



Consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2013 Closing date – 24 February 2012

Local authority response to the new school admissions and appeals codes

Purpose of this report

This report continues the consultation on admission arrangements for 2013, giving additional information on changes arising from the publication of the new draft School Admissions and Appeals Code.

New Admissions and Appeals Codes

The new Admissions and Appeals Codes have been published and have undergone consultation under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Copies of the new Codes are on the DfE website. The Codes will affect arrangements for admissions to school in the school year 2013/14 and apply to all maintained schools, Academies and Free Schools.

Recommendations

It is requested that stakeholders give their views on the proposed changes within the Codes and that Foundation Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies indicate whether they wish to continue to participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements.

Key proposals within the new draft Codes

1. to give adopted children who were previously in care the same priority as children in care;
2. to introduce a national offer day for primary school places (16 April), equivalent to that for secondary school offers (1 March);
3. to give schools greater freedom to increase the number of places available, if this is manageable from school's existing resources;
4. to allow schools to prioritise children of staff employed there for two years or more
5. to allow infant classes to exceed the statutory limit where the 31st child in a class is a twin, triplet etc, or the child of armed forces personnel;
6. to allow Academies to prioritise children eligible for the Pupil Premium;
7. to remove the statutory duty to co-ordinate in-year admissions;
8. to disallow school representatives from supporting individual appeals at school admission appeal hearings and from providing letters of support to appellants;
9. to set a timetable for the organisation of admission appeal hearings

LA proposals to accommodate the changes

The criterion relating to Children in Care (Looked After children)

The oversubscription criterion relating to children in care will have to be amended as follows: *“Pupils in the care of the local authority (known as a Looked After Child) or a child who was previously looked after but became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order”*.

This applies to all Admission Authorities; Foundation Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies will need to amend their oversubscription criteria to reflect this change.

Increases to published admission numbers

Any increase in the published admission number proposed by a school would have to be resourced and managed by the school.

Prioritising the children of school staff

The local authority does not intend to amend its policy to give priority to children of staff employed in schools, as this would be unfair to other families in the community.

Other Admission Authorities (Foundation Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies) will need to consider whether to include this proposal in their admission criteria.

Exceeding the infant class size limit

The local authority will incorporate the change in relation to ‘excepted children’. The change means that children admitted under one of the exceptions would be able to remain within that class during KS1, or until the number of pupils in the class reduced to the normal limit of 30. This will help schools manage extra children without causing additional disruption to KS1 classes. Admissions of ‘excepted children’ will be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the school concerned.

Academies and pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium

Academies and Free Schools will be allowed to prioritise children eligible for the Pupil Premium within their oversubscription criteria.

Co-ordination of in-year admissions

The local authority intends to continue to administer the co-ordinated school admissions arrangements. The LA already co-ordinates in-year admissions and we believe the processes are established, effective and fair. Administrative pressure is removed from schools and parents follow a consistent process to apply for a school place. The new Code states that local authorities must continue to monitor current pupil numbers and spaces in schools; this will be achieved most effectively by the LA maintaining current co-ordinated admissions arrangements. This course of action is in line with the intentions of neighbouring local authorities and will optimise the fulfilment of other statutory functions such as CME and Fair Access.

We would be grateful if other Admission Authorities (Foundation Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies) would indicate their intention to remain part of the in-year co-ordinated arrangements.

Admissions appeals

Representatives from schools will not be permitted to support individual appeals for places at the hearing, or to provide documentation in support of appellants as such support could create conflicts of interest and disadvantage other applicants.

Parents must be given at least 20 school days to prepare and submit in writing their intent to appeal, from the date of notification that their application for a school place was unsuccessful. The LA will ensure that appeals are scheduled to account for this timescale. Admission Authorities must publish their appeals timetable on their website by 28 February each year (as part of the co-ordinated arrangements, this will be undertaken by the LA).

Conclusion

We aim to ensure that school admission arrangements allow fair access to educational opportunity and the proposed responses to the draft Admissions and Appeals Codes are intended to support this ethos.

All comments about these proposals should be sent to the **School Admissions Team, Seafield House, kirkleatham Street, Redcar TS10 1SP by 24 February 2012.**

Tel. 01642 444108

Schools_admissions@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk