



REPORT TO GOVERNING BODIES OF ALL CHESHIRE EAST SCHOOLS – SPRING TERM 2010

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED COORDINATION SCHEME AND ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report is intended to fulfil the requirements of the regulations set out below, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998:

- **The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008**, which requires that all local authorities formulate a scheme for coordinating admission arrangements for maintained schools within their area.
- **The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008**, in relation to consultation on admission arrangements for Cheshire East community and voluntary controlled schools for the school year **2011-2012** and subsequent years, subject to any review.

1.2 This report outlines the proposed coordination scheme for the area of Cheshire East Council (**Appendix 1**), which will apply to applications for places in maintained schools and Academies received for the relevant age group i.e. at the normal point of entry into reception at 4+ and secondary transfer at 11+ for the school year 2011-12 and to applications received 'in year' (i.e. those received after the first day of the school year into the relevant age group or into any other year group) with effect from September 2010, in accordance with regulations.

1.3 The proposed admission arrangements attached as **Appendix 2**, will apply to applications received for Cheshire East community and controlled schools with effect from September 2011, subject to any review.

1.4 The proposals in this report have been agreed by the Cheshire East Admissions Forum at its meeting of 16 November 2009 as the basis for consultation.

2 PART ONE – PROPOSED LOCAL AUTHORITY COORDINATION SCHEME

2.1 Coordination regulations require that local authorities consult their Admissions Forum and each governing body who are the admission authority for a school in its area, together with any other local authority as the authority may determine on its proposed arrangements.

2.2 Once consultation has been completed, the Local Authority must then notify the Secretary of State by the **15 April 2010** that a scheme has been adopted.

- 2.3 Where a local authority fails to inform the Secretary of State that a qualifying scheme has been agreed by 15 April, the Secretary of State has the power to impose one.

3 CONSULTATION on PROPOSED CHANGES

- 3.1 It is proposed that the coordination scheme for processing applications made for the normal point of entry to school in September, as determined by Cabinet on 24 March 2009, be agreed for September 2011 with the changes listed below and to be revised to include the arrangements for coordinating 'in year' applications for September 2010 and subsequent years, subject to any review. The proposed changes are:

- Revised timetable and procedure for coordinating **primary** school admissions, with all applications being made to the 'home' authority and not the maintaining authority;
- National closing date for secondary coordination – to note;
- Procedure for making requests for admission above the Published Admission Number, to comply with changes introduced in the School Admissions Code 2009;
- The inclusion within the scheme of the arrangements for coordinating applications received 'in year'.

4 PRIMARY COORDINATION

- 4.1 The new School Admissions Code (Code) requires the 'home' local authority to coordinate all primary applications with effect from September 2011. The purpose of this is to standardise the process in line with secondary coordination to make it simpler for parents and carers (referred to hereafter as parents) to understand. Currently the primary application process involves parents completing the common application form provided by the *maintaining* authority; for parents residing on the border of two or more authorities this can mean that different procedures, including timetables have to be understood and that different application forms have to be completed, often resulting in multiple offers of a school place.
- 4.2 The new regulations require that with effect from September 2011 all resident parents applying for primary school places will apply on the common application form provided by their *home* local authority, i.e. the authority where they live. This is in line with the secondary application process.
- 4.3 The home local authority must provide parents, as before, with the opportunity to submit a minimum of three school preferences and to provide information in support of their application. However, regulations now prescribe a **national closing date** closing date of **15 January**, which is the date by which time applications must have been submitted to the local authority. This is not the date by which time applications must have been received. (The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, Schedule 1, regulation 2(2)a)

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- 4.4 The Co-ordination Regulations also prescribe for primary applications the **31 March** as the date by which the exchange of information with other local authorities must have been completed. **A national offer date has not been prescribed** and therefore dates may vary from one authority to another.
- 4.5 The Local Authority has proposed that the Cheshire East offer date for September 2011 shall be **Friday 29 April**. This is to allow for all data exchanges to have been completed with neighbouring authorities, for all applications to have been checked, and for letters to be printed out before posting on this date. This also takes into account the Easter holiday period which commences on Friday 15 April and ends on Monday 2 May and the dates proposed by neighbouring authorities, which are broadly in line with this proposal:

Local Authority	Dates Proposed
Cheshire East	29 Apr
Cheshire West & Chester	29 Apr
Halton	26 Apr
Warrington	26 Apr
Knowsley	26 April
Liverpool	26 April
Trafford	16 Apr
Manchester	15 April
Stockport	15 April
Derbyshire	09 May
Staffordshire	18 Apr
Stoke-on-Trent	11 April
Shropshire	11 Apr

