



## LOCAL AUTHORITY COORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME 2015-16

### 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This scheme applies to the school year 2015-16 and subsequent years, subject to any review.
- 1.2 The scheme meets the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Cheshire East Council (the Local Authority).
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 This coordinated scheme applies to all publicly funded schools in Cheshire East and to preferences expressed by Cheshire East parents, including applications for schools in other Local Authorities. This scheme does not apply to applications for special schools or independent schools.
- 1.5 Parents making applications as part of the normal admission round for publicly funded schools in other authorities with a different age of transfer (i.e. middle and upper schools) will also be included within these arrangements.

## NORMAL ADMISSION ROUND

### 2 GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 Section 86 of the SSFA/98 provides that local authorities must make arrangements for parents to express a preference as to the school they wish their child to be educated at. Parent is defined within s.576 of the Education Act 1996 as being those who are natural parents whether they are married or not; any person who has PR for a child; and any person who has care of the child.
- 2.2 All parents **resident** in the area administered by Cheshire East Council will be asked to make their application on the common application form provided by this Local Authority (as the 'home' authority). Parents making applications on a maintaining authority's application form will be advised to contact their 'home' authority. Parents seeking places at independent (i.e. fee paying) schools must apply direct to the school.
- 2.3 Applications for places sent direct by parents to individual schools cannot be accepted and must be sent by the school to the Local Authority for inclusion within these arrangements.

- 2.4 For community and voluntary controlled schools, in its role as the admission authority, Cheshire East Council will be responsible for determining who can be allocated a place in accordance its agreed published admission arrangements.
- 2.5 For Academies, Free Schools, Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Trust schools, 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 to consider the application and to determine by reference to the school's admission criteria if a place can be allocated.
- 2.6 For applications for schools outside Cheshire East, the relevant local authority will be responsible for coordinating decisions on applications through liaison, where relevant, with admission authorities in its area.
- 2.7 The Local Authority will collate and publish all admission arrangements in its composite prospectus, which will be published on the Local Authority's website in line with the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code. For parents without internet access, a hard copy of the agreed admissions arrangements will be available on request.
- 2.8 All preferences made in accordance with the Local Authority's arrangements will be met except where this would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources e.g. normally 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.
- 2.9 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 normally be allocated at the nearest Cheshire East school with a vacancy using the Local 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 Academies, Free schools, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools in liaison and agreement with the governing bodies of these schools.
- 2.10 Where a preference has been received from a parent resident in another local authority and a place cannot be offered, Cheshire East Council will not allocate a place.
- 2.11 Written offers will be made by Cheshire East Council to residents in its area, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

<b>Admissions authority</b>	<b>Category of school</b>
Cheshire East Council	All community and voluntary controlled schools in Cheshire East
Maintaining Local Authority	All non-Cheshire East community and voluntary controlled schools.

Governing Body of the school    All Academies and Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Free Schools

- 2.12 Schools must not notify parents 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.
- 2.13 In accordance with statutory requirements, a governing body, in its role as the admission authority for a school, **must** comply with the following procedures:
- a) Forward to their maintaining local 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 local authority's areas);
  - b) Determine or make arrangements for another body (including the maintaining local 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 local authority of their determination, or arrange for the body appointed by them to notify the Local Authority on their behalf.
- 2.14 Parents 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. Further information on the appeals process will be available on the Local Authority's website and by contacting the Local Authority.
- 2.15 Parents 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.
- 2.16 Waiting lists, where held, will be 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.
- 2.17 Waiting lists will be held **for all schools** until the end of the autumn term in the normal year of admission **as a minimum**. Waiting list arrangements implemented after the end of term will be determined by individual admission authorities. For community and voluntary controlled schools, waiting lists will be closed at this point and parents of children held on the waiting list will receive written confirmation of this.
- 2.18 Repeat applications will not be considered within the same school year, unless the parent's or the school's circumstances have changed significantly since the original application was made. Full details of the change of circumstances must be provided for consideration by the Local Authority.

