



## **Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary School Admissions for 2011/12**

**Status** : Proposed to Cabinet following Admission Forum

# **Proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for secondary school admissions for year 2011/12.**

## **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 2011 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;

“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;

“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;

“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 2011

“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 primary or secondary education that is received between 31 October 2010 and 22 July 2011;

“additional application” means any application for a place in the intake year of secondary education that is received after 22 July 2011 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

3. In Wiltshire a child usually transfers to secondary school in the September following their eleventh birthday. A child who is sixteen on or after 1 September 2011 may leave secondary school no earlier than 30 June 2012. On this date the child ceases to be of compulsory school age.
4. 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 2010 up until the deadline of 31 October 2010.
5. 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 a 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 **31 October 2010**. All Completed SCAs are to be returned directly to the LA. Any SCAs 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 31 October 2010 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 ten working days of posting their application.
13. **Shared Responsibility.**  
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 address on the child benefit notification letter will be taken 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 SCAs. 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 15 November 2010** where parents have nominated a secondary school outside the LA area, the LA will notify the relevant LA. Details of applications to selective schools in Wiltshire will be sent to those schools.
17. **By 23 November 2010** the LA will notify all Foundation and VA schools of every preference that has been expressed for that school.
18. **By 11 January 2011** 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 32 and those resident in other LA areas.

19. **By 7 February 2011** all 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.
20. 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.
21. **By 18 February 2011** the LA will inform other LAs of any places in Wiltshire schools which will be offered to their residents.
22. **By 28 February 2011** the LA will inform Wiltshire schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools.
23. **On 1 March 2011** letters will be despatched to all parents who submitted an application form by 31 October 2010 offering a place at one school.
24. 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.
25. **16 March 2011** 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.
26. **By 30 March 2011** the LA will send every maintained school a list of those pupils who have accepted an offer at the school.

## Testing

27. Where a selection test of any kind is part of the school's admission arrangements, the admission authority for the school must make it clear to the parent that they are required to express a preference on the SCAF lodged with the LA for that school before their child is tested.

28. No school may allow a child to undertake any test for ability or aptitude unless that school is one of the preferences named on the SCAF.

29. Parents may not be notified of the result of any selection test before the offer date of 1 March 2011; the result of any grammar school test will be sent out immediately on or after 1 March 2011 by those schools.

### **Late Applications for normal round of admissions**

30. 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.

31. 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 31 October 2010

- 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 2011.)
- c. A move into Wiltshire from outside the county after the deadline date but before noon 7 January 2011. 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 2011.
- d. Service Personnel moving to a Wiltshire address after the deadline date. A posting notice must be provided before noon 7 January 2011.
- 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;
- i. Where a Wiltshire resident submits a valid application prior to the deadline naming a selective school(s) outside Wiltshire and subsequently wishes to change these preferences to name a non selective school(s).

Such late applications can only be considered if they are received by the LA before noon on **7 January 2011**.

Documentary evidence should be provided with the application (or at the latest by noon 7 January 2011) 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.

32. Any applications received by a maintained school after 31 October 2010 should be

sent to the LA on receipt.

### **Applications Received between 31 October 2010 and 1 March 2011**

33. Any late applications (except those covered by paragraph 32) received by the LA will not be considered before 2 March 2011. All applications received between 31 October 2010 and 1 March 2011 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.
34. For any applications received by 1 March 2011, the LA will send out a list to any foundation or voluntary aided school named as a preference **on or before 10 March 2011**. 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 19 April 2011.
35. 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.
36. 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.
37. On or before 26 April 2011 letters will be despatched by the LA to all parents who submitted an application form which was received between noon on 31 October 2010 and 1 March 2011. The letter will offer a place at one school.

### **Applications received after 1 March 2011**

38. Any applications received by the LA for a maintained school received after 1 March 2011 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.
39. The LA will contact all foundation and aided schools 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.

40. On or before 31 August 2011 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 2011/12 school year.

### **In Year Applications (for years outside the normal intake year for the school) – effective from September 2010.**

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

42. All applicants for a school place must complete an application form which should be returned to the LA. The applicant must live in Wiltshire.

43. 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.

44. Where the LA receives an in year application form expressing a preference for a Foundation or VA school the application will be forwarded to the school within 5 school days of receipt. Applications for schools outside Wiltshire will be passed on to the maintaining local authority.

45. For a 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.

46. A decision letter will be sent out by the local authority within twenty school days of receiving the application form and this will provide information, if appropriate, about the statutory right of appeal.

47. 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 possible after the result of any selection test is known. A decision letter will be sent out by the local authority and will provide information, if appropriate, about the statutory right of appeal.

48. Children not placed at one of their preferred schools will be considered under the Fair Access Protocol.

49. 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.

### **Applications for transfer at a future date**

50. 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 and VA



schools at the earliest date they are eligible for consideration. Following this the process described above (paragraphs 46 – 49) will be applied.

### **Children from overseas.**

51. 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.
52. 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**

53. 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:-
  - ◆ those who are in care of a Local Authority (previously known as Looked After) \* (see below)
  - ◆ those attending a YPSS centre who need to be reintegrated back into mainstream education;
  - ◆ those who are permanently excluded\*;
  - ◆ those who are out of education for longer than one school term.
  - ◆ those whose parents have been unable to find them a place after moving into the area because of a shortage of places;
  - ◆ those withdrawn from schools by their family following fixed term exclusions and unable to find another place.
  - ◆ those who are refugees or asylum seekers;
  - ◆ those who are homeless;
  - ◆ those without a school place and with a history of serious attendance problems;
  - ◆ those with unsupportive family backgrounds, where a place has not been sought;
  - ◆ those known to the police or other agencies;
  - ◆ those who are carers;
  - ◆ those who have special educational needs (SEN) but without statements;
  - ◆ those who are travellers; and/or
  - ◆ those with disabilities or medical conditions.

\* 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.

54. 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

## **Appendix: 2010/11 Timetable for Secondary Co-ordination (WILTSHIRE)**

- 31 October 2010:** 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.
- 15 November 2010: 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.
- 23 November 2010 : Details of applications to be sent to Foundation and VA schools.
- 7 January 2011: Last date for any exceptional applications to be considered.
- 11 January 2011: Final list sent out from LA to all admission authorities.
- 7 February 2011: Foundation and VA schools to provide the LA with ranked lists of applicants.
- Between 6 February and 20 February, the LA will match the ranked lists of all the schools and allocate places as described at paragraph 16.
- 18 February 2011: 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 2011 : By this date the LA will provide schools which details of those children to be offered places at the school.
- 1 March 2011:** **Notification letters despatched and sent to parents.**
- 16 March 2011 : Last date for offers to be accepted by parents. Acceptances sent to LA.
- 29 March 2011: The LA will send list of pupils accepting a place to every maintained school.
- 20 April 2011: LA notified by schools of decisions regarding applications received after deadline and before 1 March 2011.
- 26 April 2011: Notification letters sent out by LA for all applications received between deadline and 1 March 2011.
- LA continues to send out notification letters to all applicants for all maintained schools.
- 31 August 2011 LA will send out a list to all maintained schools showing the pupils expected to join the school at beginning of 2010/11 school year.