- 4.6 It should be noted that offer dates cannot be before 31 March due to the requirement in the regulations (The School Admissions Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008), which states that a qualifying scheme must require coordination between local authorities to be completed by the last working day in March in the offer year (Schedule 1, Para 2(2)(C))
- 4.7 In order to assist schools, the Local Authority will continue to provide data on the total number of first, second and third preferences received. The number of first preferences; together with information about the number of admissions in the September of the previous year, as published in the Authority's information booklet, will give an indication of the likely number of children to be admitted in the September.
- 4.8 Regulations require that decisions on applications must be notified by the home authority.
- 4.9 Regulations specify that schemes must require that a parent **accepts** the offer of a school place within two weeks after the date of the offer. Cheshire East Council

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already includes an 'accept and decline' procedure in its current scheme but must revise the date, which is proposed as **Monday 16 May**, to accommodate the new requirements.

- 4.10 The date proposed for receiving **appeal applications** is **16 May**.
- 4.11 There is no change proposed to the current arrangements that state that waiting lists will be maintained as a minimum until the end of the autumn term, in accordance with legal requirements.

5 NATIONAL CLOSING DATE FOR SECONDARY COORDINATION;

- 5.1 The coordination regulations prescribe that the national closing date for secondary applications shall be 31 October, which is the date by which time applications must have been submitted to the local authority. This is not the date by which time applications must have been received. (The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, Schedule 1, regulation 2(2)a)

6 PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBERS.

- 6.1 The new Code, which applied with effect from February 2009 requires that once an admission number has been set by the admission authority, schools **should not** admit children above the published number unless the school and the local authority agree that admitting above that number will not adversely affect the school in the longer term and will not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring schools (Code, para 1.18). This is a change to the previous Code which stated that schools should not admit above the published admission number unless exceptional circumstances applied.
- 6.2 The proposed scheme states that schools can make representations to the local authority to admit above their published admission number and that such requests should be made before 31 January in the offer year, or after the national offer day, as stated in the Code, paragraph 1.18. In order to consider such requests before allocations are finalised, the Local Authority is proposing the **20 January** for the secondary transfer and **20 March** for primary admissions. In the case of maintained schools the local authority, as the strategic commissioner of school places, has the final decision.

7 IN YEAR COORDINATION

- 7.1 Following changes in admissions legislation **local authorities must coordinate all applications received 'in year' with effect from September 2010.**
- 7.2 The Local Authority is required to formulate its coordination scheme for all maintained schools and academies in its area by **1 January 2010.**
- 7.3 The law requires that in year applications must be considered without delay, and a formal decision either to offer or to refuse a place must be made and notified to the applicant, advising them of their statutory right of appeal when a place cannot be offered. Applicants must not be refused the opportunity to make an application, or

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told that they can only be placed on a waiting list rather than make a formal application.

- 7.4 Regulations require that all 'in year' applications **must be made to the home authority on the council's common application form**, which must allow parents an opportunity to submit a minimum of three preferences in ranked order for schools within or outside their home local authority area.
- 7.5 The common application form must allow parents to provide their name, their address (including documentary evidence in support), and the name, address and date of birth of the child as a minimum. In line with the common application form for admission as part of the normal admission round, the local authority is proposing that further information is requested as shown in the attached draft attached as **Appendix 3)**
- 7.6 Local authorities and admission authorities in the area must exchange information on applications made and potential offers by the dates specified in the scheme (attached as **Appendix 1)** Schools that are their own admission authority must communicate the availability of places to the local authority when requested.
- 7.7 The home authority must exchange information on applications with other local ("maintaining") authorities about preferences for schools in their area.
- 7.8 The home local authority must ensure, as far as possible, that the parent is offered a place at the school ranked highest on their application form. All offers must be communicated by the home authority. Maintaining local authorities and schools must not contact parents about the outcome of their applications until after these offers have been received.
- 7.9 Parents, who cannot be offered one of their preferred schools, must if there are places available, be offered a place at another school.
- 7.10 Each admission authority must maintain a waiting list for at least one term in the academic year of admission, for every oversubscribed school.
- 7.11 The proposed scheme is attached as **Appendix 1**. All schools are invited to feedback their comments to the Local Authority **by 1 March**.

8 PART TWO - COMMUNITY AND CONTROLLED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

- 8.1 Regulations require that all admission authorities **must** consult on their proposed **admissions arrangements** where,
- a change to the determined arrangements is being proposed; or
 - the admission authority has not consulted in one of the previous two years.
- 8.2 Regulations specify the persons who must be consulted, which includes
- the Admissions Forum;

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- admission authorities for all schools in the 'relevant area', which, for Cheshire East Local Authority, is the administrative boundary of Cheshire East,
- neighbouring local authorities;
- where relevant, faith authorities;
- governing bodies of all community and voluntary controlled schools in the relevant area;
- relevant parents and
- local groups with an interest
- Where a change is being proposed to increase an admission number by 27 or more, trade unions representing the interests of staff at the relevant school must be consulted.