### 3 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. Under the Local Authority'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 There is no statutory barrier to children being admitted outside their normal year group. Paragraph 2.17 of the School Admissions Code enables a parent to request that their child is admitted outside of their normal age group, providing flexibility for children whose parents do not feel they are ready to begin school before they reach compulsory school age. Admission authorities are responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to but are required to make that decision based on the circumstances of the case. In cases where parents will be delaying admission until the following year, an application must be submitted in accordance with the dates published for that application round.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 Requests can also be made for early or late transfer to secondary school. Parents considering such a request must in the first instance speak to the headteacher of the child's primary school.
- 3.6 The application process will commence on **1 September** in the year preceding the admission year.
- 3.7 The common application form will invite parents to express 3 school preferences ranked in order of priority. Parents 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.
- 3.8 The School Admissions Code states at paragraph 2.23 (a) that local authorities can only make one offer per child. Therefore, where parents are unable to reach an agreement and more than one application is submitted, the Local Authority will process the application of the parent who is the primary carer i.e. where the child lives for the majority of the week including weekends. Supportive documentation may be required.
- 3.9 Where care is shared jointly and it is not possible to determine which parent is the principle carer the Local Authority will determine primary residence based on where the child is registered for purposes of child benefit or (where no benefit is claimed) where the child is registered for GP purposes.
- 3.10 Parents will be asked to submit the completed application form directly to this Local Authority by the statutory closing dates published in part two.

- 3.11 Parents 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.
- 3.12 If a parent 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 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 Local Authority'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 2.4 of the School Admissions Code (2012). 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.
- 3.13 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 local authority, will be for the school ranked highest by the parents.
- 3.14 Preference ranking will not be shared with admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 2.7 of the School Admissions Code 2012 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.
- 3.15 Where a school receives a supplementary information form, this Local Authority will not consider it to be a valid application unless the parent has also listed the school on their home LA's Application Form, Supplementary information forms should be returned direct to the school concerned.
- 3.16 When a parent 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. 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.
- 3.17 For secondary transfer only, the Local Authority 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 Local 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.

3.18 The Local Authority's composite prospectus will be available electronically on its website from the 1 September. Hard copies will be available on request from the Local Authority at the start of the autumn term.

3.19 The composite prospectus 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.

#### **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. Full details must be provided to the Local Authority for consideration and by the published deadline for receipt of supporting information.

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 In the case of a recent house move, evidence such as a letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date or a signed rental agreement\* 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 to confirm the actual place of residency. \*A signed rental agreement must cover the date published as the deadline for receipt of supporting information.

4.4 A panel of officers will consider information presented in support of the late change of preference. The parent will be notified of the decision.

#### **5 PROCESSING APPLICATIONS**

5.1 The following actions will be implemented in accordance with the dates published in part two of these arrangements.

5.2 Cheshire East Council will exchange applications for schools in other local authorities' areas with all relevant local authorities and 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.

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.

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.

5.5 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.

- 5.6 Admission authorities that intend to admit above the published admission number (PAN) where it is considered that further admission/s would not have a detrimental effect on the school, should notify the Local Authority by the dates specified in part two of these arrangements to enable the local authority to deliver its coordination responsibilities effectively.
- 5.7 The Local Authority will finalise allocations on the basis of equal preferences and in line with the agreed dates, as far as possible:

## 6 NOTIFYING PARENTS OF DECISIONS

- 6.1 Cheshire East Council will send the parents of pupils who reside in Cheshire East written confirmation of the decision on the application. This will include offers for places in Cheshire East schools and schools in other local authorities, as appropriate. Where online applications have been received, the parent 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. Offers confirmed by letter will be sent out on the published offer day by second class post.

## 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 confirms that the reasons presented in support of the late submission justify the application being considered alongside on-time applications. Reasons can include 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, which must be received by the dates specified in part two.
- 7.2 Late applications received after the published deadline for the receipt of supporting information will be processed after all on-time applications even if there is a good reason for the late submission.
- 7.3 The initial (provisional) allocation date will vary and any late applications received after this date may not be processed until after offers have been made and in accordance with the dates set out in part two. There is therefore no guarantee that a late applicant will receive an offer of a school place on the published offer day.
- 7.4 In the case of a recent house move, the Local Authority will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed. This should include a letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date, or if relevant, a signed rental agreement showing the start date of the tenancy. Any rental agreement must include residency on the date published as the deadline for receipt of supporting information. Further information may be requested to confirm residency, for example, recent utility bills or evidence of disposal of previous property.

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

## 8 MOVING HOUSE

- 8.1 Parents must inform the Local Authority immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form. The Local Authority will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed. This should include a letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date, or if relevant, a signed rental agreement showing the start date of the tenancy. Any rental agreement must include residency on the date published as the deadline for receipt of supporting information. Further information may be requested to confirm residency, for example, recent utility bills or evidence of disposal of previous property.
- 8.2 Proof of residency received after the deadline published for the receipt of supporting information will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision on the published offer date.

