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Northumberland County Council Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools - 2020/21

Admissions to First and Primary Schools

1. Introductions

These are the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled first and primary schools.

Governing Bodies of all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, Parents and wider community groups who may have an interest in school admission arrangements have been consulted on the County Council's Admission Policy.

2. Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

In line with current legislation, the Local Authority has drawn up a separate scheme to coordinate admissions to maintained schools and Academies within Northumberland and neighbouring authorities for the main admissions round (phase transfer).

3. Published Admission Numbers

The admission number the Local Authority will publish for each community and voluntary controlled school is shown in Appendix 1.

4. The Local Authority Admissions Policy for 2020-2021

This admissions policy will be used to allocate places at those schools which are oversubscribed. It is attached as Appendix 2 for entry to a Reception class.

5. Address to be Used in Determining Priority for Admission

If a school is oversubscribed, the address of the parent or carer with whom the child is normally resident will be used in the allocation process. Where a child's address is difficult to determine, for example where shared living arrangements are in place, the address of the parent or carer claiming child benefit will be used. If that is not available the address shown on the NHS medical card can be used.

6. Fraudulent Applications and Withdrawal of a School Place

The Local Authority will not withdraw the offer of a place unless it has been made in error it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, the application will be considered on the basis of correct information, and parents or carers will have the right of appeal where no place can be offered.

The local authority will seek to withdraw the offer of a school places if it is established that a fraudulent application was submitted.

Where parents or carers are found to have made a fraudulent application for a school place and the admission authority decides not to withdraw that place in the best interests of the child, should a school place be sought for any other sibling, or siblings,

the sibling criterion will be not be considered.

7. Parental disagreement

The management of school applications may be severely delayed during the main admissions round where separated parents or carers of the child each submit a separate application for different schools. The School Admissions Code states that only one offer per child is made by the Local Authority. In this situation the Local Authority asks that parents and/or carers resolve matters between themselves and inform the Local Authority in writing of which application should be processed. The Local Authority will not become involved in private disputes; furthermore neither application will be processed until the matter is resolved.

8. The Admissions Timetable

The timetable for the September 2021 application and allocation processes will be in line with the co-ordinated admissions schemes in accordance with the timetable detailed in Appendix 3.

9. Late Applications

For oversubscribed schools, applications which are received or changed after the published closing date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Normally applications submitted after the relevant published date will not be considered until after allocations for those parents who applied on time have been made. Any evidence submitted after the relevant date to support a late application or change of preference will not be considered. Affected applicants will not receive an offer with other parents on National Offers Day, instead receiving one on 're-allocation day'.

10. Waiting Lists

Once places have been allocated, children refused a place will continue to be considered for any vacancies which become. Vacancies will always be allocated by applying the admissions policy; length of time on the waiting list will not be considered.

11. Twins and Siblings of Multiple Births

Where places are available for some but not all children from multiple births (including twins) the Local Authority will exercise discretion offered by the Admissions Code to offer all the children a place, even if this breaches the published admission number for the year group.

12. Catchment Areas

Catchment areas are a tool used to apply the over subscription criteria when a school has more applications than places. Catchment areas have no separate legal identity outside of the application of the admissions policy and determining entitlement to home to school transport. Details of catchment areas are available on request or by following the links on the County Council's webpage.

13. Distance Measures

Distance measures will be undertaken using the Local Authorities computerised Geographical Information System (GIS). This measures a straight-line measure from the front door of the home to main gate of the school. Distance checking is an integral function within the school admissions software ensuring consistency in measurement

14. Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A request may be made for the date at which a child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, to be deferred to later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year. A child may take up a part-time place until the child reaches

compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

Any such request should be discussed with the Headteacher and made in writing to the local authority. The local authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the local authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be discussed with the headteacher of the school and made in writing to the local authority. The local authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the local authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Summer Born Children

The parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to the reception class in the September following their fifth birthday and that that the child will remain in this cohort as they progress through school.

Parents who want to make this request should make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time. The application to the local authority should include this request and in addition it should be made in writing to the headteacher of the school. The local authority will liaise with the school who will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher, who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the local authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Parents will be informed of the outcome of the request before primary national offer day.

If the request is agreed, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If the request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

If child who has not reached compulsory school age has been allocated a Reception place and their parent or carer wishes to delay their child's entry to school, the place will be held open. The place must be taken up in the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age.

15. Admissions to Nursery Schools and Infant/Primary Schools Offering Nursery Education

These arrangements do not apply to the admission of nursery children. Nursery admission arrangements are determined separately.

