

**Darlington Local Authority**

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

**Introduction**

1. This scheme is made by Darlington Local Authority under the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (Secondary) (England) Regulations 2002 and applied to all maintained secondary schools in the Darlington area.
2. The proposed co-ordinated scheme is for the academic year 2008/09 and shall apply to every secondary school in Darlington Authority area (except special school) and will take effect from September 2008.

**Interpretation**

3. In this scheme –

“the LA” means Darlington Borough Council acting in their capacity as local authority;

“the LA area” means the area in respect of which the LA are the local authority;

“secondary education” has the same meaning as in section 2(2) of the Education Act 1996;

“secondary school” has the same meaning as in section 5(2) of the Education Act 1996;

“school” means a community, foundation or voluntary school (but not a special school) which is maintained by the LA;

“admission authority” in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the LA and, in relation to a foundation or VA school means the governing body of that school;

“the specified year” means the school year beginning at or about the beginning of September 2008;

“admission arrangements” means the arrangements for a particular school or schools which govern the procedures and decision making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school;

“casual admission” means any application for a place in the first year of secondary education that is received after 1 September 2008;

“nearest appropriate school” is defined as a school closest to the home address that has places available”.

## PART I - THE SCHEME

1. There will be a standard application form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) supplied by the Local Authority for parents living in the Darlington area who wish to express a preference(s) for a secondary school in the Authority area or to a school(s) in another LA area.
2. The CAF will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of secondary education in the specified year.
3. The CAF must be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences for the purposes of section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, by parents resident in the LA area wishing to express a preference for their child-
  - a. to be admitted to a maintained secondary school within the LA area (including Voluntary Aided, Foundation and the proposed Academy);
  - b. to be admitted to a school located in another LA's area (including VA, Foundation and Academy schools).
4. The CAF will –
  - a. invite the parent to express up to five preferences by completing the form, in rank order of preference.
  - b. invite parents to give their reasons for each preference;
  - c. explain that the parent will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:
    - (i) all preferences expressed will be considered on an equal weighting basis but where a child is eligible for more than one place it will be the highest ranked school for which they are eligible that they will be offered by the LA as the admissions authority, or on behalf of the admission authority of a VA, Foundation or the proposed Academy schooland
    - (ii) if a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, a place will be offered at the nearest alternative school that has places available.
  - d. specify the closing date and where it must be returned, in accordance with paragraph 10.

5. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:
  - a. that all reasonable steps are taken to issue a CAF to every child living in the Darlington area who is due to transfer to secondary education in September 2008;
  - b. that the CAF is accompanied by a written explanation of the co-ordinated admissions scheme.
  - c. that a supplementary form will be available from the LA for parents to complete who express a preference for a VA school to enable them to provide relevant additional information.
6. All preferences expressed on the CAF are valid applications. The governing body of a foundation or VA school can require parents who wish to nominate, or have nominated, their school on the CAF, to provide additional information on a supplementary form only where the additional information is required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria to the application. Where a supplementary form is required it must be returned to the LA, along with the CAF, so that the relevant forms can be passed to the appropriate schools.
7. Where a school receives a CAF in error it should inform the maintaining LA, whether the parent lives in that area or, so that the home LA can ensure that a CAF is received with preferences and ranking.
8. Where a school receives a supplementary form from a Darlington resident it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed a CAF and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary forms are received directly by foundation, VA or the proposed Academy school, the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a CAF has been received from the parent and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete a CAF. Under the requirements of the scheme, parents will not be under any obligation to complete an individual school's supplementary form where this is not strictly required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria.

### **Processing of CAFs**

9. The closing date for applications is **19th October 2007**. Completed CAFs are to be returned to the LA via primary schools, so that the LA can keep track of parents that do not complete a CAF.
10. **By 26th October 2007** primary schools will forward all applications (and supplementary forms) to the LA.

## Determining offers in response to the CAF

11. The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the CAF's. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the CAF where-
  - (a) it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority or
  - (b) an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The LA will allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 16 of this Schedule.

12. **By 9th November 2007** where parents have nominated a school outside the LA area, the LA will notify the relevant authority/authorities.
13. **By 16th November 2007** the LA will notify the admission authority for each of the schools of every nomination that has been made for that school, including all relevant details and any supplementary forms received by this date, which schools require in order to apply their oversubscription criteria.
14. **By 11th January 2008** VA, Foundation, Academy and other LA's will consider all applications, apply the school's oversubscription criteria and provide the LA with a list of those applicants ranked according to the school's oversubscription criteria. Applicants that are refused also need to be listed in order of oversubscription criteria.
15. The LA will compare the lists from all admission authorities against the parents preferences:
  - Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools that school will be allocated to the child.
  - Where a child is eligible for a place at more than one school, then a place will be offered at the highest ranked school.
  - Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

Consultation will take place with all relevant admission authorities until the allocation of places is resolved.

16. By **15th February 2008** negotiate with other LA's to finalise offer of places and by **22nd February 2008** the LA will inform its secondary schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools.
17. Where no CAF was received, an offer of a place will be made at the nearest appropriate school with vacancies, to the home address of the child.

