

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 secondary schools in the Darlington area.
2. The co-ordinated scheme is for the academic year 2010/11 and shall apply to every secondary school in Darlington Authority area (except Beaumont Hill special school) and will take effect from September 2010.
3. The scheme is determined in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Schedule 2.

Interpretation

4. 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, Academy 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 2010;

“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;

“in-year admission” means any application for a place in the first year of secondary education that is received after 1 September 2010;

“eligible for a place” means that a child has been placed on a school’s ranked list at such a point which falls within the school’s published admission number;

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

Schedule 1

PART I - THE SCHEME

1. There will be a standard application form known as the Secondary School Admission Form (SSA) 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 SSA will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of secondary education in the specified year.
3. The SSA 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 Academy);
 - b. to be admitted to a school located in another LA's area (including VA, Foundation schools and Academies).
4. The SSA will invite the parent to express up to three preferences and give their reasons for each preference by completing the SSA and explain that the parent will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:
 - a. 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 another LA, and admission authority of a VA, Foundation school and Eastbourne Church of England Academy;
 - b. if a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, then the parent/carer will be offered a place at the nearest alternative school that has places available.
 - c. specify the closing date and where it must be returned, in accordance with paragraph 10.
5. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to issue a SSA to every child living in the Darlington area who is due to transfer to secondary education in September 2010 and the SSA is accompanied by a written explanation of the co-ordinated admissions scheme.

6. The LA will ensure 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.
7. All preferences expressed on the SSA are valid applications. The governing body of a VA school can require parents who wish to nominate, or have nominated, their school on the SSA, 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 SSA, so that the relevant forms can be passed to the appropriate school.
8. Where a school receives a SSA 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 SSA is received with preferences and ranking.
9. 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 SSA and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary forms are received directly by a VA school, the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a SSA has been received from the parent and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete a SSA. 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 Secondary School Admission Forms

10. The closing date for applications is 23rd October 2009. Completed SSAs are to be returned to the LA, so that the LA can keep track of parents that do not complete a SSA.
11. SSAs received after the closing date but before Friday 15th January 2010 will be considered by the Authority if there are exceptional/individual circumstances which prevented the submission of the SSA by the stated deadline. Consideration will be given to families who have moved into the area, single parents who have been ill for some time or for parents who have been dealing with the death of a close relative. All must provide clear evidence for the LA to make a decision to accept their application.

All SSAs will be considered on an individual basis, if the reason given is unacceptable then the application will be considered after the applications received by the deadline and the decision of the LA will be final.

12. By 13th November 2009 where parents have nominated a school outside the LA area, the LA will notify the relevant authority/authorities.
13. By 20th November 2009 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.

Determining offers in response to the SSA

14. The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the SSAs. 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 SSA where it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority or an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.
15. By 7th January 2010 VA, Foundation, Academies and other LA's will have considered all applications for their schools. They will then provide the LA with a list of those applicants ranked according to the school's oversubscription criteria who may potentially be offered a place at the school up to the PAN. Applicants that are refused also need to be listed in order of oversubscription criteria.
16. The LA will compare the lists from all admission authorities against the schools nominated on the SSA. Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools that school will be provisionally allocated to the child.
17. Where a child is eligible for a place at more than one school, then a place will be provisionally offered at the highest ranked school for which they are eligible.
18. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, the child will be provisionally allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.
19. The LA will consult with all relevant admission authorities until the allocation of places is resolved.

20. By 12th February 2010 the LA will negotiate with other LA's to finalise offer of places and by 19th February 2010 the LA will inform its secondary schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools.
21. Where no SSA was received, an offer of a place will be made at the nearest appropriate school with vacancies, to the permanent home address of the child.
22. **On 1st March 2010** parents will be notified that they are being offered a place at an allocated school. The letter will give the following information:
 - a. 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;
 - b. the reasons why the child is not being offered a place at each of the other schools nominated on the SSA;
 - c. information about their statutory right of appeal against the decision to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
 - d. contact details for the school and LA (and those nominated Foundation, VA or the Academy school where they were not offered a place, so that they can lodge an appeal with the governing body);
 - e. where the child has been refused a place at a nominated Foundation, VA or Academy school, an invitation for the child's name to be added to a waiting list. For community and voluntary controlled schools, the LA will operate a waiting list until the end of December 2010, to fill places that may become available in the first term of the school year. This is only applicable to pupil's entering school at Year 7.
 - f. what to do if the place offered is in another LA;
 - g. 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.
23. Parents will have seven working days to respond to the offer letter to accept the school place offered. The LA will then look to withdraw the offer.

PART II - LATE APPLICATIONS

SSAs received after Friday 23rd October 2009 (late applications) will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, e.g. families who have moved into the area after the closing date (refer to 11). These late applications will be considered up to and including Friday 15th January 2010.

