

Co-ordinated scheme for admissions to school in 2012/13

1 Principles and scope of the scheme

- 1.1 The scheme has been drawn up to fulfil the requirements set out in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Code, 2010 (published by the Department for Education (DfE)), in particular:

..to simplify the admission process for parents whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism that ensures that, as far as is practicable, every parent of a child living in a local authority area who has applied to a maintained school or Academy is sent one, and only one, offer of a school place by their local authority. (3.2)

All references in this co-ordinated scheme are to the School Admissions Code unless otherwise stated.

The key statutory provisions relating to co-ordinated admission arrangements are:

- every parent of a child living in a local authority area who has applied to a maintained school or Academy is sent one, and only one, offer of a school place by their local authority (3.2)
- formulating a co-ordinated scheme (3.6-3.12)
- fair admission arrangements (1.72-1.74)
- a common application form which allows parents to express at least three preferences and give reasons (3.15a)
- an online application facility
- how application forms are treated and the use of supplementary forms (1.77-1.79)
- schools must consider and decide on applications for school places in accordance with their published arrangements (1.34-1.36)
- parents who are unsuccessful in all their preferences must be offered an alternative school place (3.15g)
- offers in the secondary transfer scheme to be sent on 1 March (or the next working day if 1 March is not a working day)
- closing date for applications: 31 October for secondary, 15 January for primary
- exchange of information with neighbouring LAs by dates specified in the scheme (3.15b)
- rights of children from overseas (1.58-1.64)
- boarding provision (1.68)
- independent Choice Advice service (Appendix 5)

- 1.2 The Hampshire scheme takes into account all relevant legislation including the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Education Act 2002, legislation on sex discrimination, race relations, disability (particularly the School Admissions Code), and relevant regulations, in particular the School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, a statutory duty under section 14(3A) of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by Section 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) and the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- 1.3 The scheme applies to all maintained schools, including voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools and academies in Hampshire.
- 1.4 The scheme sets out key actions and general principles rather than detail. Administrative procedures will be made available to schools at the end of the summer term each year by the County Admissions Team.

2 **The co-ordinated scheme for admissions - September 2012**

2.1 Terminology

LA – local authority (for residents living in the administrative area of Hampshire County Council, this is the County Council)

Home LA – the LA area in which the child lives

Maintaining LA – the LA responsible for the preferred school(s)

Admissions Team – refers to the Hampshire County Admissions Team

Deadline – For the main admissions round, the date and time given by which the form must be submitted.

Hampshire school – Those schools, including academies, located in the administrative area of Hampshire County Council and maintained by Hampshire County Council.

Hampshire parent – a parent living in the administrative area of Hampshire County Council (but whose child[ren] may not necessarily attend a Hampshire maintained school).

Schools Adjudicator – a statutory officer who is appointed by The Secretary of State but is independent of him. The Adjudicator decides on objections to admission arrangements and variations of determined admission arrangements. The Schools Adjudicator comes under the supervision of The Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council.

2.2 Information for parents

The Code requires Local Authorities to publish clear, objective and fair admission arrangements (4.6). The Education (School Information) (England) Regulations 2002 (as amended) set out these requirements in detail in Schedules 2 and 3.

The Code gives parents the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator (4.14) if they believe the arrangements do not comply with the law or the mandatory requirements of the Code.

The LA will publish its composite prospectus, no later than 12 September in the offer year (Appendix 4, para 7), online as well as in hard copy available for distribution without charge to parents on request (Appendix 4, para 8) throughout the offer year.

Information about school admissions and school places will be sent to all Hampshire infant, primary and junior and secondary schools and academies and to neighbouring LAs. Main round applications forms and supplementary forms for all schools and Academies in the local authority area will be available from the local authority, online or in hard copy, and from schools, no later than 12 September in the offer year. In-year application forms will be available from the Admissions Team, from schools or online at any time.

2.3 Applications

All Hampshire parents requiring a school place will be required to complete a common application form or apply online, regardless of the status or LA of the maintained schools or academy for which they wish to apply.

In addition, the governors of some schools may require a supplementary information form to be completed (to ensure they have sufficient criteria-related information to be able to allocate places correctly). This form is **additional to, and does not replace**, the application on Hampshire's common application form or online application which must be completed in every case. Voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools and academies must consider an application on a common application form or online application, even when not supported by a supplementary information form. The Code (1.78 – 1.79) sets out clear guidance on what information can be requested on a supplementary information form.

