
2011-2012 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Cyndi Hughes,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of Children’s Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members’ approval for the Local Authority’s admission policy for the 2011/12 academic year and the co-ordinated arrangements for all schools in the Borough.

Summary

2. In line with the School Admissions Code, the Local Authority is required to annually review the admission criteria used to allocate places for maintained primary and secondary schools in Darlington. **Appendix A** details the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for both primary and secondary applications to be considered for the 2011/12 academic year.
3. Consultation has been undertaken in line with the Code. Details of the consultation undertaken are included in this report and the comments received are attached at **Appendix B**.
4. 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 15 April 2010.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members consider and approve the changes required to the Local Authority’s Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for both primary and secondary applications for the 2011/12 academic year as set out in paragraph 10.

Reasons

6. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) 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 2011/12.
 - (b) If the scheme is not approved and returned to the DCSF by the 15 April 2010 the Secretary of State may impose a scheme on the Authority.
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**Murray Rose,
Director of Children's Services**

Background Papers

School Admissions Code – issued on 10 February 2009

Melanie Stainthorpe: Extension 2067

S17 Crime and Disorder	Not relevant to this report
Health and Well Being	Offering a school place to meet parental preference and close to a child's address enhances safeguarding and provides security for the child.
Sustainability	Darlington's communities are enhanced through the provision of school places to meet locality needs.
Diversity	There are a range of schools in Darlington with Governance ranging from Community Schools to Voluntary Aided, Foundation and an Academy. Parents have a wide choice of schools to match the diverse needs of a pluralistic community.
Wards Affected	The admissions criteria affects children living in all wards across Darlington
Groups Affected	Parents, Pupils, Schools, Neighbouring Authorities, other Admission Authorities.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no budget implications. This paper proposes an admissions policy to be adopted for the 2011-12 academic year.
Key Decision	This is a key decision as it affects more than one ward in Darlington.
Urgent Decision	For the purposes of call in this matter does not represent an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Provision of an Admissions Policy ensures sufficient places are available in each community so that children can attend a school of their choice.
Efficiency	The Admissions Policy and management of school places ensures that the Local Authority complies with statutory guidance on Surplus Places. This enables parents to have a choice in a school place but ensures resources are not wasted and school budgets are not overcommitted.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. The Local Authority acts as a 'clearing house' for all applications for a place at a school in Darlington at the normal point of entry (September). This is part of a co-ordinated scheme where the Local Authority is the admissions authority for community and voluntary controlled schools and acts on behalf of the admission authority of voluntary aided schools, foundation and St Aidan's Church of England Academy in 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/Secondary School Application form 2011/12' in order that only one offer will be made. The relevant admissions oversubscription criteria will be applied to all schools that are oversubscribed.
8. The equal preference system operates to give parents choice in their selection of schools, allocating their highest ranked preference wherever possible.
9. Attached at **Appendix A** is the Co-ordinated Admission Scheme for both primary and secondary school applications.
10. The admissions oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled primary schools will be:
 - (a) Looked After Children
 - (b) Medical Reasons
 - (c) Family Links
 - (d) Associated Schools
 - (e) Distance
11. This now includes an additional category of 'Associated Schools', which would only be used in the case of families applying from infant to junior phase of their education. This criterion has been added to prioritise applications from families whose children attend of the two remaining infant schools' Abbey Infants and Mowden Infants, so that they may continue their education at one of the two associated junior schools, Abbey Juniors or Mowden Juniors. These applications would receive priority over those from families whose children were in attendance at another school.
12. The admissions oversubscription criteria for community secondary schools will be:
 - (a) Looked After Children
 - (b) Medical Reasons
 - (c) Family Links
 - (d) Associated Transport
 - (e) Distance

Full details of each criterion are provided in Appendix A.

13. 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. All schools are obliged to admit the child in accordance with the statement.
14. Children with SEN are therefore placed in schools outside the admissions round for pupils who do not have a statement.
15. Once approved, there is a statutory duty on the Local Authority to forward the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) before 15th April 2010. If this does not happen the Secretary of State may impose a scheme on the Authority.

Outcome of Consultation

16. The Authority is legally obliged to consult with relevant admission authorities each year by 1st March in the year of entry. Consultation has taken place with all neighbouring authorities, admission authorities within the Borough, Headteachers and Governing Bodies, Local Admissions Forum and parents.
17. The Local Authority has acted where appropriate upon comments on its proposed co-ordinated scheme for 2011/12. The comments and the Local Authority response to these comments are attached at **Appendix B**.