



Proposed Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary School Admissions for 2014/15

Status : Proposed Co-ordinated Scheme 2014/15

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Introduction

1. This scheme for co-ordinated admissions is pursuant to section 89(b) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for co-ordinating the arrangements for the admission of pupils to secondary schools within the LA area. It applies to secondary schools in Wiltshire with effect from September 2014 intakes. There will be an annual review of the scheme as per the School Admissions Code in force at the time.

Interpretation and Glossary

2. In this scheme –

“the LA” means Wiltshire Council acting in their capacity as a local (education) authority;

“the LA area” means the County of Wiltshire;

“primary education” has the same meaning as in section 2(1) of the Education Act 1996(as amended by the Education Act 2002);

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

“primary school” has the same meaning as in section 5(1) of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education Act 2002);

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

“school” means a community, voluntary controlled, foundation or voluntary aided school, other than special schools, which is maintained by the LA; (the Education Act 1996 defines school in section 4).

“Academy” means a state funded, non fee paying independent school set up under a Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the proprietor of an Academy (most commonly, and hereafter, referred to as an Academy Trust). Academy Funding Agreements require them to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions, though the Secretary of State has the power to vary this requirement where there is a demonstrable need.

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

“the specified year” means the school year beginning in September 2014

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

“late admission” means any application for a place in the first year of secondary education that is received between noon 31 October 2013 and 24 July 2014;

“additional application” means any application for a place in the intake year of secondary education that is received after 24 July 2014 or for any other year group in the school up to and including Yr 11;

“eligible for a place” means that a child’s name has been placed on a school’s ranked list within the school’s published admission number.

The Scheme

The Normal Admissions Round

From the summer of 2015 new government legislation states that young people have to stay in education or training until their 18th birthday. This will usually be at secondary school until the academic year in which they are 16 (some students may transfer to Further Education or a University Technical College at 14). Students can then choose from one of the following options post-16: full-time education, such as school or college; an apprenticeship; employment or volunteering alongside part-time education or accredited training. It is compulsory that they participate in education or training until their 18th birthday. The only exception is early achievement of level 3 qualifications, for example if they take A level exams in year 12.

3. Parents will be able to make an online application. Online applications will be made directly to County Hall, Trowbridge. If an online application has been submitted, a written application is not necessary. The online facility will be available at least from 1 September 2013 up until the deadline of noon 31 October 2013.
4. There will be a standard form for written applications known as the Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF) used for the admission of pupils into the first year of secondary education in the specified year.
5. The SCAF must be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences by a parent wishing to apply for a school place for their child either within or outside the county. The child must live in Wiltshire.
6. The LA will make arrangements to ensure
 - a) the SCAF is accompanied by written guidance notes explaining the coordinated admissions scheme, and
 - b) that copies are available on request from the LA and from all primary and secondary schools in the LA area, and
 - c) that an electronic version of the form is available for parents to make an online application.
7. The SCAF and accompanying guidance notes will invite the parent to express up to three preferences in rank order (schools may be inside or outside Wiltshire), and to give their reasons for each preference, explain that the parent will receive no more than one offer of a school place and specify the closing date and the address to which it must be returned. They will also confirm that:
 - a) a place will be offered at their highest ranked school at which they are eligible to be offered a place; or
 - b) if a place cannot be offered at any one of their preferred schools, and the child is living in Wiltshire, a place at an alternative school will be allocated.
8. Any school which operates criteria for selection by ability or aptitude must ensure that its arrangements for assessing ability or aptitude enable decisions to be made in accordance with the scheme's timescale as set out in the Appendix.

