

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME

APPENDIX 1

STATUTORY BASIS

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Applications for school places 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) and for the normal admission round into the relevant age group (i.e. reception at 4+ and secondary transfer at 11+) shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out in this scheme.
- 1.2 This scheme meets the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Cheshire East Council.
- 1.3 This scheme applies to admissions in the school year 2011-12 and for subsequent years, subject to any review. In respect of the arrangements for applications received outside the normal admission round, (i.e. 'in year' applications) these shall apply with effect from September 2010 in accordance with The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008.
- 1.4 Under its scheme of co-ordination for schools in Cheshire East, the Authority will be responsible for managing the admission of all pupils who are resident within its administrative area.
- 1.5 The co-ordinated scheme applies to all schools, excluding special schools, maintained by Cheshire East Council and to admissions to Sandbach School, and to preferences expressed by Cheshire East resident parents and carers for schools maintained by other English local authorities and Academies. Admissions to other schools with independent status will not be covered by this scheme.
- 1.6 Parents and carers making applications as part of the normal admission round for schools maintained by other authorities with a different age of transfer (i.e. middle and upper schools) will also be included within these arrangements.

THE CO-ORDINATION SCHEME

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 Cheshire East Borough Council, as the admission authority for its community and voluntary controlled schools, will be responsible for determining who can be allocated a place at these schools in accordance with the Council's published admission arrangements.
- 2.2 For schools not maintained by this Council, the relevant local authority will be responsible for determining who can be offered a place.
- 2.3 For Academies and schools with voluntary aided, foundation or Trust status, decisions on applications will normally be made by the governing body. The

exception to this will be where the governing body has made arrangements for another body (including the maintaining authority) to consider the application and to determine by reference to the school's admission criteria if a place can be allocated.

- 2.4 The admission arrangements for schools maintained by Cheshire East Borough Council, and for Sandbach School, are published on the Council's website and in its information booklets in line with the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code (2009). Admissions arrangements are also available from each school on request.
- 2.5 All parents and carers **resident** in the area administered by Cheshire East Borough Council will be asked to make their application on the common application form provided by this authority (as the 'home' authority). Parents and carers making applications on a maintaining authority's application form will be advised to contact their 'home' authority. Parents and carers seeking places at independent (i.e. fee paying) schools must apply direct to the school.
- 2.6 Applications for places sent direct by parents and carers to individual schools cannot be accepted and will be sent back to the local authority for inclusion within these arrangements.
- 2.7 The common application form will invite parents and carers to express 3 school preferences ranked in order of priority.
- 2.8 Parents and carers will be provided with the opportunity to give reasons for their preferences and can, if appropriate, provide any additional documents in support of their preference/s.
- 2.9 Parents and carers will be asked to provide details, where applicable, of any siblings attending the preferred school at the time of application and who will be attending at the time of admission, details of the current school attended and the length of time resident at the address provided.
- 2.10 If a parent or carer expresses a preference for a school designated as having a religious character (faith school) they will be asked to state the religious denomination of their child on their application form. Parents and carers will be advised to contact the school as they may also be required to complete a supplementary information form. Forms will be available on the Council's website or direct from the school. Supplementary information forms (SIFs) will request information in addition to that provided on the common application form. Such request must be made in accordance with paragraphs 1.78 and 1.86 of the School Admissions Code (2009). Examples of additional information that can lawfully be requested include membership of, or relationship with the church, or a reference from a priest or other religious minister as proof of religious commitment.
- 2.11 Where a school receives a supplementary information form, this LA will not consider it to be a valid application unless the parent/carer has also listed the school on their home LA's Application Form, in accordance with paragraph 3.7 of the School Admissions Code. Supplementary information forms should be returned direct to the school concerned.
- 2.12 When a parent or carer has submitted their application on the common application form but has not also submitted a supplementary information form (where relevant),

the admission authority must nevertheless consider the application in accordance with legal requirements (Para 4.3 of Section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). In circumstances where a SIF has been received the admission authority must be proactive in ensuring that there is an application, in order for the preference to be considered.