Governing bodies of voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools and Academies must forward to the Admissions Team any application made to the school direct (regardless of whether the parent making the application resides in the administrative area of the County Council). Governing bodies of voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools and academies must determine by reference to the school's admissions criteria the ranking of all applications to the school, unless they have asked the local authority to do this on their behalf. When requested to do so such governing bodies must notify the Admissions Team of their determination within the prescribed timescales.

2.4 Consideration of Applications

All preferences will be considered simultaneously. Applications are considered against each school's published admission criteria. Where a place can be offered at more than one school, the local authority will offer a place at the highest named school at which the applications is successful. For Hampshire residents, in the event that none of the preferred schools have places available, the catchment or next nearest Hampshire school with a place available (which could be the child's current school) will be offered. Where this school is an admission authority school confirmation from the

school will be sought. For residents of other local authorities, the home LA will allocate an alternative place.

In the main admissions round, a change of address notified to the Admissions Team after the deadline for applications may be used as the application address if the family has, by the freezing date for the relevant round (see 3.1 below), provided evidence of the new address. A rental agreement or a solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts will be accepted as evidence of a change of address. If evidence is not provided by this date, the application will be considered on the basis of the previous address. Following the freezing dates, any change of address notified to the Admissions Team and supported by adequate evidence can be used to determine position on a waiting list.

For in-year applications, a rental agreement or a solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts will also be accepted as evidence of a change of address.

In all cases of change of address, the Admissions Team will ask schools to verify that the move took place. The LA may remove an offer of a place based on an address which did not subsequently become the child's main address.

Special conditions apply in the case of service families.

Where a child lives at more than one address, the address where the child spends more time will be used for the application. Where a child's time is split equally between two addresses, parents may choose which to use for the purpose of the application.

In all cases further evidence may be requested before a place is offered.

2.5 Children with challenging behaviour (3.30-3.33)

Admission authority schools must not refuse to admit children on the basis of their behaviour elsewhere except in the case of pupils who have been permanently excluded twice in the preceding two years and, exceptionally, outside the normal admissions round in certain limited circumstances where the school already has a particularly high proportion of children with challenging behaviour and falls into specified performance-related categories.

3 **Main admissions round**

- 3.1 National deadlines are in place for both primary and secondary admissions rounds. The secondary offer date is set nationally and the primary offer date locally. For each round a 'freezing' date is set locally: applications received after this date cannot be included in the main admissions round and will not be considered until two weeks after the offer date.
- 3.2 After the deadline, and until the freezing date for the round, only changes to preferences arising from significant changes of circumstance will be allowed; such applications may be considered alongside on-time applications, where appropriate.

- 3.3 Applications received after the deadline but before the freezing date for each round will be considered in the main admissions round but after all on-time applications, unless there are exceptional circumstances that warrant consideration.
- 3.4 Under no circumstances may any governing body, headteacher or anyone else associated with a school or the County Council offer a place, or give any indication that a place might be available, before the official notification date for each round. Neither should details of discussions about the number of applications or offers be included in governing body minutes available to the public.
- 3.5 Waiting lists are established 14 days after the single notification date. A waiting list will be maintained for each oversubscribed community and voluntary controlled school. Oversubscribed admission authority schools must maintain a waiting list for at least one term in the academic year of admission. A child will automatically have their name added to the waiting list of any school named as a higher preference than the school allocated. Parents wishing their child to be included on the waiting list of another school named in the application must inform the authority in writing.

Each waiting list will be ranked according to the admission policy for the school with no account being taken of the length of time on the waiting list. When a place becomes available it will be allocated to the child at the top of the waiting list at the end of the day that the place became available. The LA will offer the applicant the place in writing. A school must not inform the family of the child they believe to be at the top of the waiting list that a place has become available for their child unless this has been agreed by the Admissions Team.

In-Year Fair Access (3.19) and school closure arrangements (1.47b) will take priority over the waiting list. The LA will write periodically to all those on waiting lists to ask if they wish to remain on the list.

- 3.6 The main round admission process will be coordinated with neighbouring authorities beyond each offer date until late applicants have been offered school places for September 2012.
- 3.7 The Admissions Team will publish to schools detailed lists of allocated children and will provide schools with the associated ATF files for importing to SIMS.