18. **On 1st March 2008** (*letters will be issued on Friday 29th February, due to 1st March being a Saturday*) parents will be notified that they are being offered a place at an allocated school. The letter will give the following information:
- the name of the school at which a place is offered whether it be an offer by the LA or on behalf of another admission authority;
  - the reasons why the child is not being offered a place at each of the other schools nominated on the CAF;
  - information about their statutory right of appeal against the decision to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
  - contact details for the school and LA (and those nominated Foundation, VA or the proposed Academy school where they were not offered a place, so that they can lodge an appeal with the governing body);
  - where the child has been refused a place at a nominated Foundation, VA or the proposed Academy school, an invitation for the child's name to be added to the waiting list. For community and voluntary controlled schools, the LA will operate a waiting list up to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008 for 2008 admissions only.
  - what to do if the place offered is in another LA;
  - what to do if an offer was not made at the preferred school which was within another LA, who to contact and the timescale in which to do so.
19. Parents will have seven days to respond to the offer letter to accept the school place offered. The LA will then look to withdraw the offer.
20. Waiting lists will be used to fill places that have been allocated but not taken up at the start of the school year in September 2008.

## **PART II - LATE APPLICATIONS**

- Forms received after Friday 19th October 2007 (late applications) will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, e.g. families who have moved into the area after the closing date. These late applications will be considered upto and including Friday 18th January 2008.
- In any other circumstances such late applications will be held on a waiting list for consideration once the process has been applied to those applications who had submitted forms by the required deadline.

## **PART III - CASUAL ADMISSIONS**

- Applications received after 1st September 2008 and for places in year groups other than the normal year of entry will be treated as casual admissions.
  - (i) For families moving into the Authority and wishing to gain a place at a community or voluntary controlled secondary school, parent/carers should contact the LA direct. If requesting a place at a Foundation, VA or the proposed Academy school should contact the school direct.
  - (ii) If a child already attends a Darlington mainstream secondary school and wishes to transfer to another, they must in the first instance discuss the transfer with the current school that the pupil is at. If they then still wish for the transfer to proceed, PART A of a transfer request form should be completed by the school and issued to the parent/carer who will then forward to the LA. The LA in turn will forward to the recipient school for completion.
  - (iii) If a child wishes to transfer to a mainstream secondary school in Darlington that has reached or exceeded its admission limit, after discussion has taken place with the current school, a transfer request form should be completed, then parent/carers should be directed to the LA who will inform them of their right to appeal and issue appeal papers. For children wishing to transfer to an oversubscribed VA school the transfer request form will be forwarded, the VA school can then inform parents of their right to appeal.

## SCHEDULE 2

### Timetable of co-ordinated scheme

Consultation with Governing Bodies on admissions policy 2008/09	<b>Autumn Term 2006</b>
Consultation with Admission Forum	<b>February 2007</b>
Consult with other admission authorities and neighbouring LA's	<b>By 1st March 2007</b>
Results of consultation reported to members and policy agreed	<b>By 15th April 2007</b>
Parents open day invitations issued	<b>w/c 3rd September 2007</b>
Secondary brochures 2008/09 issued	<b>w/c 3rd September 2007</b>
CAF's issued to Y6 pupils	<b>w/c 3rd September 2007</b>
Parent open days for Secondary Schools	<b>17.09.07 to.28.09.07</b>
CAF's (Secondary) to be returned by	<b>Friday 19th October 2007</b>
Exchange of forms to other LAs	<b>By 9th Nov 2007</b>
Inform VA & Foundation secondary schools of all applications made and forward supplementary forms	<b>By 16th November 2007</b>
Secondary admission authority schools to send LA their ranked list of offers	<b>By 11th January 2008</b>
Negotiation with other LAs to finalise offer of places	<b>By 15th February 2008</b>
Inform schools of the final offer list including children offered places residing other LA's	<b>By 22nd February 2008</b>
Offer Letters from this LA including aided schools and offers on behalf of other LA's	<b>1st March 2008</b>
Admission Appeals	<b>May/June2008</b>

## SECONDARY SCHOOLS 2008/09

School	Age Range	Current Admission Number	Proposed Admission Number
Branksome Comprehensive	11-16	180	180
Carmel RC Technology College	11-18	180	180
Eastbourne School *	11-16	180	180
Eastbourne Academy *	11-16	140	140
Haughton Community School	11-16	180	180
Hummersknott School & Language College	11-16	240	240
Hurworth School Maths & Computing College	11-16	127	127
Longfield Comprehensive	11-16	180	180

\* The Authority is currently consulting on a proposal to develop an academy to replace the current Eastbourne School. A decision is expected from the School Organisation Committee at the end of April. Should the decision be made to proceed with the academy, Eastbourne school will close on 31 August 2007 and the admissions number will be that for the academy listed in the table above.

### **Admissions Criteria - Secondary Education**

- (i) **Looked After Children**  
A "looked after" child is a pupil who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that Authority.
- (ii) **Pupils with a Statement of Special Need**  
Children with a statement of special educational need which specifies the school in the statement.
- (iii) **Associated Transport**  
Pupils who live in an area from which the Authority provides designated transport to the preferred school in order to limit travel costs.
- (iv) **Medical Reasons**  
Pupils with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement. Applications under this criterion should be supported by written evidence from a doctor.
- (v) **Family Links**  
Pupils who have a brother or sister already attending the school and who is expected to be on roll at that school at the time of admission.
- (vi) **Distance**  
Pupils who live nearest the preferred school measured by the shortest walking route judged to be safe. This will be based on the parental address. We will, however, consider the overall availability of school places in an area to ensure that no children have an unreasonable distance to walk. This may override distance to the preferred school.