9 CONSULTATION on PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 It is proposed that the current admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, determined by Cabinet on 24 March 2009, be agreed for September 2011 with the following changes:

- Amendment to the title 'looked after child' to be renamed '**cared for child**';
- Amendment to the current oversubscription criteria to give a **higher priority to siblings**;
- Removal from the oversubscription criteria of the category of '**feeder/partner**' primary schools.
- Proposals to vary some schools' current **admission numbers** for September 2010 admissions, in line with net capacities (**Appendix 4 to follow**);
- Proposed **re-zoning** arrangements.

10 AMENDMENT to the TITLE 'LOOKED AFTER CHILD' to be RENAMED 'CARED FOR CHILD'

10.1 To revise the wording for criterion 1 following feedback from children through the Children in Care Council. This will not affect the priority for admission, which must be first priority in accordance with regulations as stated in paragraph 2.9 of the School Admissions Code.

11 AMENDMENT to the CURRENT OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA to give a HIGHER PRIORITY to SIBLINGS

11.1 The Local Authority would like to propose a change to the current oversubscription criteria to give a higher priority to children with siblings already attending the preferred school and expected to continue at the school in the following year. The effect of this would be that; in the event that a community or voluntary controlled school is oversubscribed, children with siblings would be ranked higher than children resident within the school's designated catchment area and as such

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'catchment area' children could be displaced if demand for available places within these categories exceeds the number of places available.

- 11.2 Paragraph 2.21 of the School Admissions Code states that *'giving priority to younger brothers and sisters of children already at the school supports families and can reassure parents about the safety of children when walking to school. Older children can also offer support to their younger brothers and sisters while at the school'*. The Code is also clear in paragraph 2.25 that *'families must be at the heart of the admissions system'*.
- 11.3 In the past two years, the application of Cheshire County Council's oversubscription criteria, which affords a high priority to children resident within its designated catchment area, resulted in unsuccessful *sibling* applications for reception class places as follows:
- 12 primary schools with a total of 33 siblings for admission in September 2009.
 - 11 primary schools with a total of 31 siblings for admission in September 2008.
- 11.4 Potentially, this can mean that parents unsuccessful with their application for the younger child then choose to move the older sibling to an alternative school, which is considered not to be in the best interest of the child or the school by all concerned parties.
- 11.5 Advice was received on 25 August 2009 from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator following an exercise undertaken to scrutinise admission arrangements for 2010. The advice of the Adjudicator was that the Authority's arrangements are open to challenge as they do not go 'far enough' to meet the requirements of paragraph 2.25 of the School Admissions Code, which states that *'admission authorities for primary schools **should** ensure in their oversubscription criteria that siblings (including twins, triplets or children from other multiple births) can attend the same primary school'*.
- 11.6 It is acknowledged at this stage that the main concern of the Schools Adjudicator is in relation to primary school admissions. However, the Local Authority is proposing that the same set of oversubscription criteria be applied to all applications, i.e. those received for oversubscribed schools during the primary, secondary and 'in year' application process and to include all older children as sibling links attending the school and expected to continue attending the school in years **reception through to year 10**.
- 11.7 It is not proposed that sibling links for secondary school admission include older siblings on roll in the sixth form (who may also continue in the sixth form the following year) and older siblings who may transfer from year 11 to year 12 in the sixth form at the time of admission of the younger sibling the following year.

12 PROPOSED REMOVAL FROM the OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA of the CATEGORY of 'FEEDER/PARTNER' PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- 12.1 The Local Authority is also seeking your views on the removal from the oversubscription criteria of named feeder schools.