## 9 ACCEPTING AND DECLINING PLACES

- 9.1 Parents will be required to **accept or decline** the school place offered by the dates published in part two. The Local Authority reserves the right to withdraw places not accepted by this date.
- 9.2 For late applications notified after the offer date parents will be required to accept the place offered within **10 working days** of the date of the offer.

## 10 WAITING LISTS

- 10.1 Waiting lists for oversubscribed schools will consist of those children whose parents have specifically requested in writing (including e-mail) that they remain on the waiting list, along with late applicants and those for whom an appeal application has been received. Waiting lists will be held in criteria order and not on a first come first served basis.
- 10.2 Vacancies will be re-allocated to children held on the school's waiting list in line with the dates published in part two.
- 10.3 After the start of the school term in September, the Local Authority will hold up-to-date information on waiting lists through liaison with schools until the end of the autumn term only. After this date all waiting list information will be closed. Admission authorities that have published that they will continue to hold waiting lists after this date will be responsible for maintaining their waiting lists in accordance with their own published admission arrangements.

## 11 ADMISSIONS APPEALS

- 11.1 The application decision letter/e-mail will explain the parents' right of appeal and how appeals may be made. Applications for appeal should be received by the dates published in part two.



- 11.2 Parents can submit an appeal in respect of each school for which admission has been refused.
- 11.3 Appeals against decisions notified after the published offer day will be heard within 40 days of the published appeals deadline where possible, or if received too late, within 30 school days of appeal being lodged.
- 11.4 All appeal applications should be sent to the admission authority for the school for which admission has been refused.

## **‘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 of children moving into Cheshire East from another local authority’s area, moving within Cheshire East, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.
- 12.2 Parents seeking Cheshire East school places ‘in year’ will be required to complete the Cheshire East ‘in year’ application form. Forms will be published on the Local Authority’s website and will be available in hard copy on request.
- 12.3 In all cases, parents will be advised to contact their preferred school to progress their application.
- 12.4 Parents will be invited to provide additional information in support of their application. Application details will be shared with the relevant schools.
- 12.5 Parents 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.
- 12.6 Personal or sensitive information provided for the purpose of school admissions will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and its eight principles, details of which are published on the Council’s website. In order that applications can be processed in accordance with parents’ wishes, personal information may be shared within the Local Authority, with other relevant local authorities and with relevant schools. Relevant local authorities include the home local authority (where resident) and local authorities where the schools named on the application form are located; relevant schools include the schools listed as preferences and the current or most recent school.
- 12.7 In order to ensure that a place is offered at a suitable school as quickly as possible, some applications will be processed in accordance with the Local Authority’s agreed Fair Access Protocol. The operation of Fair Access Protocols is outside the arrangements of co-ordination and is triggered when a parent of an eligible child has not secured a school place under in-year admission procedures. In all cases, where this is deemed necessary to ensure a positive outcome for the family, parents will receive full information before this procedure is implemented. The Local Authority’s Fair Access Protocol; agreed in partnership with the

headteachers of both primary and secondary schools, will only progress with agreement of parents and will not affect the parent's right to express preferences for schools of their choice or to challenge unsuccessful applications through the appeals process. All permanently excluded pupils ready to be admitted into a new school will be offered admission under the Fair Access Protocol. Full information about the process is published on the Council's website.

- 12.8 If a parent 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 may be required by the school to complete a supplementary information form. Forms will be available from the school or on the Local Authority's website. 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 2.4 of the School Admissions Code (2012). 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.
- 12.9 The Local Authority will publish on its website a list of the vacancies in Cheshire East publicly funded schools for parents seeking places outside the normal admission round.
- 12.10 Parents 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.
- 12.11 The Local Authority will maintain up-to-date records of applications and their outcomes through liaison with schools.
- 12.12 The process of completing the application for a school place can be facilitated by the school by inviting the parent to complete an online application during a school visit or by the parent prior to contacting or visiting the school. Hard copy application forms are available on request from the Local Authority.
- 12.13 Parents making applications for schools in other local authorities' areas will be advised to contact the relevant local authority for advice about their own application process.
- 12.14 Applications will not normally be accepted more than 6 school weeks prior to the intended date of admission. An exception to this is where an application is made during the summer term, for admission at the beginning of the following September. In this case, applications will be accepted up to 8 school weeks prior to intended date of admission.

