
SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2009/10

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Chris McEwan,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Murray Rose, Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members' approval for the Local Authority's admission policy for 2009/10 and the co-ordinated arrangements for all schools in the Borough.

Information and Analysis

2. The Local Authority acts as a 'clearing house' for all applications for a place at a primary school in Darlington. This is part of a co-ordinated scheme where the Local Authority is the admissions authority for community, voluntary controlled schools and acts on behalf of the admission authority of voluntary aided schools, for the Borough. The Authority will make a single offer of a school place each academic year, to parents who have expressed a preference for their child to be admitted to a maintained school within Darlington. Although all applications will be considered on an equal weighting basis, should a child be eligible for a place at more than one school, parents/carers are requested to rank their order of preference on the 'Primary School Admissions Form 2009/10' in order that only one offer will be made. The relevant admissions criteria will be applied to all schools that are oversubscribed.
3. The Authority operates a similar co-ordinated scheme for secondary school applications, although the Governors of Hurworth School, Carmel College and Eastbourne Church of England Academy act as the Admission Authorities for these schools.
4. The equal preference system operates to give parents choice in their selection of schools, allocating their highest ranked preference wherever possible.
5. Attached at **Appendix A and B** are the Co-ordinated Admission schemes for both primary and secondary school applications.
6. As in previous years the Admissions Criteria for Primary Schools will be Looked After Children, Medical Reasons, Family Links and then Distance. The Admissions Criteria for Secondary Schools will be Looked After Children, Medical Reasons, Family Links, Associated Transport and then Distance. The Secondary School criteria has changed slightly from previous years as Family Links has been moved to a higher priority than

Associated Transport. Full details of each criteria are provided in each Appendix.

7. Where a child has undergone statutory assessment and a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) has been issued, the statement will name the school the child should attend. The Admissions Authorities of Community, Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled, and Foundation Schools are obliged to admit the child in accordance with the statement.
8. Children with SEN are therefore placed in schools outside the Admissions round for pupils who do not have statements.
9. Once approved, there is a statutory duty on the Local Authority to forward the Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) before 15th April 2008. If this does not happen the Secretary of State may impose a scheme on the Authority.

Outcome of Consultation

10. The Authority is legally obliged to consult with relevant admission authorities each year by 1st March. Consultation has taken place with all neighbouring authorities, other admission authorities within the Borough, Headteachers and Governing Bodies and the Local Admissions Forum. The Local Authority has acted upon comments on its proposed co-ordinated scheme for 2009/10. The comments and the Local Authority response to these comments are attached at **Appendix C**.

Legal Implications

11. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

12. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

13. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

14. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Key Decisions

15. This is a key decision as it affects more than three wards in Darlington.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that Members consider and approve the changes required to the Local Authorities admissions policy for 2009 /2010.

Reason

17. The Authority is under a statutory duty to consult and adopt an admission scheme for both Primary and Secondary school places for the academic year 2009/10.

**Murray Rose,
Director of Children's Services**

Background Papers

School Admissions Code of Practice

Melanie Stainthorpe : Extension 2812