Secondary transfer

- 3.8 Information about Year 6 out-county pupils will be exchanged between LAs during the summer term preceding the application year.
- 3.9 Hampshire parents with Year 6 children attending (maintained) schools in other LAs will be sent information about the application process direct by the Admissions Team.
- 3.10 Parents of Year 6 children attending Hampshire (maintained) schools but living in other LAs will receive information about the application process direct from their home LA.

- 3.11 Parents of Year 6 Hampshire children attending independent schools may obtain details about the application process from the Admissions Team.
- 3.12 Applications by Hampshire residents
Applications must be made online, or on the Hampshire common application form (CS2) and submitted to the County Admissions Team or the child's current Hampshire primary or junior school, by **Monday 31 October 2011**.
- Primary and junior schools will send CS2s to the Admissions Team as they receive them and by Monday 7 November 2011 at the latest.
- 3.13 Applications by Hampshire residents for schools outside Hampshire
Applications for schools in neighbouring LAs will be recorded by the Admissions Team and then sent to the maintaining LA of the school on Friday 11 November 2011.
- 3.14 Applications from non-Hampshire residents for Hampshire schools
These will be submitted using the home LA's common application form or online system. Use of the Hampshire CS2 or online system is not permitted. Parents will send their application form direct to their home LA who, in turn, will pass relevant information to the Hampshire Admissions Team on 11 November 2011.
- 3.15 Single Notification Date
On 1 March 2012 the Admissions Team will send letters to, or notify by electronic means, all Hampshire parents who applied for a place in Year 7 in September 2012 before 6 January 2012, informing them of the outcome of their applications. (Appendix 2, 7e)
- 3.16 Applications received after 31 October 2011
Applications to community and voluntary controlled schools received after the deadline (31 October 2011) and by 6 January 2012 will be referred to the Admissions Team and will be considered after all on-time applications unless exceptional circumstances apply. All Hampshire schools will forward any such application forms to the Admissions Team. The authority will decide if an application can be considered as on-time within the co-ordinated scheme.
- 3.17 Late applications received after 6 January 2012
Applications received after 6 January 2012 must be made on the out-of round form and will be handled by the LA with the necessary liaison with schools that are their own admission authority. They will not be considered until at least fourteen days after the offer letters have been sent. They will then be accepted or refused according to whether places are available in the schools. Decisions will be sent by the LA.
- Schools named in applications from parents who have already applied for a place for the same child will be deemed to be lower preference than those named in the earlier application unless the parent informs the Admissions Team otherwise. Repeat applications will only be administered once the outcome of any previous application has been notified to the parent.

Infant to junior transfer and applications for Year R

3.18 Applications by Hampshire residents

Applications must be made online, or on the Hampshire common application form (CJ2 or CR2) submitted to the Admissions Team or a Hampshire school, by **Sunday 15 January 2012**.

Schools will forward completed application forms to the Admissions Team as they receive them and by Friday 20 January 2012 at the latest.

3.19 Applications by Hampshire residents for schools outside Hampshire

Applications for schools in neighbouring LAs will be recorded by the Admissions Team and then sent to the maintaining LA of the school on Friday 27 January 2012.

3.20 Applications from non-Hampshire residents for Hampshire schools

These will be submitted using the home LA's common application form or online system. Use of the Hampshire CJ2 or online system is not permitted. Parents will send their application form direct to their home LA who, in turn, will pass relevant information to the Hampshire Admissions Team on 27 January 2012.

3.21 Single Notification Date

On Thursday 19 April 2012 the Admissions Team will send letters to, or notify by electronic means, all Hampshire parents who have submitted applications for Year R or Year 3 in September 2012 before 17 February 2012, informing them of the outcome of their applications.

3.22 Applications received after the deadline

Applications to community and voluntary controlled schools received after the deadline (i.e. after 15 January 2012) and by 17 February 2012 will be referred to the Admissions Team and will normally be considered after all on-time applications unless exceptional circumstances apply. All Hampshire schools will forward any such application forms to the Admissions Team. The authority will decide if an application can be considered as on-time within the co-ordinated scheme.