- 2.13 In circumstances where a SIF has not been completed the application will be assessed on the basis of the information submitted to the governing body on the home local authority's common application form.
- 2.14 All preferences will be considered on the basis of the **equal preference model** for allocating places, in accordance with legal requirements. This means that in the first instance, all preferences will be considered against the relevant published oversubscription criteria **only**, i.e. without reference to the preference ranking. Thereafter, where a pupil can potentially be allocated more than one school place stated on the application form, the **single offer**, determined by the home authority, will be for the school ranked highest by the parents or carers.
- 2.15 Preference ranking will not be shared with admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.76 of the School Admissions Code 2009 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.
- 2.16 All preferences made in accordance with the Council's arrangements will be met except where this would prejudice efficient education or the efficient use of resources e.g. where the year group in question is full. The duty to comply with parental preference is, however, removed for a period of two years where the child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools from the date on which the latest exclusion took place.
- 2.17 For admission as part of the normal admission round places will normally only be offered up to the published admission number, which applies to the normal year of entry. A child cannot be refused admission to the normal year of entry on the grounds of prejudice to the provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources unless the published admission number has been reached. In respect of admission to year groups other than the normal point of entry, it is expected that the admission number will continue to be applied. However, if circumstances have changed since the year of entry, a place may be refused even if the admission number has not been reached.
- 2.18 In some circumstances the local authority may agree with the school that admitting further pupils (i.e. above the published admission number) will not adversely affect the school in the longer term and will not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring schools. In such circumstances, a preference will be met, even where the year group is full. The local authority will ensure, where relevant, that the duty to comply with infant class size legislation is not compromised.
- 2.19 In the case of in-year admissions, a place will be considered to be available at a preferred school if the number on roll in the relevant year group is not in-line with, or in excess of the published admissions number.
- 2.20 In respect of applications made during the course of the year (i.e. outside the normal admission round) children may also be admitted above the published admission

number as part of the Authority's 'In Year Fair Access Protocol' or as a transitional measure in the case of a closing school.

- 2.21 The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) has confirmed that the operation of *In Year Fair Access protocols* is outside the arrangements of coordinated admissions and as such the statutory duty to comply with parental preference does not apply in those circumstances. Therefore, this scheme does not apply to children who fall under the Authority's 'In Year Fair Access Protocol'; such children will continue to be considered for admission in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Authority's agreed Protocol.
- 2.22 If the pupil is a Cheshire East resident and Cheshire East Council is not able to offer any of the preferences stated on the application form a place will be allocated at the nearest Cheshire East school with vacancies using the Authority's Ordnance Survey address point data system for measuring straight line distances from the address point of the home to the address point of the school in miles. This will include allocating vacancies at voluntary aided and foundation schools in liaison and agreement with the governing bodies of those schools.
- 2.23 Where a preference has been received from a parent or carer resident in another authority and a place cannot be offered, Cheshire East Authority will not allocate a place.
- 2.24 Offers will be made by Cheshire East Council, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

Admissions authority	Category of school
Cheshire East Authority	All community and voluntary controlled schools in Cheshire East and Sandbach School
Maintaining Local Authority	All non-Cheshire East community and voluntary controlled schools.
Governing Body of the school	All aided, foundation and Trust schools and Academies

- 2.25 Schools must not notify parents or carers that a place has become available but must inform their maintaining local authority in order that an offer can be made by the home authority.
- 2.26 In accordance with statutory requirements, a governing body, in its role as the admission authority for a school, **must** comply with the following procedures:
- Forward to their maintaining authority details of any application made to the school direct, together with any supporting information provided by the parent (regardless of whether the parent who made the application resides in that authority's areas)
 - Determine or make arrangements for another body (including the maintaining authority) to determine by reference to the school's admissions criteria the order of priority in which each application for the school is ranked

- c) To notify their maintaining authority of their determination, or arrange for the body appointed by them to notify the Authority on their behalf.