9. The governing body of an Academy, Foundation or Voluntary Aided School can ask parents who have expressed a preference for their school on the SCAF, to provide additional information on a supplementary form only if the additional information is required in order to apply their oversubscription criteria to the application. Where a supplementary form is required it is the responsibility of the individual governing body to provide a copy to each parent who has expressed a preference for the school on a SCAF and who has requested such a form.
10. Where a school receives a supplementary form it may not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed a SCAF which expressed a preference for that school. The SCAF or an online application must have been returned to the LA. It is the responsibility of schools using supplementary forms to inform the applicant that they must submit a SCAF to the LA.
11. The closing date for applications is **noon 31 October 2013**. All completed SCAFs are to be returned directly to the LA. Any SCAFs which are incorrectly returned to schools must be forwarded to the LA to be received by the deadline. Forms returned to schools and not received by the LA by noon 31 October 2013 will be treated as late applications.
12. The LA will send out an acknowledgement of receipt for each SCAF and all online applications. Applicants will be advised to contact the LA if they have not received an acknowledgement within fifteen school days of posting their application.

Shared Responsibility

13. Where two adults have shared responsibility for a child they should agree before submitting an application form which school(s) to name as their preference(s). In cases of dispute, or when two application forms are submitted, the LA will process the application received from the adult with whom the child is living the majority of the school week. The address shown on the child benefit notification letter will be taken as evidence of residency. If this is not available then the address showing on the child's NHS medical card can be used as evidence of residency.

Determining offers

14. The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the SCAFs. The LA will only make a decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the SCAF where-
 - a. it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or
 - b. an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or
 - c. an applicant is not eligible for a place at any of the schools for which a preference was expressed.
15. The process by which the LA will allocate places is explained at paragraphs 19 -20.

16. **By 26 November 2013** where parents have nominated a secondary school outside the LA area, the LA will notify the relevant LA.
17. **By 29 November 2013** the LA will notify all Academies, Foundation and VA schools of every preference that has been expressed for that school.
18. **Noon 7 January 2014:** Exceptional circumstances deadline
19. **By 8 January 2014** the LA will provide a final list to all other admissions authorities of every preference that has been expressed for their school(s) including those considered as exceptional as outlined in paragraph 31 and those resident in other LA areas.
20. **By 16 January 2014** all Academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools must have considered all of the preferences for their school, and provide the LA with a ranked list of all applicants in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.
21. The LA will then match this ranked list against all other ranked lists and:
 - Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the preferred schools, a place at the school will be offered to the child.
 - Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be offered a place at whichever school was their highest available preference.
 - Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools (and they live in Wiltshire), the child will be allocated a place at their designated school unless an alternative place is available within the safe statutory walking distance from their home address. Should this place subsequently be declined then it is the parent's responsibility to apply for an alternative school place.
22. **By 4 February 2014** the LA will inform other LAs of any places in Wiltshire schools which will be offered to their residents.
23. **By 28 February 2014** the LA will inform Wiltshire schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools.
24. **On 3 March 2014** letters will be despatched to all parents who submitted an application form by noon 31 October 2013 offering a place at one school.
25. These offer letters will give the following information:
 - a. The name of the school at which a place is offered;
 - b. The reasons why the child is not being offered a place at any of the other schools nominated on the SCAF;
 - c. Information about their statutory right of appeal against any decisions to refuse places at other preferred schools;
 - d. Contact details for the LA and the schools for which they expressed a preference.

26. **18 March 2014** is the deadline for parents to accept the place offered. Parents will be asked to respond to the LA. If they do not respond by this date it will be assumed that the place offered has been declined.
27. **21 March 2014** Details of late applications to be sent to VA, F Schools and Academies.
28. **25 March 2014:** the LA will send every maintained school a list of those pupils who have accepted an offer at the school.
29. By **04 April 2014:** all schools must inform the LA of any places that have been accepted via the school directly

Testing

30. Where a selection test of any kind is part of the school's admission arrangements, the admission authority is required to allow the child to sit the entrance exam and inform parents of the outcome prior to preferences being made.