3.23 Applications received after 17 February 2012

Applications received after 17 February 2012 must be made on the out-of round form and will be handled by the LA with the necessary liaison with schools that are their own admission authority. They will not be considered until at least fourteen days after the offer notifications have been sent. They will then be accepted or refused according to whether places are available in the schools. Decisions will be sent by the LA.

Schools named in applications from parents who have already applied for a place for the same child will be deemed to be lower preference than those named in the earlier application unless the parent informs the Admissions Team otherwise. Repeat applications will only be administered once the outcome of any previous application has been notified to the parent.

4 In-year admissions

4.1 Applications

All completed application forms must be returned to the home LA. The date of receipt by the LA determines the date of application. In the case of forms handed in to schools for forwarding to the Admissions Team, the date of receipt by the school is the relevant date.

4.2 Availability of places

In the case of community and voluntary controlled schools the LA will assess the availability of places either through internal records or through communication with schools. In the case of voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools and academies the availability of places will be communicated to the LA by the schools on request (see 4.6 below).

4.3 Oversubscription

Applications received on the same day will be considered together. Where there are more applications for a place at a school than places available, the school's published oversubscription criteria will be used to determine the allocation of places.

4.4 Determination of applications

Applications for community and voluntary controlled schools will be determined by the LA; applications for voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools and academies will be determined by the respective governing bodies unless there is an agreement with the governing body that the LA acts on their behalf.

4.5 Offer letters

Offer letters, including those to Hampshire residents who have secured a place at a school in another authority's area, will normally be sent out by the home LA by second class post within ten school days of receipt of the application (subject to 5.4 below) or of confirmation from a neighbouring LA that a place can be offered, whichever is the later.

The offer letter will request acceptance of the offer within ten school days and will outline any entitlement to assistance with transport. If a place cannot be offered at the preferred school, the letter will explain the waiting list procedures and the right of appeal.

The allocated school will be advised of the admission by the LA (by way of copy of the letter to the parent or alternative electronic transfer of the child's details). If it has been agreed by the Admissions Team, the child may start on roll before the formal offer letter has been received. In any event the child will be required to be on roll and attending as soon as possible. Where additional support is required that is not available and/or there are significant special/medical needs there may be a delay. The child should however normally be attending within 3 school weeks of the date of the letter. The school will inform the Admissions Team when the child is on roll.

In the event that an applicant does not respond to an offer from the LA within the ten school days specified, a final reminder letter will be sent giving a further seven days to respond to the offer. If no response is received with seven days, a second

letter will be sent stating that the offer has been withdrawn. In any event, if the child has not taken up the place within four school weeks of the offer (or six from the specified date in June – see 5.4 below), and this is not due to school action, the place will be withdrawn.

4.6 Applications to admission authority schools

Within two school days of receipt of an application which names a Hampshire voluntary aided, foundation or trust school or an academy as a preference, the LA will send details either manually or electronically to that school for consideration. Within two further school days of receipt of the application, the school will advise the LA of the availability of places, and, if applicable, the ranking of applications and an update on the waiting list.

4.7 Applications to schools in other LAs

Within two school days of receipt of an application which names a school in another authority's area the LA will send details either manually or electronically to that authority, unless a place can be offered at a higher preference Hampshire school.

4.8 Applications for a Hampshire school by a resident of another LA

When the LA is notified by another authority (either manually or electronically) that a resident of that LA has named a Hampshire school in an application, the LA will advise that authority of the availability of places within:

- two school days for a community or voluntary controlled school; or
- six school days for a voluntary aided, foundation or trust school or academy.

4.9 Looked after children

Applications on behalf of looked after children will be given the highest priority. On receipt of appropriately detailed representations from those with legal responsibility for the child supporting the view that admission to a specified school is in the child's best interests, the LA will normally require the admission even where this takes the school over its published admission number (PAN).

4.10 Fair Access Admissions

By law, each LA is required to publish a Fair Access protocol which includes statutorily determined categories of vulnerable children. The Fair Access protocol allows an admission to be made which take a school over its PAN in the relevant year group. Should it be determined that an application can be considered under the Fair Access Protocol, the LA will discuss the admission with the carer or guardian or those working with the child to establish the school which it would be in the child's best interests to attend. The Admissions Team will discuss the placement with the school in question to determine whether there are any reasons for not placing the child at the school. The placement may need to be resolved by referral to the area placement panel. In this case, the LA will inform applicants of the outcome of their application within three days of being notified of the decision.