- 2.27 Parents and carers will be informed in writing of their legal right of appeal against any decision not to offer them a place at a school stated as a preference on their application form and their right to be supported by a friend or adviser, including a local authority Choice Adviser. Further information on the appeals process will be available on the Council's website and by contacting officers of the Local Authority, including Choice Advisers.
- 2.28 Parents and carers can submit an appeal in respect of each school for which admission has been refused. All appeal applications should be sent to the admission authority for the school for which admission has been refused (paragraph 2.24).
- 2.29 'In year' admission appeal hearings and appeals against decisions on sixth form applications will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged. The timetable for appeals against decisions on applications made during the normal admissions rounds is listed in paragraph 11.
- 2.30 Waiting lists will be held in criteria order and not on a 'first come, first served' basis. Placing a child's name on a waiting list does not affect the statutory right of appeal.
- 2.31 Waiting lists for oversubscribed schools will consist of those children whose parents or carers have specifically requested in writing (including e-mail) that they remain on the waiting list, along with new applicants and those for whom an appeal application has been received.
- 2.32 Waiting lists must be held until the end of August in the normal year of admission.

NORMAL ADMISSION ROUND

3 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. Under the Council's policy, children may start school in the reception class in the September following their 4th birthday. For transfer to secondary, children will usually transfer at the beginning of the autumn term following their eleventh birthday.
- 3.2 Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the primary school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year. Applications for deferred admissions must be made by the published closing date. Parents will not however, be able to defer admission beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted or beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday.
- 3.3 To help younger children adjust to school, schools may phase full-time admission, admitting these children on a part-time basis. Arrangements are decided at school level.
- 3.4 In exceptional circumstances requests can be made for early or late transfer to secondary school. Parents and carers considering such a request must in the first instance speak to the headteacher of the child's primary school.

- 3.5 The application process will commence on **1 September** in the year preceding the admission year.
- 3.6 For secondary transfer only, the Council will have records for all children resident within its area who attend Cheshire East primary schools. In order to make sure that all resident pupils are included in the co-ordinated admissions process, this Authority will also request data from neighbouring authorities and from independent schools in the area at the end of the summer term in the year preceding admission for details of resident pupils who attend their schools.
- 3.7 The Authority's information booklets will be available electronically on the Council's website from the 1 September. Hard Copies will be available in primary schools, or will be obtainable by request from the Local Authority at the start of the autumn term.
- 3.8 Booklets will include information on the application process including key dates, a copy of the common application form, details of Cheshire East schools and allocation data relating to applications for the previous year, in compliance with School Information (England) Regulations 2008.
- 3.9 Parents/carers will be asked to submit the completed application form directly to this Council by the statutory closing dates as follows:

31 October - Secondary Transfers

15 January - Primary Admissions

4 CHANGING PREFERENCES

- 4.1 After the closing date for applications, the Local Authority will not accept a change of preference unless it is satisfied that there is a genuine reason for doing so, such as a recent house move.
- 4.2 Any parent wishing to change a preference after the closing date for applications without a genuine reason for doing so in the opinion of the Local Authority will be advised that the application will be treated as a late application.
- 4.3 Full details must be provided to the Authority for consideration by the following dates:

15 December - Secondary Transfers

28 February – Primary Admissions

- 4.4 In the case of a recent house move, a letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date or a signed rental agreement of at least 12 months showing the start of the tenancy will be required. Further confirmation may also be required including evidence of disposal of previous property and recent utility bills.
- 4.5 A panel of officers will consider information presented in support of the late change of preference. The parent or carer will be notified of the decision.

