In addition, the LA will provide posters for primary and secondary schools to display. The LA will use social media to alert parents of the need to apply. Parents who apply online but do not complete their application will receive a reminder email during the week prior to the closing date. The LA will compare Year 6 school class lists with applications to let schools know of any parents who have not applied by mid-October, for them to remind. Despite all of this, it is the parent’s responsibility to apply for a secondary school place for their child.

**How does the selective testing process work?**

Children wanting to attend a selective school (including the selective stream at The Spires College) will need to complete a selective test. Applicants will need to complete an exam registration form to enable their child to sit the test. These forms are available from selective schools or from the LA website. They should be returned directly to the selective school where the parent wants their child to sit the test. The deadline for returning the forms is noon on 9 September 2020. This is in addition to completing the Common Application Form by 31 October 2020. No place will be offered at a selective school unless a parent has completed a Common Application Form that names the school as a preference.

All children whose parent registers for a selective test will be able to sit the test. Children can sit the test at any selective school or school with a selective stream within Torbay. The test will take place on 19 September 2020. The same test result will be used for an application to any of the selective schools; students only need to sit the test once. In certain circumstances where a child cannot take the test on this date, schools will arrange an alternative test date.

If there are circumstances on or shortly before the test date that adversely affect the child taking the test, parents must notify all the selective schools they want to apply to immediately if they want these circumstances to be taken into account. Schools will decide what weight, if any, to give to these circumstances.

Schools will write a guidance letter to parents following the test to tell them whether or not their child has reached the standard to be considered for a place at any of Torbay’s selective schools. This letter will be posted on or as soon as possible after 16 October 2020. This does not guarantee a place for a child at any selective school. Parents will need to complete and submit a Common Application Form by 31 October 2020 for their child to be considered for a place. If there are more successful candidates than there are places available, places will be offered to the children ranked most highly against the school’s admission oversubscription criteria.

If a parent completes and submits a Common Application Form by 31 October 2020 that names a selective school and the child has not sat the selective test, the application will be processed but as the child will have no rank they will not get a place at the selective school. If a child sits a selective test but no application form is submitted, the application cannot be processed and no place will be offered.

**How do parents apply for a place?**

The person applying must have parental responsibility for the child needing a school place.

There is a Common Application Form (Form CAF1) for all parents to use. This will be available online at [www.torbay.gov.uk](http://www.torbay.gov.uk) during the application period, 1 September 2020 to 31 October 2020. Parents can complete and submit the form electronically.

Paper forms will also be available from the LA and from primary schools.

Some schools use supplementary information forms for parents who want their child to be prioritised for specific reasons e.g. on grounds of faith or because the parent is a member of staff at the school. These forms are used to collect additional information to help the admission authority to prioritise children correctly. Parents should return these forms directly to the school by the application deadline.

These supplementary forms and exam registration form are optional and parents can choose whether or not to complete one, depending on their circumstances. All parents must also complete the common application form in order to make an application for a school place. Schools should check with the LA that a common application form has been completed for each parent who has sent them a supplementary information form. If the supplementary information is completed before the deadline but the common application is not completed until after the deadline, the application will be treated as ‘late’.

Schools and must forward any common application forms they receive to the LA. They should keep a record of any application received.

Parents can list up to 3 schools on the common application form, in order of preference. These schools can be inside or outside of Torbay. Parents will be able to give the reasons for their preferences on the form.

Parents who apply online will receive a confirmation email that they should keep safely as a record of their application. Parents who apply on paper should keep a copy of their application. They should also send a stamped, addressed envelope or postcard with their application so that the LA can confirm that they have received the application. If a parent sends in a stamped, addressed envelope and has no response after two weeks they should phone Student Services to check what has happened.

Parents posting their application form or supplementary information form close to the deadline should obtain proof of posting and should send a copy of this to Student Services. Where there is proof that the application was posted prior to the deadline, the application will be treated as an on time application. If no proof of posting is sent in and there is no evidence from a postmark that the application was posted before the deadline, the LA will treat the application as late.

**What are the rules if a child lives abroad?**

The Local Authority must not refuse to admit a child on the basis of their nationality or immigration status nor remove them from roll on this basis. The local authority should not refuse an application made from overseas (or from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands), on the grounds that the applicant does not currently live in its area.

Parents should apply in the same way as other parents of children who already live in the area. No place will be given that conflicts with the requirements of UK Border Agency and Immigration Agency, we will not offer places to children while they are overseas except for children who have a right of abode in this country unless a valid visa permitting entry into the country is provided. Generally parents will need to provide a photocopy of a passport including a valid visa or other document allowing for entry into the United Kingdom/ or documentation showing that the child is living in the United Kingdom and is entitled to live in the United Kingdom for an application to be accepted.\*

\*this change has been put in place following our exit from the EU in January 2021.

**What if a child has special educational needs or a disability (SEND)?**

If a parent has a child with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) or if they are seeking an assessment placement in a special unit or special school they should still complete a common application form. They should also contact Torbay’s SEND team: [send@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:send@torbay.gov.uk) for any additional advice.