In any other circumstances SSAs received after the closing date (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 - WAITING LISTS

A child's position on a waiting list(s) will be determined by the oversubscription criteria for the relevant admission authority. If a parent/carer wishes to add their child's name to a waiting list then they must complete the 'options' form that will be attached to their offer/refusal letter issued in March 2010.

Vacancies often arise at short notice and those on the waiting list should be prepared to take up a place as soon as it occurs. Places will not be held for later consideration. The LA will maintain waiting lists for Community & Voluntary Controlled schools for Year 7 pupils only until the end of December 2009. Thereafter normal transfer/in-year admission arrangements will operate.

If you did not initially apply for a school but now wish to do so then you must apply. In the case of a VA, Foundation or Academy school you must contact them direct for an application. For community and voluntary controlled schools then you must complete the section on the 'options' form. Names can be then be added to a waiting list using the oversubscription criteria.

PART III – IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

Applications received after 1st September 2010 and for places in year groups other than the normal year of entry will be treated as in-year admissions. The LA does not operate waiting lists for any community or voluntary controlled schools. See separate scheme.

SCHEDULE 2**Timetable of co-ordinated scheme**

Consultation with Governing Bodies on admissions policy 2010/11	Autumn Term 2008
Consultation with Admission Forum	By February 2009
Consult with other admission authorities and neighbouring LA's	By 1st March 2009
Results of consultation reported to members and policy agreed. Send scheme to DCSF	By 15th April 2009
Secondary brochures 2010/11 issued	w/c 7th September 2009
Parent open days/evenings for Secondary Schools	14th Sept 2009 to 25th Sept 2009
SSA's to be returned to the LA by	Friday 23rd October 2009
Exchange of forms to other LA's	By 13th November 2009
Inform VA & Foundation secondary schools of all applications made and forward supplementary forms	By 20th November 2009
Secondary admission authority schools to send LA their ranked list of offers	By 8th January 2010
Negotiation with other LA's to finalise offer of places	By 12th February 2010
Inform schools of the final offer list including children offered places residing other LA's	By 19th February 2010
Offer Letters from this LA including aided schools and offers on behalf of other LA's	1st March 2010
Admission Appeals (if necessary)	May/June 2010

SECONDARY SCHOOLS 2010/11

School	Age Range	Current Admission Number	Proposed Admission Number
Branksome Comprehensive	11-16	180	180
Carmel RC College	11-16	180	180
Eastbourne Church of England Academy	11-16	140	140
Houghton 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

Darlington Local Authority Admissions Criteria - Secondary Education**(i) Looked After Children**

A "looked after" child is a pupil who is in the care of Darlington local authority or provided with accommodation by that Authority.

(ii) 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 (see explanation).

(iii) Family Links

Pupil's who have a brother or sister already attending the school and who are expected to be on roll at that school at the time of admission (see explanation).

(iv) 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 (see Associated Transport section below for designated areas).

(v) Distance

Pupils who live nearest the preferred school measured from the front door of the home address (including flats) to the main school gate, by the shortest walking route judged to be safe (lighting at regular intervals and paved/tarmaced). This will be based on the child's permanent home address. (To remain consistent the LA uses a Geographical Information System to measure all distances).

Distance Tie Breaker

In the event of a tie-break, the LA will carry out a thorough investigation, which may involve an officer walking the route using a pedometer. Where a single place remains and the next child to be offered is a twin or other multiple birth, then the LA will use its discretion in deciding whether to offer over the PAN.

Medical Criterion

If a parent/carer states a preference for a school and indicates their reason for doing so is 'medical', then they will be required to send a supporting letter from a professional practitioner. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the only suitable school and the difficulties it would cause if their child had to travel to another school. The LA will make contact with the District Medical Officer for independent information regarding their child's condition. The LA will also seek advice from other qualified professionals, e.g. Psychologists or other specialists where necessary.

Family Links

Children have a family link if:

- They are half brother or full brother or sister.
- They are adoptive brother or sister.
- Their carers are married/co-habiting and children live together in the same household.
- They are children of the same household.

Associated Transport

Certain areas are linked to particular schools to secure admission for the pupils in those areas and to limit travel costs. These arrangements are referred to as 'Associated Transport Provision' the areas from which transport is provided is listed below each school:

Hummersknott School & Language College

Skern Park Estate in Darlington, High Coniscliffe, Piercebridge, the Teesdale approaches to Darlington, the 'Chestnuts' estate and the Heighington area.

Hurworth School, Maths & Computing College

Middleton St George, Middleton One Row, Neasham, Bishopton, Sadberge, Great Stainton, Little Stainton Sockburn, Low Dinsdale and Hurworth Moor. Although the Firthmoor area is not linked to Hurworth School for the purposes of Associated Transport, the Local Authority will continue, in line with established practice, to provide assisted transport for any pupil from the Firthmoor area.

Longfield Comprehensive School

The Brafferton area.