4.11 Waiting lists

A waiting list will be maintained for each year group for all oversubscribed community and voluntary controlled schools. Following an in-year application, a child will automatically have their name added to the waiting list of any school named as a higher preference than the school allocated. Parents wishing their child to be included

on the waiting list of another school named in the application must inform the authority in writing. The LA will write periodically to all those on waiting lists to ask if they wish to remain on the list. The waiting list is ranked according to the admission policy for the school with no account being taken of the length of time on the waiting list. In-year fair access (ref. 3.19) and school closure arrangements (1.47b) will take priority over the waiting list.

If they wish, voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools and academies will operate their own waiting lists and will inform the LA when a place becomes available.

A waiting list cannot include a child for whom an application for the relevant school has not been made to the LA.

When a place becomes available at a school with a waiting list for the relevant year group, it will be offered by the LA to the child at the top of the waiting list at the end of the day on which the place became available. The LA will offer the applicant the place in writing. A school must not inform the family of the child they believe to be at the top of the waiting list that a place has become available for their child unless this has been agreed by the Admissions Team.

5 General information affecting all admissions

(This section contains specific information and advice to be followed by all schools in the interests of fairness and transparency.)

5.1 Guidance

Parents must be advised to read the guidance notes accompanying the application form and the full Parents' Guide for points of clarification, information and advice before applying.

5.2 Choice Advice

Support and/or independent advice is available for vulnerable families from the Choice Advice Service. Help can be given with completion of applications where necessary.

5.3 Year of entry

Children will only be admitted by their chronological age unless they are already in a different year group in a Hampshire school and/or with the agreement of the receiving headteacher.

5.4 Timescales for offers

During the main admissions round, timescales are clearly set out and places are offered well before the place will be taken up.

Outside the main admissions round, the offer of a place must normally be taken up within four school weeks of the offer date. Where an application is made more than four weeks in advance of the date that the family will be able to take up the place, the application will not be processed until four weeks before the date when it can be taken up and the family will be informed of this.

Applications for admission at the start of term in September in other year groups than the normal year of entry can be considered six school weeks before the end of the summer term and held open until the start of the autumn term.

In the case of families of UK service personnel and other Crown Servants the County Council will adhere to the mandatory requirements of the Code (3.27- 3.28).

- 5.5 Families living some distance from the school
If a place is available, this must be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list in accordance with the published criteria, even if this child lives some distance from the school. It cannot be a condition of offering a place that a family move into the catchment area or nearer the school, provided they can assure the school that the child will arrive on time and attend regularly. Each case must be treated on its merits. If schools are doubtful whether parents will be able to ensure a child's punctuality and regular attendance, this must be discussed directly with them.
- 5.6 Pupils with special educational needs but without a statement
Children with special educational needs but without a statement must not be disadvantaged compared to other children. These children may be admitted over the PAN under the Fair Access protocol (see 4.10 above). Admission authorities may not refuse to admit a pupil because they consider themselves unable to cater for his or her special educational needs.
- 5.7 Pupils with a statement of special educational needs
The Code states (1.56) "section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with a statement of special educational needs that names their school".
- 5.8 Pupils with disabilities
The Code states that admission authorities "must ensure that their admissions arrangements ... do not unfairly disadvantage, either directly or indirectly, a child with a disability". In addition, the Disability Discrimination Act requires schools to have regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to publish a disability equality scheme showing how they are meeting these duties. (1.72)
- 5.9 Home-school agreements
Admission may not be conditional upon parents signing a home-school agreement. (1.55)
- 5.10 Fraud in applications
Admission authorities reserve the right to withdraw a place where it was obtained fraudulently (1.50-1.51). The County Council will investigate allegations of fraudulent practice and, where appropriate, the County Council may monitor the residency details provided. Monitoring may include contacting third parties to check residency information provided.
- 5.11 Appeals
Parents may appeal for any school where their application has been unsuccessful. The County Council arranges independent appeals in relation to community and voluntary controlled schools; individual governing bodies are responsible for appeal

arrangements in voluntary aided, foundation and trust schools and academies. Voluntary aided schools receive advice from their respective dioceses, which will often make the appeal arrangements on schools' behalf.

Parents should be made aware that the appeal process is entirely separate from the management of the waiting lists. The fact that parents may wish to appeal will have no effect on their child's position on the waiting list.