Where children have an EHCP the LA’s Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team will follow the SEND Code of Practice. Parents will still be invited to express a preference for up to three schools. The LA will then consult with the preferred school. The LA expects that the school will be named on the Education, Health and Care Plan and the pupil will be given a place at the school unless the school cannot meet the child’s needs, or the admission would be a good use of resources.

**How does the admission process work?**

After the closing date the LA will check that all applications received are on the system. The LA will forward applications for schools in other LA areas to the correct LA.

Torbay LA will forward details of their applications to all other admitting authorities by 24 November 2020. This will include VA and Foundation schools and academies within Torbay who manage their own application process. The LA will not tell other admitting authorities whether the application is a first, second or third preference. The LA will send applications for places outside Torbay to other LAs for them to be ranked by their admission authorities. LAs will exchange information via a secure electronic system except in the case of electronic failure.

All admitting authorities will rank each application against the admission criteria for the school and place them in order of priority. They will use only the admission criteria to prioritise the applications. They will return their ranked lists to the LA by 11 January 2021. The LA will rank applications in the same way where it is the admitting authority for a school or is acting on behalf of the school.

The LA will allocate each child a place at the parent’s highest ranked school that can offer a place. This means they will decide which place to allocate if more than one school can offer a place to a child. Where the LA is not able to allocate a place at any of the parent’s preferred schools, they will allocate the child to the closest school (by walking route) to their home address within Torbay where there are places available taking into account travel time and transport costs. The LA will liaise with other LAs regarding cross-border applications.

The LA will send all Torbay primary schools a draft list of children allocated to them by 22 February 2021 for schools to do a final check.

On the National Offer Day, 01 March 2021, parents who applied online and said they wanted to be notified by email will receive an email. Other parents will be sent a letter by second class post.

The email or letter to parents will tell them

1. Which school their child has been allocated;
2. Why their child has not been allocated a place at another preferred school;
3. How to appeal for a place at a school where the application has been refused;
4. The date by when parents must submit their appeal (01 April 2021).

Each admitting authority will give information to the LA about the number of children allocated a place at their school under each oversubscription criterion. The LA will publish this information on its website to assist parents in deciding whether or not to appeal and to inform parents applying for places in future years.

Parents cannot normally have more than one offer of a place.

