



**Proposed Admission Arrangements for
Community and Voluntary Controlled
Secondary Schools for 2014/15**

Status : Proposed Admissions Arrangements 2014/15

PROPOSED SECONDARY ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Wiltshire Council's proposed admission arrangements for admission to Voluntary Controlled and Community (VC and C) Secondary Schools for the 2014/15 academic year

1. General Information

This policy applies solely to applications for places at Voluntary Controlled (VC) and Community (C) Secondary Schools in Wiltshire. Foundation (F) Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools and Academies (A) are their own admission authorities and the governing bodies are responsible for determining their own procedures and policies.

Proposed arrangements for the co-ordination of secondary admissions are made within the co-ordinated admissions scheme proposed for 2014/15.

a. Designated Area

A designated area is a discrete geographical zone served by a school. The address that determines a child's designated area is the place where s/he is ordinarily resident with his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for the majority of the school week. Most schools have a discrete designated area but some addresses fall within areas shared by two or more schools. Children living outside the county boundary are treated as if the children live within Wiltshire but outside the designated area for the school(s) in question. Maps for each designated area are held by the local authority.

b. Preferences

Parents will be invited to state up to three ranked preferences. Each preference will be considered equally. This means that Wiltshire Council will consider all applications against the published admissions criteria without reference to how the school applied for has been ranked on the application form. As far as possible applicants will be offered a place at a school to which they have expressed a preference. Where the applicant has made more than one preference the Local Authority (LA) will make an offer at the highest ranked preference school with available places in accordance with the standard admission criteria. Where it is not possible to offer a place at a preferred school, and the applicant lives in Wiltshire, the LA will allocate a place. Allocations will be made after all expressed preferences have been considered. An applicant will normally be offered a place at the designated school for their home address. An alternative school may be allocated in cases where the designated school is full and the alternative school is within the safe statutory 3 mile walking distance and has places available or it is a school to which free home to school transport would be provided.

c. SEN pupils

Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs are required to be admitted to the schools named on their statements. Once a statement reaches the formal proposed stage the administration of the admission of the young person becomes the responsibility of Statutory SEN Service at which point this policy ceases to apply.

d. Deadline

The closing date for applications is noon 31 October 2013.

All applications received after noon 31 October 2013, including those directed incorrectly to schools and not forwarded to the LA before the deadline, will be treated as late applications and

considered only after those applications received before the deadline have been determined. Applications may be considered as being received on time if they meet the exceptional circumstances criteria as detailed in the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2014/15.

e. Published Admission Number

A Published Admission Number (PAN) is agreed for each school annually and defines the number of places available for the year of entry. All applications must be agreed until the PAN has been reached and this figure will not be exceeded other than in exceptional circumstances. For example, a child living within a school's designated area and for whom no reasonable alternative school place is available, would be allocated a place at the designated school even if this exceeded the PAN. Reasonable in this circumstance is defined as a school within the statutory 3 mile safe walking distance from the child's home address or a school to which free home to school transport would be provided.

f. 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 shown on the child benefit notification letter or bank statement 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.

g. Multiple Births

The LA will endeavour to place siblings born at the same time (eg twins, triplets etc) in the same school. If necessary schools will be required to admit over PAN to accommodate such children.

2. Oversubscription Criteria

Where a secondary school is over-subscribed, places are allocated to children in order of the ranked criteria listed below:

1. Children in Care

Children in Care (Looked After Children) a 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989).

2. Vulnerable Children

Children from families registered with the National Asylum Support Service; children or families with a serious medical, physical or psychological condition where written evidence is provided at the time of application from a senior clinical medical officer and the general practitioner or specialist showing that it would be detrimental to the child or family not to admit to the preferred school; children with particular educational needs where written evidence is available from Statutory SEN Service to show that it would be detrimental to the child not to be admitted to the school;

For the purpose of the above criteria the word 'families' is determined as living at the same address at the time of application and also living at the same address on a permanent basis. Proof will be required.

3. Designated Area Siblings and Shared Area Siblings

A child is considered under this criterion if a sibling is attending the school as at the deadline date and where the child lives within the designated area or shared area at the same address as the sibling. The sibling must not be in year 12 or 13 of the school at the deadline date. Step, half and foster siblings are included in this category;

4. Other Children from the Designated Area or Shared Area

Children resident within the designated area or shared area who do not qualify under one of the criteria above.

5. Other Siblings

A child is considered under this criterion if a sibling is attending the school as at the deadline date and where the child lives at the same address as the sibling. The sibling must not be in year 12 or 13 at the deadline date. Step, half and foster siblings are also included in this category;

6. Children of staff at the school

A child is considered to fall under this criterion:

- a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or
- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

If applicants wish to be considered under this criterion then a letter from the Headteacher confirming the above applies to the applicant must be provided at the time of application.

7. Other children

Children to whom none of the above criteria apply.

Tie Break

If the school is oversubscribed within any of the above categories the straight-line distance from the child's home address to the school will be used as the determining factor. Distances will be measured according to the Ordnance Survey eastings and northings for the child's home address and the school. Those living closer to the school will be given priority.