Attendance at a school's nursery does not guarantee admission to the school's Reception group nor is it a factor in allocating places in most cases.

All parents must apply for a place in a Reception class.

APPENDIX 2

Northumberland County Council Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools - 2020/21

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Document-store/School%20admissions/Admissions-Handbook-PRIMARY-School-2021-22-Final.pdf>

Admissions to First and Primary Schools

Oversubscription Criteria

This policy applies only to Local Authority maintained schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Voluntary Aided Schools, Trust Schools and Academies apply their own admission criteria.

The County Council is obliged to admit all applicants to a particular school provided these do not exceed the school's Published Admission Number (PAN).

1. Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs where the school is named in the statement
2. Children looked after and who were previously looked after, i.e. in public care
3. Children living within the catchment area of the school and those on whose behalf firm evidence is presented that they will be living in the catchment area by the appropriate admission date.
4. Children with an exceptional social or medical reason that means that they can only attend that specific school (for example, where the child or one or both parents has a disability that means that the child can only go to one school).
 - Strong supporting evidence must be provided from a professional body involved with the family or the child.
 - The professional must be independent of both the family and the school
 - The evidence must relate specifically to the school for which the application is being made and must demonstrate clearly why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs

No assumptions should be made that the submission of the relevant evidence will, in itself be sufficient to allocate a place.

NOTE: You will not be allocated a place under this criterion if you omit to send to the School Admissions Manager a written statement from a professional third party by 16 January.

5. Children resident in the greater catchment area of the school partnership who have

siblings already in the school who are expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission. Evidence must be presented to confirm that the child will be living in the greater catchment area by the appropriate admission date.

6. Children resident in the greater catchment area of the school partnership who are expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission. Evidence must be presented to confirm that the child will be living in the greater catchment area by the appropriate admission date.

7. Children who have a sibling who already attends the school and who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.

For the purpose of admissions siblings are deemed to be brothers and sisters, stepsiblings, foster siblings adopted siblings and other children who reside permanently in the household and are treated as siblings.

8. Children on whose behalf preferences are expressed on grounds other than any of those outlined above.

Parents may be asked to provide evidence of residency if the requested school is oversubscribed.

Should it prove necessary, because places are limited, to distinguish between Children in any given category priority will be given to those who live nearest to the school, measured in a direct line ('as the crow flies')

Applications on behalf of children who are resident in other Local Authority areas will be considered in the same way as applications from Northumberland residents.

Children with disabilities will be treated no less favourably than other applicants for admission. Schools are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that Children with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage, and no child will be refused a place on the grounds of disability. A pupil has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The County Council reserves the right to vary these criteria within the relevant year to take account of revisions to legislation or its interpretation by the courts.

Those parents whose application to a school has been unsuccessful will be notified of their right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, gives this right to all parents whose application for a school has been unsuccessful. The decision of an Appeal Panel is binding on both the Admission Authority and the school. The DfE Code of Practice on school admission appeals can be found on the DfE website.

Publication of the Local Authorities Information for Parents (2020/21) booklet

The Information for Parents publication for September 2021 entry will be available from the beginning of September 2020. Schools should make their own prospectus available to parents 6 weeks before the closing date for applications. This means that schools prospectuses should be available by 12 September 2020.

APPENDIX 3

Admissions timetable

| DATE | EVENT |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 November 2020 | Application process opens online for 2021/21 |
| Midnight 15 January 2021 | Closing date for all application forms to be received by the LA |
| 14 February 2021 | Last date for any late applications to be submitted and considered as Exceptions |
| 5 February 2021 | Applications for own admission authority schools and academies in Northumberland will be forwarded to those admission authorities and applications stating preferences for schools in other LAs will be forwarded to those LAs |
| 2 March 2021 | Academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools to provide the LA with their ranked lists of applicants, including details of how the oversubscription criteria were applied |
| 8 March 2021 | The LA will inform other LAs of any offers of Northumberland schools to be made to applicants resident in their areas |
| 22 March 2021 | The LA will inform Northumberland schools of children to be offered places at their schools |
| 16 April 2021 | National offer day for places. |
| 1 May 2021 | Date for parents to refuse the offer |
| 8 May 2021 | Reallocate spaces that have become available since offer day (on-time applicants only - waiting list process) in criteria order. |
| 29 May 2021 onwards | Places are allocated as and when they become available in priority order. June/July Appeals are heard |