**What are the timelines?**

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| The closing date for parents to submit the Common Application Form will be 31 October 2020. The online application facility will close at 23.59pm on that date. |
| Timetable   |  |  | | --- | --- | | 1 September 2020 | Torbay Council website opens for online applications and paper forms available | | 9 September 2020 12 noon | Closing date for receipt of Registration Forms for grammar schools | | 19 September 2020 | Selective testing day | | 18 September 2020 | Closing date for football academy and performing arts academy registrations at Torquay Academy | | 16 October 2020 | Parents notified of outcomes of selective testing | | 31 October 2020 | Closing date for Common Application Forms | | 17 November 2020 | LA sends pupil information to other LAs | | 24 November 2020 | LA sends pupil information to other admitting authorities | | 11 January 2021 | Foundation/VA schools and Academies return ranked lists | | 4 February 2021 | LA applies agreed scheme for Torbay secondary schools and informs other LAs of offers made to its residents. Address changes accepted until this date except where different deadline set by an admission authority. | | 22 February 2021 | Schools informed of allocation of pupils | | 1 March 2021 | National Allocation Day. Allocation letters sent to parents by second class post. Online applicants receive email notification of allocation. | | 15 March 2021 | Deadline for 2nd round applications & changes of preference | | 30 March 2021 | Decisions on 2nd round applications and allocations where no application made | | 01 April 2021 | Closing date for receipt of 1st round appeals to be included in main body of appeal hearings | | 14 May 2021 | Closing date for receipt of 2nd round appeals | | May/June 2021 | Appeals | | 1 September 2021 | Date on which applications become In Year applications | |
| **What is the admission address?**  The home address used to decide on priority for admission purposes is the one where the child is living at the time of the application (normally the closing date). Where a child lives with separated parents the admission address is the one where the child lives for the majority of the school week. The admission authority, or the LA acting on its behalf, will make the final decision about the address to be used as the admission address, according to the definition of ‘home address’ given in the school’s admission policy.  When a school is oversubscribed the admission authority will usually make checks to ensure the given address is correct. This may involve checking council tax records and/or asking for documents to prove that the parent who has care of the child is living at the given address. Acceptable documents may include council tax statements, utility bills, benefit statements or tax credit statements. Phone bills and bank statements are unlikely to be acceptable. Each admission authority will make its own decisions about what evidence they will accept.  If the admission authority has a concern that an address may be fraudulent or misleading, they may ask the parent for additional information and may visit the address to check that it is genuine. The council or other admitting authorities may use Torbay’s Address of Convenience Protocol. If the address if found to be fraudulent the admission authority may withdraw the offer of a place. They will take into account the length of time that a child has been attending the school.  Where an applicant is a member of the UK forces or a crown servant returning from overseas, official proof of a posting to the area will be required as in the School Admissions Code.  **What if a child moves house after the application deadline?**  If a family moves house on or before 04 February 2021, or if they have exchanged contracts on a house purchase by that date, the new address will be used as the admission address unless a school’s admission policy says something different. If the move means that the schools applied for are no longer appropriate, the parent may give some new preferences. Any parent wanting to apply for a selective place will need to contact the school directly to make arrangements to be tested. If a parent moves on or before 04 February 2021 and does not tell the LA, and their child is given a place at a school that they should not be given based on the new address, the place may be taken away if the school is over-subscribed.  **What other changes of preference can be made after the closing date?**  Once the closing date has passed, parents can only change their preferences if there is a significant change of circumstances. This is defined as   1. Where there are significant new medical reasons supported by a medical practitioner that may make the original choice of school unsuitable 2. Where a child is taken into care and the change is supported by a letter/email from Social Care, as long as the information is new and was not available to the applicant at the time the application was made.   If the change of preference includes an application for a selective school, parents will need to contact the school directly to find out whether it is possible to the child to be tested.  Other changes of preference can only be made after the National Offer Day (01 March 2021).  **What happens to late applications?**  Late applications are those received after the closing date of 31 October 2020 and before the start of September 2021. These will be processed after the National Offer Day. Parents wanting to apply for a place at a selective school should contact the school at the time when they send their application to the LA to find out about testing arrangements. Late applicants complete the same application form but the online process will not be available. An electronic version of CAF1 will be available on the council’s website to download, complete and email back to Student Services. Very occasionally there is an exceptional reason why a parent could not submit an application by the closing date. If this reason is genuine and serious the LA or admission authority may agree to treat the application as on time. Acceptable reasons might be e.g. the death of a close relative or serious illness meaning the applicant or a close relative is in hospital. As the application period is two months, these exceptions will be rare.  Parents wanting their late application to be treated as on time will need to make their case in a letter or email to Student Services and to send in supporting evidence. This must be done as soon as possible after the closing date. The later the request, the weaker the case is likely to be unless there is good reason. The LA will tell the parent when a decision has been made.  **What happens after the national offer day?**  Any parent who is not happy with the school place offered to their child can request a change of preference. If no place is available at a higher preference school the child will keep the offer already made unless a parent refuses this place by letter or email. Parents allocated places in the first round wanting to change their preferences should do so by 15 March 2021.  Admission authorities will rank late applications received by 15 March 2021 along with any changes of preference requested by parents after the National Offer Day. Offers of places for late applications and changes of preference will be made on 30 March 2021. All late applications and changes of preference received by 15 March will be treated equally and parents will be offered a place at their highest preference school that has a place available for their child.  The LA will prioritise applications and changes of preference received after 15 March by the date when they are received. If a vacancy only arises after the date of receipt, all applications current on the date the vacancy arises (waiting list, changes of preference and new late applications) will be ranked by the admission authority using the school’s oversubscription criteria to decide who takes highest priority.  **What happens with duplicate and disputed applications?**  If two parents both apply for a place for the same child but give different preferred schools, or the same schools but in a different order, the LA will contact both parents and ask them to agree on the schools and the order of preference.  All parental applications are subject to Data Protection legislation and the personal content of an application will not be shared (other than to agencies mentioned in the privacy statement on the application form) without the agreement of the applicant, unless there is a legal requirement to do so. However, the LA will inform a person with parental responsibility that an application has been made and will share the preferred schools if asked to do so. The LA will first check with the person who made the application that there is no legal reason to withhold this information.  Where no agreement can be reached by parents, places may be held at two schools and one place will be removed when the child is physically admitted to the other school as a child cannot have two school places. Parents will be asked to settle disputes about school places if at all possible as uncertainty can be upsetting for the child.  **How does the waiting list work?**  Any child who does not get a place at the first preference school will automatically be added to the waiting list. If a place becomes available the LA will contact the parent of the child at the top of the waiting list and offer the place. The allocated school will not be changed until the parent has confirmed they want the place at the waiting list school.  The LA will manage the waiting list until the beginning of September 2020. After this, all admission authorities must keep a waiting list until the end of December 2020. The LA will do this on behalf of the schools that take part in the joint In-Year scheme.  Any parent who wants to keep their child on a waiting list for a school after 31 December 2020 will need to complete an in-year application form during December 2020. Admission authorities do not legally have to maintain a waiting list after 31 December. However, the LA will continue to keep a waiting list for all schools participating in the in-year co-ordinated scheme (this is separately published on Torbay Council’s website). Parents will need to email or write to Student Services to confirm that they want their child to continue on the waiting list before the start of each half-term. Parents will also have to complete a new application form the following September if they are still waiting for a place. |
| **How do parents appeal?**  Parents who have been refused a place at a school can appeal against this refusal. For on time applications the deadline to ensure the appeal is heard before the end of the summer term is 01 April 2021. If a parent appeals after this deadline their appeal will be heard after all the on-time appeals and this may put them at a disadvantage because any places the appeal panel decides can be offered may have already been filled. Details of the appeal process are included on Torbay Council’s website and/or individual school websites. |
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