If two or more children with the same priority for admission live an indistinguishable distance from the preferred school, but cannot all be admitted then the available places will be decided by means of casting lots.

3. Early or Delayed Transfer

Early transfer

Children may only transfer early to a secondary school if it can be shown that not to do so would be detrimental to their academic progress or social welfare. Each such request involves consultation with the current school, the school to which the child wishes to transfer and where appropriate, the Authority's professional adviser(s). The application will not be agreed if one or more parties consider that the transfer would be inappropriate. Agreement to such a request would be considered exceptional.

Delayed transfer

Children may remain for a further year in a primary school if it can be shown that not to do so would be detrimental to their academic progress or social wellbeing. The presence of special educational needs or underachievement are not in themselves sufficient reasons to delay transfer.

Children for whom a delayed entry to school or year group retention has already been agreed by the relevant parties will continue in the lower year group unless it can be shown that it is in their best interests to rejoin their chronological year group.

The continuation of this arrangement will continue on transfer to secondary school unless the parent/carer, current school, the school to which the child would otherwise wish to transfer and, where appropriate, the LA's professional adviser consider it in the child's best interest to rejoin the chronological year group. An application for transfer to secondary school must still be made in the same way as expected of other children in the year group in which they are working (rather than their chronological age group).

Reference will be made to the Protocol on Delayed Transfer or Retention of Pupils out of their Chronological Year Group (as attached as an appendix to these arrangements).

4. Service Families

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.

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').

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

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.

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.

5. Waiting Lists

Waiting lists will be maintained for all intake year groups in schools. Children will automatically be added to these lists if a preference higher than the school place offered has been refused. All applicants have the right of appeal against any refusal of a place. The existence of a waiting list does not remove this right from any unsuccessful applicant.

The position on the list will be determined by applying the published over-subscription criteria and not by date order of receipt. This will mean a position will change if a later application is received from someone with higher priority according to the oversubscription criteria.

Waiting lists for the all year groups will close on 24 July 2014.

Parents may submit a fresh application for the next academic year group which will be considered from 1 May 2014 onwards.

Places that become available will not be offered to pupils who are not on the waiting list.

If your child is offered a place from a waiting list for any VC, C School then you must accept or decline the place within 10 working days of the date of offer. If the place is not accepted then a further letter will be sent informing the applicant that should they not accept or decline the place within 5 working days the place will be withdrawn. A further letter will be sent informing the applicant the place has been withdrawn.

Notes:

- Names will only be removed from the lists if a written request is received or if the offer of a place that becomes available is declined.
- Registration of interest on a school's Pre-Admission List will not be considered as an application for a school place.
- Parents must contact any Voluntary Aided, Foundation school or the Academy concerned to obtain information on the existence and or maintenance of a waiting list.
- Except for Service Families, children will considered to be living within the designated area for a school on receipt of an exchange of contracts or a signed tenancy agreement.
- Except for Service Families, children will not be considered to be a sibling unless their brother or sister is attending the school and is expected to still be in attendance at the chosen start date.

6. Late or in year Applications

These are applications received after the intake deadline and any applications received for other year groups.

Other than in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the two schools involved, a transfer will, if the applicant is not moving address, only be considered as being for the start of the next traditional term.

Any additional applications will be considered together with any applications already on a school's waiting list.

Applications received at least one traditional term before the term in which admission is being sought are considered together and are ranked using the oversubscription criteria listed in section 2.

Applications received requesting more immediate admission are considered in the order that the School Admissions Team receives them. If more than one additional application for a particular school is received on the same date places are allocated to children in order of the ranked criteria as listed in section 2.

In all cases parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to state up to a maximum of three secondary ranked preferences. An offer will be made at the school listed as highest preference which has an available place.

If your child is offered a place at any VC or C School then you must accept or decline the place within 10 working days of the date of offer. If the place is not accepted then a further letter will be sent informing the applicant that should they not accept or decline the place within 5 working days the place will be withdrawn. A further letter will be sent informing the applicant the place has been withdrawn.

If your child is offered a place at any VC or C School and you accept the place, you must take the place up within 28 working days of the required admissions date stated on the original application form. Should the place not be taken up within the 28 working days the local authority will then write to the parents informing them that the place has been withdrawn.

Requests for places in year groups other than the one relating to the child's chronological age will only be agreed, if supported by the LA's relevant professional adviser(s) and the school.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs must be admitted to the school named on their statements. Once a statement reaches the formal proposed stage the administration of the admission of the young person becomes the responsibility of Statutory SEN Service at which point this policy ceases to apply.

An admission number, which applies to the normal year of entry, is agreed for each school annually. Applications will generally be agreed until this Published Admission Number (PAN) for the year group in question has been reached or until the net capacity of the school has been reached.

If the governing body of any school refuse admission to a child with challenging behaviour (outside the normal admissions round) the case must be referred to the LA for consideration under the In-Year Fair Access Protocol. This will normally only be the case where the school has a partially high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously excluded children.