- 12.2 Currently, attendance at a feeder school offers a higher priority for admission within the oversubscription criteria to children resident outside the preferred school's designated catchment area than priority under the 'distance to the nearest school' criterion would allow.
- 12.3 The effect of this can be that parents seek places at primary schools on the basis of the high schools that they feed into and, when preparing for transfer to high school, have sought places at alternative primary schools during the course of the year in order to increase the likelihood of success of their secondary school application.
- 12.4 In view of the fact that primary school catchment areas and the secondary school catchment areas that they feed into overlap, any child seeking a place at their 'local' secondary school will have a priority for admission under the 'designated catchment area' criterion, regardless of which primary school the child attends.
- 12.5 The School Admissions Code paragraph 2.72 states that the use of named feeder schools can support good curriculum and geographical links and local continuity between phases in an area. It is important to bear in mind that whilst no places can be guaranteed in case the pattern of preferences expressed does not allow this guarantee to be met; and this includes guaranteeing places at the designated catchment area school, the use of catchment areas would ensure as far as possible, that for parents that choose their catchment area high school and a primary school serving the same area, in most cases, such links will continue and as such local continuity between phases would not normally be affected. However, where a parent takes up a place for their child at a primary school in the catchment area of a high school serving a different area, the parent may find at allocation that their application is unsuccessful if the school is oversubscribed with applications from children resident within its area.
- 12.6 Schools working together within Education Improvement Partnerships will continue to do so ensuring good curriculum and geographical links and local continuity between phases.
- 13 PROPOSED VARIATIONS TO ADMISSION NUMBERS (APPENDIX 4);**
- 13.1 Admission numbers are part of a school's admission arrangements. Regulations require that admission authorities set an admission number for the relevant year group based on the physical capacity of the school. Admission numbers must refer in each case to children to be admitted to the school for the first time.
- 13.2 For most schools it is proposed to retain the existing admissions number for September 2011 arrangements. A full list of admission numbers are shown in **Appendix 4.**
- 13.3 This paper seeks comments on a number of proposals for reductions/increases in Published Admission Numbers (PAN) proposed by governing bodies. Comments on these proposals can be referred to the relevant admission authority before the closing date for consultation of 1 March 2010 and to the Local Authority. Admission authorities will need to consider the responses before determining the admission arrangements, which must be 15 April.

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13.4 The Local Authority recommends for approval the following proposed increases:

	Indicative Number	Current PAN	Proposed PAN
St Thomas More Catholic High	128	127	128
Sound & District	17	17	19
St Oswald's Worleston	7	7	8

13.5 Proposals by governing bodies to increase the published admission number for their school which the Local Authority recommends are not supported are listed below. This recommendation is made as either the proposed change is not in line with the net capacity of the school, or the Authority has concerns about the long term implications for the school or other schools within the locality.

	Indicative Number	Current PAN	Proposed PAN
Prestbury CE	40	40	45
Ivy Bank	52	45	60
Monk Coppenhall	51	55	60
The Dingle	50	50	60
Ashgrove	22	25	17

14 PROPOSED RE- ZONING ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2011

14.1 There are currently no changes being proposed to the 2010 zoning arrangements to apply for 2011. Work is currently underway to review all catchment areas through informal consultation with schools. It is anticipated that this work will be completed during the summer of 2010 with any changes arising out of this review, to take effect from September 2012. Any proposed changes will be subject to statutory consultation between 1 November 2010 and 1 March 2011.

RECOMMENDED: That governing bodies of all schools consider and comment by the statutory deadline of 1 March on the proposed:

- **Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme to apply in September 2010 in relation to 'in year' applications only and to all applications with effect from September 2011;**
- **Admission Arrangements for community and voluntary controlled Cheshire East schools and Sandbach School.**

PART ONE CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM
LA COORDINATION SCHEME FOR ALL MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

Name of School or LA.....

	Support	Do not Support	No View
1. Revised timetable and procedure for coordinating primary school admissions.			
Comments (if any)			

	Support	Do not Support	No View
2. National closing date for secondary coordination			
Comments (if any)			

	Support	Do not Support	No View
3. Procedure for making requests for admission above the Published Admission Number			
Comments (if any)			

	Support	Do not Support	No View
4. The proposed arrangements for coordinating applications received 'in year'.			
Comments (if any)			



PART TWO CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

**COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS
 PROPOSED *ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS* FOR SEPTEMBER 2011& BEYOND**

	Support	Do not Support	No View
1. Amendment to the title 'looked after child' to be renamed ' cared for child '.			
Comments (if any)			

	Support	Do not Support	No View
2. Amendment to the current oversubscription criteria to give a higher priority to siblings .			
Comments (if any)			

	Support	Do not Support	No View
3. Removal from the oversubscription criteria of the category of ' feeder/partner ' primary schools.			
Comments (if any)			

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	Support	Do not Support	No View
4. Proposals to vary some schools' current admission numbers for September 2010 admissions, in line with net capacities (Appendix 4).			
Comments (if any)			

	Support	Do not Support	No View
5. Proposed re- zoning arrangements			
Comments (if any)			

Please return to Barbara Dale, Admissions & Appeals Manager, School Admissions Service, Delamere House (EC), Delamere Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2LL or by email to Barbara.Dale@Cheshireeast.gov.uk by **1 March 2010**.