5 PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Cheshire East Council will exchange applications for schools in other authorities with all relevant local authorities electronically around:

12 November - Secondary Transfers

31 January - Primary Admissions

- 5.2 Cheshire East Council will provide reports containing details of applications to its voluntary aided and foundation schools for consideration by governing bodies in accordance with the school's own published admission arrangements by,

19 November - Secondary Transfers

9 February - Primary Admissions

- 5.3 Cheshire East voluntary aided and foundation schools will inform the Local Authority of the pupils eligible for a place under its admissions criteria and provide lists of pupils in criteria order who cannot be offered places by:

15 December - Secondary Transfers

28 February - Primary Admissions

- 5.4 Cheshire East Council will inform other local authorities of offers to be made to pupils resident within their boundaries and request details of offers they will be making to Cheshire East residents by (or as soon as possible thereafter):

14 January - Secondary Transfers

14 March - Primary Admissions

- 5.5 Schools that intend to make representations to the Authority to request admission over the published admission number, where it is considered that a further admission/s would not have a detrimental effect on the school, should submit their requests by the dates stated below. Further requests can also be made after the published/National offer day. The local authority, as the strategic commissioner of school places, will consider the affect on the school in the longer term and the potential detriment to neighbouring schools before reaching a final decision.

20 January - Secondary Transfers

20 March - Primary Admissions

- 5.6 The Local Authority will finalise allocations on the basis of equal preferences in line with the following dates, as far as possible:

14 February - Secondary Transfers

31 March - Primary Admissions

6 NOTIFYING PARENTS and CARERS of DECISIONS

- 6.1 Cheshire East Council will send the parents and carers of pupils who reside in Cheshire East a decision letter confirming offers of places. This will include places in Cheshire East schools and schools in other local authorities. Offer letters will be sent out by second class post on:

1 March*- Secondary Transfer

29 April - Primary Admissions

**The Regulations state that the prescribed day shall be 1st March...except that, in any year in which that day is not a working day, the prescribed day shall be the next working day.*

- 6.2 Where online applications have been received, the parent or carer making the online application can logon to their online account on the published date to view the school place offered and can also request to receive their offer by e-mail.

7 LATE APPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Applications received after the closing date will be recorded as 'late' and considered after all on-time applications unless the Local Authority accepts that the reasons stated for the lateness of the application justify the application being treated as on-time e.g. exceptional medical reasons preventing an earlier application or late removal into the area. Reasons must be presented at the time of application and supporting documentation **must** be provided. Supporting documentation must be received by:

15 December - Secondary Transfer

28 February - Primary Admissions

- 7.2 In the case of a recent house move, the Authority will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed:

- A letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date;
- A signed rental agreement of at least 12 months showing the start of the tenancy.

- 7.3 The Local Authority may also request further information for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property.

- 7.4 In respect of medical reasons preventing an earlier application, a letter of confirmation from a medical practitioner will be required.

- 7.5 Where supporting documentation has been received by the published date and the Authority has accepted reasons stated for a late application the application will be recorded as an on-time application.

- 7.6 Application forms and supporting documentation received after the published date will be considered after all on-time applications, even where the Authority accepts

that there are good reasons for the late application, and as such these applications may be disadvantaged in the consideration of their preferences.

- 7.7 Parent and carers making new applications after the published offer date (paragraph 6.1) will be advised of the outcome of their application after

15 March - Secondary Transfer

16 May - Primary Admissions

8 MOVING HOUSE

- 8.1 Parents and carers must inform the Authority immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form. The Authority will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed:

- A letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date;
- A signed rental agreement of at least 12 months showing the start of the tenancy.

- 8.2 In addition the Local authority may request further information for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property.

- 8.3 Information and supporting evidence must be received by the following dates:

15 December - Secondary Transfers

28 February - Primary Admissions

- 8.4 The completion date or tenancy start date must be no later than the dates stated in paragraph 8.3 above for the new address to be used for allocation purposes.
- 8.5 Proof of residency received after the published dates will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date.