This provision will not apply to a Child in Care (Looked after Child, a previously looked after child) or a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, as these children must be admitted.

Applications for a child's designated school which would exceed the admission number will usually be agreed in cases where a reasonable alternative place is not available. Reasonable in this circumstance means a school within the statutory safe 3 mile walking distance from the child's home address or a school to which free home-to-school transport would be provided.

An application for a school which would exceed the admission number will be agreed if the child has particular learning needs identified by Statutory SEN Service which cannot be met at an alternative school.

Any child refused a place at a school will be placed on the waiting list for that school (which will be kept in order using oversubscription criteria not date of receipt of application).

7. Sixth Form Admissions

Parents or students wishing to enrol for sixth form courses at Voluntary Controlled or Community Secondary Schools should in the first instance contact the school and ask for a copy of the sixth form prospectus. This will detail the courses offered at the school and any specific entry requirements for any of those courses. The school will require an application form to be completed should the parent or student wish to make a formal application to join the school's sixth form.

8. Appeal Process

Parents have a right of appeal to an independent panel against any decision made by or on behalf of the Authority as to the school at which education is to be provided for their child.

Information about the appeal procedure will be provided where a place at one or more of the preferred schools has been refused. Appellants should contact the Customer Services Team (01225 713010) to obtain an appeals form which should be returned to Democratic and Members Service team at County Hall, Trowbridge. The clerk for the appeals panel will be provided by the D&M Service team.

Once a place has been awarded by the independent appeal panel the place must be taken up within twenty eight days of the required date of admission stated on the original application form.

Should the place not be taken up within the twenty eight days the local authority will then write to the parents informing them that the place has been withdrawn.

9. Further Appeals

Unless there are significant and material changes, as agreed by the Director for Children and Education, in the circumstances of the parent, child or school relevant to a further application, a repeat application during the same academic year will not be considered and no fresh appeal can be made.

Where there have been material changes in circumstances and the repeat application is considered and again refused, the parents will have the right to a fresh appeal.

Parents who have appealed unsuccessfully can reapply for a place at the same school in a later academic year, and have a right of appeal if unsuccessful with that application.

Appendix A

Protocol on Delayed Transfer or Retention of Pupils out of their Chronological Year Group

Introduction

The LA in its published admissions arrangements makes reference to delayed transfer of pupils when transferring from primary phase to the next phase of education.

In the admissions arrangements it is noted that children may remain for a further year in a primary phase school if it can be shown that not to do so would be detrimental to their academic or social progress.. Each such request involves consultation with the parents, the current school, the school to which the child would otherwise wish to transfer and, where appropriate, the Admissions Authority's professional adviser. If one or more parties do not agree then the delay would not be appropriate and the child's name will be removed from the school roll at the same time as other pupils within the same chronological year group.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The issue of delayed transfer is sometimes raised for pupils with special educational needs, either at the infant/junior transfer or junior/primary/secondary transfer stage. It is not normally considered appropriate to educate pupils out of their year group unless there are exceptional circumstances. In cases where schools or parents are considering educating pupils out of the year group for pupils at School Action Plus or with a Statement of Special Educational Need it is necessary for the following to happen.

An appropriate member of Targeted Schools and Learning support services should be involved and together with the school must provide advice on the nature and degree of the pupil's difficulties and explore

- a. How these compare to his/her peers i.e. those in the year group which he or she should be educated.
- b. How the delayed transfer or retention of the pupil will help alleviate any difficulties he or she experiences.
- c. The likely emotional, social, academic effects on retaining out of year group.

- d. What steps would be necessary to include the pupil within his/her peer group in order to transfer at the expectant time or remain with his or her chronological year group.

NB. In line with the SEN Code of Practice schools must make reasonable adjustments to include pupils who have been identified as having a special educational need.

Where a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs the issue of being retained out of the year group must be addressed at the Annual Review prior to transfer. The annual review prior to secondary transfer should be held in the summer term of Year 5.

- Where a pupil does not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs a School Action Plus review meeting should be held early in the summer term of year 5. In this meeting it would be necessary to provide the evidence detailed above (See a-d previously stated) and agreement would need to be reached between all parties involved.
- The implications of delayed transfer or retention should be fully discussed with the current school, the receiving school, parents and Local Authority representative in order to fully explore the long term implications.
- It should also be noted that whilst a pupil is still in the infant stage of education it may not be obvious they are out of year group, but by the time they are in Year 10 the difference may be more apparent.
- It should also be noted that in the case of some special schools the pupils will automatically be put in their chronological year group rather than out of year group so this may have implications for pupils who require a special school placement in the long term.
- If following detailed discussion there is agreement that delayed transfer or retention is in the pupil's best interest, the notes of the meeting together with individual comments from the various members present should be forwarded as part of the annual review process to the Statutory SEN Service for pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs.
- Schools will be informed of the outcome of the request at the transfer review stage or in the case of School Action Plus within a month of receipt of the request.
- It will be the responsibility of the school to inform the parents of the decision.