Late Applications for normal round of admissions

31. Late applications, ie those received after the deadline for the normal admissions round, will not be considered until after all of those which were received on time have been processed.
32. Only in exceptional circumstances such as those listed here will a late application be considered at the same time as applications received by the deadline of noon 31 October 2013
- a. The illness/death of a close relative such that meeting the deadline was not possible.
 - b. Where there has been a change of family circumstances after the deadline date which has a significant effect on the preferences given on the original application. (If this is a house move this must have been completed with an exchange of contracts before noon 7 Jan 2014.)
 - c. A move into Wiltshire from outside the county after the deadline date but before noon 7 January 2014. Confirmation of the new address (in the form of an exchange of contracts or a tenancy agreement) must be provided before noon on 7 January 2014.
 - d. Service Personnel moving to a Wiltshire address after the deadline date. A posting notice must be provided before noon 7 January 2014.
 - e. Any application for a Wiltshire school from outside the county which was lodged before the closing date of the home authority.
 - f. Where there has been a delay in the LA receiving the application due to an administrative error by a school or/and DCE staff.
 - g. Where a common application form has not been received by the LA but the parent can provide proof of postage – NB the return of a tear off slip to the present school will not constitute a proof of postage.
 - h. Where written evidence from a specialist (such as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service) is available showing that it would be detrimental to the family unit to split siblings.

Such late applications can only be considered if they are received by the LA before noon on **7 January 2014**.

Documentary evidence should be provided with the application (or at the latest by noon 7 January 2014) to verify the circumstances which caused the late application to be made. If evidence cannot be provided, the application will not be treated as an exception.

33. Any applications received by a maintained school after noon 31 October 2013 should be sent to the LA on receipt.

Applications Received between 31 October 2013 and 3 March 2014

34. Any late applications (except those covered by paragraph 31) received by the LA will not be considered before 4 March 2014. All applications received between 31 October 2013 and 4 March 2014 will be considered together with any applicant previously refused a place and if necessary will be prioritised using the oversubscription policy in place at that time.

35. For any applications received by 3 March 2014, the LA will send out a list to any Academy, Foundation or Voluntary Aided School named as a preference **on or before 21 March 2013**. A, VA and F schools should return a confirmation as to whether or not a place can be offered for each applicant. If more than one application has been received then a ranked list will be returned to the LA no later than 03 April 2013.

36. The LA will then match the returns from all schools and will make an allocation of one place for each applicant:

- Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the preferred schools, a place at the school will be offered to the child.
- Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be offered a place at whichever school was their highest available preference.

37. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools and the child lives in Wiltshire, they will be allocated a place at a school. This will be their designated school or may be at another school to which there would be an entitlement to free school transport if it were outside the statutory three mile distance from the home.

38. On or before **9 May 2014** letters will be despatched by the LA to all parents who submitted an application form which was received between noon on 31 October 2013 and 3 March 2014. The letter will offer a place at one school.

Applications received after 3 March 2014

39. Any applications received by the LA for a maintained school received after 3 March 2014 will be dealt with as soon as possible with allocations to a single school being made and offer letters sent out from the LA as soon as is practically possible.

40. The LA will contact all Foundation, Aided schools and Academies named as a

preference on an application form to determine whether or not a place is available. An offer will be made for the school named as the highest preference where there is an identified place. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, and the child lives in Wiltshire, the child will be allocated a place at their designated school unless an alternative place is available within the safe statutory walking distance from their home address.

41. On or before **31 August 2014** the LA will send out a list to all maintained schools in Wiltshire showing those pupils expected to start in the school at the beginning of the 2014/15 school year.

42. In-Year Transfer Applications (for years outside the normal intake for the school)

43. The LA will make available copies of the Admissions Guide and SCAF through all primary and secondary schools and on request from County Hall.

44. All applicants for a school place must complete an application form which should be returned to the LA. The applicant may or may not live in Wiltshire.

45. Should a parent living in Wiltshire wish to apply for a school in another authority, they must contact that authority directly to apply.

46. Where a maintained school receives an in year application form expressing a preference for that school the form should be forwarded to the LA within 5 school days of receipt.

47. Where the LA receives an in year application form expressing a preference for a Academy, Foundation or VA school the application will be forwarded to the school within 5 school days of receipt.

