
2010-2011 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Chris McEwan, 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 2010/11 academic year and the co-ordinated arrangements for all schools in the Borough.

Summary

2. In line with the School Admissions Code of Practice, 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 and B** detailed the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for both primary and secondary applications to be considered for the 2010/11 Academic year.
3. Consultation has been undertaken in line with the Code of Practice. Details of the consultation undertaken are included in this report and the comments received are attached at **Appendix C and D**.
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 15th April 2009.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members consider and approve the changes required to Local Authority’s Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for both primary and secondary applications for the 2010/11 Academic year.

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 2010/11.

- (b) If the scheme is not approved and returned to the DCSF by the 15th April the Secretary of State may impose a scheme on the Authority.

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

Background Papers

School Admissions Code of Practice – issued on 10th February 2009

Rachel Jones: Extension 2026

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 2010-11 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 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 2010/11' in order that only one offer will be made. The relevant admissions criteria will be applied to all schools that are oversubscribed.
8. The Local 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.
9. The equal preference system operates to give parents choice in their selection of schools, allocating their highest ranked preference wherever possible.
10. Attached at **Appendix A and B** are the Co-ordinated Admission schemes for both primary and secondary school applications.
11. As in previous years the Admissions Criteria for Primary Schools will be:
 - (a) Looked After Children
 - (b) Medical Reasons
 - (c) Family Links
 - (d) Distance
12. The Admissions Criteria for Secondary Schools will be:
 - (a) Looked After Children
 - (b) Medical Reasons
 - (c) Family Links
 - (d) Associated Transport
 - (e) Distance

Full details of each criteria are provided in each Appendix.
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. The Admissions Authorities of Community, Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled, and Foundation 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 statements.
15. 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 2009. 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, other admission authorities within the Borough, Headteachers and Governing Bodies and the Local Admissions Forum.
 17. The revised School Admissions Code of Practice, which came into force on 10th February 2009 introduced new regulations pertaining to consultation with parents. A consultation document was made available to all parents who have a child between the ages of 3 to 16. Attached at **Appendix C** are the responses received. These responses will be reported to the Local Admissions Forum where they can receive consideration from a representative group of Admission Authorities and users of the system. The Local Admissions Forum may subsequently make recommendations to the Council concerning Admission criteria to schools.
 18. The Local Authority has acted where appropriate upon comments on its proposed co-ordinated scheme for 2010/11. The comments and the Local Authority response to these comments are attached at **Appendix D**.
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