### **13 PROCESSING APPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 All applications should be processed within no more than 10 working days from the receipt of application. Different time scales will apply to applications processed in accordance with the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol.
- 13.2 Where there are spaces in the relevant year group a place will normally be offered to the parent.

- 13.3 **If the year group in question is full, a decision to refuse admission must be referred to the admission authority.**
- 13.4 In cases where a school is oversubscribed, the admission authority will rank the applications in accordance with their published oversubscription criteria.
- 13.5 **All decisions will be confirmed by the school in writing to the parent and the letter/e-mail will include information about the legal right of appeal and a start date, where relevant.** Optional letter/e-mail templates will be made available online for admission authorities that choose to use them.
- 13.6 Where a preference has been unsuccessful, written correspondence will confirm the decision on the application and will advise the parent to contact the Local Authority for advice about alternative schools with vacancies.
- 13.7 Written correspondence confirming offers will advise the parent to contact the school to accept or decline the school place within no more than 10 school days from the offer date.
- 13.8 In cases where a school feels that further admissions can be agreed on the basis that to do so will not result in a breach of infant class size legislation or will not prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources, the application must be referred to the admission authority for a decision.
- 13.9 Decisions on applications will be notified to the Local Authority to enable the Local Authority to keep up-to-date records.
- 13.10 **Admission will normally take place for primary school admissions within 10 school days from the date of offer and for secondary school admissions within 20 school days from the date of offer.**
- 13.11 Repeat applications will not be considered within the same school year, unless the parent's or the school's circumstances have changed significantly since the original application was made. Full details of the change of circumstances must be provided on the applications form for consideration.

## **14 WAITING LISTS.**

- 14.1 Waiting lists will not be held for community or voluntary controlled schools other than in accordance with legal requirements, which require that they are held up until the end of the autumn term for the normal year of admission (i.e. reception and year 7 admissions). Where waiting lists are held by other admission authorities, children will be added to waiting lists in criteria order and not on a first come first served basis.
- 14.2 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 Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

## **15 'IN YEAR' APPEALS**

- 15.1 Applications for appeal should be submitted within 20 school days from the date of notification that the application for admission was unsuccessful.

## 16 Part Two – Key Dates

Process	Secondary Transfers	Primary Admissions
Application process starts – letters to parents, online application form and composite prospectus available.	1 September 2014	1 September 2014
<b>Closing date for applications</b>	<b>31 October 2014</b>	<b>15 January 2015</b>
Preferences forwarded to other LAs	14 November 2014	5 February 2015
Preferences forwarded to Academies, Free, VA and Foundation Schools	21 November 2014	12 February 2015
<b>Deadline for receipt of supporting documentation</b>	<b>8 December 2014</b>	<b>16 February 2015</b>
Academies and Free Schools, VA and Foundation Schools to respond	15 December 2014	6 March 2015
Provisional allocations of places at Cheshire East schools sent to other LAs for their residents	Around 16 January 2015	Around 13 March 2015
Responses to other LAs on potential offers of places in their schools for Cheshire East residents (so far as possible)	16 January 2015	13 March 2015
Representations from schools re admission over PAN	By 30 January 2015	By 20 March 2015
Allocations to be finalised	13 February 2015	31 March 2015
<b>Offers released</b>	<b>2 March 2015</b>	<b>16 April 2015</b>
<b>Deadline for accepting or declining places</b>	<b>16 March 2015</b>	<b>30 April 2015</b>
<b>Waiting lists prepared, late applications processed and vacancies allocated.</b> Waiting lists will be held in criteria order. Parents offered places on this basis will be required to accept or decline the place offered within 10 schools days.	<b>After 16 March 2015</b>	<b>After 30 April 2015</b>
<b>Appeals Application Deadlines</b>	<b>30 March 2015</b>	<b>18 May 2015</b>
Appeal Hearings	By 19 June 2015	By 21 July 2015
Appeal Hearings – late Applications	Within 40 days of deadline where possible, or 30 school days of appeal being lodged	
Appeal Applications – ‘In Year’ Admissions	Within 20 school days from the date of notification that the application for admission was unsuccessful.	
Appeal Hearings – ‘In Year’ Applications	Within 30 school days of appeal being lodged	Within 30 school days of appeal being lodged
Please note: Deadline for Admission Authorities to publish Appeal Timetables on their website		28 February of relevant year