9 ACCEPTING AND DECLINING PLACES

- 9.1 Parents and carers will be required to **accept or decline** the school place offered by the published dates below:

15 March - Secondary Transfers

16 May - Primary Admissions

- 9.2 The Local Authority reserves the right to withdraw places not accepted by this date.
- 9.3 For applications processed after the dates stated in paragraph 7.5, parents and carers will be required to accept the place offered within **10 working days** of the offer date.

10 WAITING LISTS

- 10.1 Waiting list will be administered in accordance with the arrangements set out in paragraphs 2.29-2.32
- 10.2 For the normal admission round, the LA will hold the waiting list until the beginning of the school term in September. Waiting list will then be handed over to schools. Vacancies will be re-allocated to children held on the school's waiting list in line with the dates published in the 'Key Dates' section of this scheme.

11 ADMISSIONS APPEALS

- 11.1 The decision letter will explain the parents' right of appeal and how appeals may be made.
- 11.2 The closing dates for the submission of appeals (those relating to decisions sent on the published offer date) are:

25 March - Secondary Transfer

16 May - Primary Admissions

- 11.3 Parents and carers can submit an appeal in respect of each school for which admission has been refused. Appeal hearings will be heard:

By 6 July - Secondary Transfer (statutory date)

By 15 July - Primary Admissions

- 11.4 Appeals for late applications (i.e) those not relating to decisions sent on published offer date) will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- 11.5 All appeal applications should be sent to the admission authority for the school for which admission has been refused (paragraph 2.24)

'IN YEAR' ADMISSIONS

12 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 12.1 'In year' applications are those made during the school year into any year group other than the normal point of entry (i.e. normal admission round). This will include applications from parents and carers of children moving into the authority from another authority's area, moving within the authority, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.
- 12.2 Parents/carers seeking places 'in year' will be advised to complete the 'home' local authority's common application form stating up to three school preferences ranked in priority order and will be invited to provide additional information in support of their application, including any supporting documents.
- 12.3 Information about Cheshire East schools and leaflets explaining the coordinated application process together with a copy of the common application form will be

available on the Council's website. Hard Copies will be available on request from local offices and schools.

- 12.4 Completed application forms and any supporting documentation must be returned to the 'home' local authority.
- 12.5 For parents and carers moving into Cheshire East from another authority, this authority will accept an application on its own common application form provided that the parent or carer can provide evidence that contracts have been exchanged on the purchase of their new place of residence or that a tenancy agreement has been signed. Parents will need to notify this authority of the date agreed for removal into the area. Cheshire East Council will notify the 'home' authority in such circumstances.
- 12.6 Parents and carers of children who are seeking a transfer to an alternative school for reasons other than a house move will be strongly advised to discuss the proposed transfer with the current school before submitting an application.

13 PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The process for considering preferences will commence on the next working day following receipt of the application.
- 13.2 If the relevant year group has a vacancy a place must be allocated unless one of the statutory reasons for refusing admission applies, as stated in paragraphs 3.30-3.33 of the School Admissions Code 2009.
- 13.3 Where more applications are received for a particular year group than there are places available, the relevant body will determine the order of priority for admission by reference to the school's oversubscription criteria.
- 13.4 All applications received for 'in-area' schools, i.e. those schools maintained by the home authority, will be processed within no more than **10 working days** from receipt of application.
- 13.5 Where preferences are received for 'out-of-area' schools, i.e. for schools maintained by another local authority, applications will be processed within no more than **20 school days**.
- 13.6 Cheshire East Borough Council will forward preferences received for its schools where the governing body is the admission authority to the relevant body, together with any supporting documentation, within 5 school days from receipt of application.
- 13.7 The request **must** be considered by the relevant body and a written response **must** be provided to the maintaining local authority. For Cheshire East maintained schools, the response must be returned to the Local Authority within **5 school days**. If the relevant body is refusing admission then the reason for refusal must also be provided in writing (preferably e-mail), following which the Local Authority will write to the parent advising them that the application has been refused, explaining the reasons for refusal and informing the parent of the legal right of appeal against the decision.
- 13.8 Where applications are received for out-of-area schools, Cheshire East Council will forward details of the application to the relevant maintaining local authority,

including any supporting documentation within 5 school days from receipt of the application.