48. For an Academy, Foundation or VA school, the school's governing body is responsible for deciding the outcome of the application and advising the LA accordingly within 10 school days of the date on which the information was received by the school.

49. In all cases, a decision letter will be sent out by the local authority within 20 school days of receiving the application form and this will provide information, if appropriate, about the statutory right of appeal.

50. If an application has been passed on to a selective school, it is recognised that such a school will not be able to make a response to the LA until after the result of an appropriate selection test has been received. The selective school will inform the LA of the outcome of the application as soon as practicable after the result of any selection test is known. A decision letter will be sent out by the LA and will provide information, if appropriate, about the statutory right of appeal.

51. Waiting lists for schools must be kept and will be managed as per the admission arrangements for the particular school involved. Waiting lists will be kept in order of the relevant oversubscription criteria and not in date order of receipt.

52. In accordance with paragraph 2.21/2.22 of the School Admissions Code 2012 the Local Authority is now required to provide parents on request of the availability of school places within its area. All schools must provide the LA with this information. This must be done on a monthly basis with the first return to be sent by 6 September

2013.

Applications for transfer at a future date

53. Applications for transfer will be considered a maximum of one traditional term in advance. Where early applications are received the admission authority will advise the parent that their application will not be considered until a specified later date. Details of early applications received directly by the LA will be sent on to all Foundation, VA schools and Academies at the earliest date they are eligible for consideration.

Children from overseas.

54. Children who hold a full British Citizen passport or children whose passport has been endorsed to show they have the right of abode in the country are entitled to apply for a place at a maintained school. The passport or visa should be made available for inspection before an offer of a school place can be made. Asylum Seekers should make available evidence of their right of abode as provided by the National Asylum Support Service.

55. Applications on behalf of children currently living outside the UK will be considered but until the children are resident in the country their home address will be considered as being their place of residence outside the UK. Exceptions to this would be instances where the children are of parents returning from foreign postings, such as UK service personnel and other crown servants (including diplomats) who have been posted abroad on a fixed term contract and who are returning to live within the UK. Proof of the future UK residency (or a service unit's postal address) will be required if application is made to an oversubscribed school.

Fair Access Protocol

56. Schools will act in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol which has been adopted to give access to educational provisions for hard to place children and includes those children and young people of compulsory school age in some or all of the following categories:-

- a) *Children attending PRUs or Alternative Provision who are ready to be reintegrated back into mainstream education but into a different school from the one originally attended;*
- b) *Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and who are ready for re-integration to an alternative school.*
- c) *Children known to the police or other similar agencies, where there has been active involvement in the past six months;*
- d) *Children returning from the criminal justice system who are registered with the Youth Offending Team;*
- e) *Children with a history of serious attendance problems, who have been out of education for longer than one new term;*
- f) *Children withdrawn from schools following fixed term exclusion, who have been out of education for longer than one school term;*
- g) *Children with special educational needs, but who do not have a statement (normally those on School Action), who have been out of education for longer*

than one new school term;

- h) Other children who have been out of education for longer than one new school term;*
- i) Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;*
- j) Children on the at-risk register, whose move either within or from outside the County requires a change of school;*
- m) Children who are carers;*
- n) Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers*
- o) Children of asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school. The need for a supported entry does not include language support where this is the only support required and must be substantiated by professional evidence. Examples of the type of circumstances that might demonstrate a need for a supported entry are where such a child requires specific emotional or behavioural support by the school;*
- p) Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;*
- q) Children of UK service personnel and other Crown Servants, where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school.*
- r) Children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought*

* Exception to this protocol - The Local Authority (Wiltshire) has the legal power to direct a school to admit a child in its care to a school best suited to that child's needs. This action will be taken in the best interests of the child. Other local authorities have the power to direct a Wiltshire school to admit a child in their care if the school is best suited to his or her needs.

57. In the vast majority of cases children and young people requiring a school place will continue to be admitted in accordance with the usual admission procedures rather than through this protocol.

Service Families

58. Applications for children of service personnel with a confirmed posting to the county, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in the county, will be considered in advance of the family moving into the county if necessary. Where possible, an application must be included in the normal admission round.

59. An official letter, such as a posting note or letter of support from the commanding officer, should be sent to the local authority as soon as possible. This should include the relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address (the address of the closest house in the nearest 'quartering area').

60. Until a fixed address is available, the Unit postal address or quartering area address will be used and a school place allocated accordingly.

61. The local authority will not refuse a service child a place because the family does not currently live in the area, and will not reserve blocks of places for these children.

62. Children will be considered to be siblings if any brother or sister is going to be attending a school. Their position on any waiting list will be set accordingly.

Admitting in area children above PAN

63. Wiltshire Council will always try and allocate a space at a child's designated school whenever this is possible. It must be noted we cannot reserve places at any school nor can we guarantee that a space will be available at the designated school. Having enough spaces in schools for local children is a service priority for the School Buildings and Places team.

64. The local authority has responsibility for the strategic management of school places across the county and has to ensure admissions do not compromise its ability to provide efficient and effective use of resources. It is often more economic to admit local children to their designated school because this does not incorporate an additional transport cost which would be required were an alternative school to be allocated.

65. For some schools, the next nearest school does not provide a reasonable alternative because it is beyond the statutory walking distance or the route to it is unsafe or there is no available transport. Any children who move into these areas might have to be admitted to the designated school despite any existing pressures upon it.

66. It may not always be possible to find a space at the designated school if this is already oversubscribed. In area children will be given priority on any waiting list. If the designated area school is unable to accommodate any more children within the year group then the Council will allocate an alternative school which will be the next nearest school which has available places

67. Transport would be made available for any children who had to be allocated a school because their designated school was full and the school that has been allocated is outside of the statutory safe walking distance for the age of the child.

Appendix: 2014/15 Timetable for Secondary Co-ordination (WILTSHIRE)

- Noon 31 October 2013:** **Closing date for all Common Application Forms to be received by the School Admissions Team at County Hall. Applications must be received by the LA by noon on this date.**
- 26 November 2013: Details of applications which include preferences for schools in other LAs to be sent to those LAs. Details of applications to selective schools in Wiltshire sent to those schools.
- 29 November 2013 : Details of applications to be sent to Academies, Foundation and VA schools.
- Noon 7 January 2014: Last date for any exceptional applications to be considered.
- 8 January 2014: Final list sent out from LA to all admission authorities.
- 16 January 2014: Academies, Foundation and VA schools to provide the LA with ranked lists of applicants.
- Between 16 January and 4 February, the LA will match the ranked lists of all the schools and allocate places as described at paragraph 16.
- 4 February 2014: The LA will inform other LAs of any offers of places at Wiltshire schools to be made to applicants resident in their areas.
- 28 February 2014: By this date the LA will provide schools which details of those children to be offered places at the school.
- 3 March 2014:** **Notification letters despatched and sent to parents.**
- 18 March 2014: Last date for offers to be accepted by parents. Acceptances sent to LA
- 21 March 2014: Details of applications received after deadline and before 4 March to be sent to Academies, Foundation and VA schools.
- 25 March 2014: The LA will send list of pupils accepting a place to every school.
- 04 April 2014: School must inform LA of any pupils who have accepted places via the school.
- 03 April 2014: LA notified by schools of decisions regarding applications received after deadline and before 4 March 2014.
- w/c 22 April 2014: LA to send out chaser letters to parents who have not yet accepted or decline offered made on 3 March 2014.
- w/c 30 April 2014: **Final letters to be sent to parents who have not responded informing them that offer is being withdrawn. Parents have the right to appeal.**

9 May 2014: Notification letters sent out by LA for all applications received between deadline noon 31 October 2013 and 3 March 2014.

LA continues to send out notification letters to all applicants for all schools.

30 August 2014: LA will send out a list to all maintained schools showing the pupils expected to join the school at beginning of 2014/15 school year.