- 13.9 Where applications from non-Cheshire East residents are made to the home authority for places in Cheshire East schools, the relevant (home) local authority will forward details of the application to Cheshire East Borough Council.
- 13.10 In the event that a place can be offered for a school ranked as a higher preference, the home local authority will notify the maintaining authority that a higher preference can be allocated.
- 13.11 Where relevant, the home local authority will send any determination granting or refusing admission to the maintaining authority or the governing body where it is the admission authority.
- 13.12 Cheshire East Borough Council as the home local authority will finalise allocations for its residents on the basis of equal preferences.
- 13.13 This Council will endeavour in all cases to process applications as quickly as possible to ensure that admission to school is not delayed unnecessarily.

14 NOTIFYING PARENTS and CARERS of DECISIONS

- 14.1 Cheshire East Council will send parents and carers of pupils resident in Cheshire East a decision letter confirming the single offer of a school place. This will include offers of places for Cheshire East schools and for schools in other local authorities' areas. Offer letters will be sent out by second-class post or by e-mail if requested and will confirm the date the child will attend the school as agreed by, or notified to the receiving school.
- 14.2 Admission will normally take place at the start of the school term, or exceptionally, at the start of a half term where agreement with the school has been reached. Where a child is out of school due to a recent house move, earlier admission will be agreed to ensure that the child is not out of school for an unreasonable amount of time.
- 14.3 Home resident parents and carers who are unsuccessful with an application will be offered a place at the nearest Cheshire East school with a vacancy as stated in paragraph 2.22.
- 14.4 Parents and carers will be required to **accept or decline** the school place offered within 10 working days of the offer being made. The Local Authority reserves the right to withdraw places not accepted within the timescale specified.

15 WAITING LISTS.

- 15.1 Where waiting lists are held, these will be administered in accordance with the arrangements set out in paragraphs 2.29-2.31
- 15.2 For 'in year' waiting lists only, children who are subject of a direction by a local authority to admit, are part of a managed transfer from a closing school or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the In Year Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

16 ADMISSIONS APPEALS

16.1 In year admission appeals will be administered in accordance with the arrangements set out in paragraphs 2.27-2.29.



NORMAL ADMISSION ROUND KEY DATES for 2011-2012

Process	Secondary Transfers	Primary Admissions
Application process starts – letters to parents and carers, online application form and composite prospectus available.	1 September 2010	1 September 2010
Closing date for applications	31 October 2010*	15 January 2011*
Preferences forwarded to other LAs	12 November 2010	31 January 2011
Preferences forwarded to Aided & Foundation Schools	19 November 2010	9 February 2011
Deadline for receipt of supporting documentation	15 December 2010	28 February 2011
Aided and Foundation Schools to respond	15 December 2010	28 February 2011
Provisional allocations of places at Cheshire East schools sent to other LAs for their residents	14 January 2011	14 March 2011
Responses to other LAs on potential offers of places in their schools for Cheshire East residents (so far as possible)	14 January 2011	14 March 2011
Representations from schools re admission numbers	By 20 January 2011	By 20 March 2011
Allocations to be finalised	14 February 2011	31 March 2011*
Offers released – (letters posted 2nd class post)	1 March 2011*	29 April 2011
Deadline for accepting or declining places	15 March 2011	16 May 2011
Waiting Lists Prepared and vacancies re-allocated	After 15 March 2011	After 16 May 2011
Deadline for application for Appeals against LA/governing body decisions	25 March 2011	16 May 2011
Appeal hearings	By 6 July 2011	By 15 July 2011

* Statutory Requirements