

City of Bradford MDC

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In-year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme

**For applications and mid-term transfers during
the school year for all schools in the Bradford
Metropolitan District Area**

1. INTRODUCTION

Although there is no legal requirement to co-ordinate in year admissions from September 2013, the Local Authority will continue to do so for all community and voluntary-controlled schools and any own admission authority school that wishes to participate in co-ordination. The proposed In Year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme explains this process.

An 'in-year admission' is defined as admissions to a school outside the normal transfer times or for a year group that is not the normal year of entry. For community and voluntary controlled schools, Bradford LA will co-ordinate admissions. The scheme does not apply to nursery schools, special schools or sixth form applications.

2. APPLICATION FORMS

- 2.1 Bradford District residents who wish to apply for a community or voluntary-controlled school must complete the **common in year application form**. Applications for own admission authority schools (voluntary-aided, foundation, trust schools and academies) for which the LA administer their in year applications, should also be made using the LA's application form. The in year application form is available from the Admissions Team at Future House, Bolling Road, Bradford BD4 7EB. A copy of the form can also be downloaded from the Council's website (www.bradford.gov.uk).
- 2.2 Parents/carers will be asked to give reasons why they wish their child to transfer. The form also lists the Fair Access categories and the parent is required to tick any that apply to their child. Where a parent has requested a transfer of school within the Bradford district or from another authority but has not moved house, the child's current school must complete Part 2 of the form which asks for further information on the child to establish whether the transfer request should be dealt with through the Fair Access Protocol. If Part 2 is not completed, the form will be returned to the parent for them to discuss the transfer with the current school before it will be processed.
- 2.4 Parents must return the completed application form to the Admissions Team. If any community or voluntary-controlled school receives an application or a request for a place direct from the parent, whether the school has places or not, the application should be forwarded to the Admissions Team.
- 2.6 Applications for Catholic schools must be made on the individual school's application form which are available from the school or can be downloaded from the Bradford Council website and returned directly to the school.
- 2.7 In accordance with the School Admissions Code, Catholic schools and any other own admission authority school dealing with their own in year admissions **must** inform the LA's Admission Team of every application made for their school and the outcome of the application.

3 NUMBERS ON ROLL

All schools are required to communicate the availability of places to the LA's Admission Team when requested to do so. Admission officers will request updated numbers on roll in each year group from all schools on a regular basis, ie fortnightly. This will enable the Admissions Team to offer accurate advice to parents on the availability of school places in their area. In addition, schools should routinely inform the Admissions Team each time a child leaves the school and whether children allocated have been admitted.

4 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

4.1 Applications for community and voluntary-controlled schools

- 4.1.1 The LA's Admissions Team (as the Admissions Authority for community and voluntary-controlled schools) will determine whether an applicant can be offered a place in any of these schools. If there are more applications than places available in the year group, the Admissions Team will consider the application against its published 'oversubscription criteria'.
- 4.1.2 Where a community or voluntary-controlled school is ranked higher on the application form and a place can be offered, the Admissions Team will process the application within **15** school days from receipt of the form.
- 4.1.3 If more than one school listed can be offered, the applicant will be offered a place at the school ranked highest on the application form.
- 4.1.4 If none of the schools listed can be offered, a place will be offered at an alternative available school, unless the child's current school is within a reasonable distance. If this is the case, no other school will be offered.
- 4.1.5 Where any school has **more than two places** in the relevant year group and the parent has approached the school directly, the child may be admitted and the school then send notification of the application and the start date to the Admissions Team. If only one place is available, the school **must** contact the Admissions Team to establish whether there are any other applicants awaiting to be processed.

4.2 Applications for own admission authority schools for whom the LA is co-ordinating admissions

- 4.2.1 Where such schools, the Admissions Team will forward details of the application to the relevant school. This will be done within 10 days of receipt of the application and where the school is ranked higher than a community or voluntary-controlled school that could be offered.
- 4.2.2 The governing body (or delegated persons to determine the application), as the admission authority, will determine whether the applicant can be offered a place at their school. If, at any one time, there are more applicants than there are places in the year group, the school's oversubscription criteria must be used to determine who will be offered the place.
- 4.2.3 Following receipt of the application, the school must inform the Admissions Team whether the applicant can be offered a place within a maximum of **5** school days. (If the year group is full, the school should inform the Admissions Team immediately.) The applicant may be kept on the school's waiting list if one is maintained.
- 4.2.4 Following receipt of the school's decision, the Admissions Team will write to the parent informing them of the outcome of their application within **five** school days. An offer of an alternative school will be made where appropriate.
- 4.2.5 Where a school has **more than two places** in the relevant year group and the parent has approached the school directly, the child may be admitted and the school then send notification of the application and the start date to the Admissions Team. If only one place is available, the school **must** contact the Admissions Team to establish whether there are any other applicants awaiting to be processed.

4.3 Applications for Catholic schools and other own admission authority schools dealing with their own in year admissions

- 4.3.1 Applications should be made on the school's own in year application form. If any of these schools are listed on the LA's common application form, then details of the application will be sent to the school. The school **must** respond to this request and either use the LA's form to process the application or issue the parent with their own application form immediately.

4.3.2 Once any application has been considered by the school, the LA's Admission Team **must** be notified of the details and outcome of the application.

4.3.3 Where a place is not available, the LA will then allocate an alternative school if possible.

4.4 Applications for schools in other local authorities

4.4.1 Parents resident in the Bradford district who wish to apply for a school maintained by another local authority must apply on the Bradford in-year application form.

4.4.2 Where an application for an out of authority school is received, the Admissions Team will forward details of the application to the relevant authority for that school. This will be done within **15** school days of receipt of the application and where the out of authority school is ranked higher than a Bradford school that could be offered.

4.4.3 Following receipt of the authority's decision, the Admissions Team will write to the parent informing them of the outcome of their application within **five** school days. An offer of an alternative school will be made where appropriate.

4.4.4 Where an application is received from a resident in another local authority for a school the Bradford LA co-ordinate, the Admissions Team will endeavour to provide a decision to the home authority within a maximum of **ten** school days of receipt of the application, dependent upon the type of school applied for.

5 OFFERS OF SCHOOL PLACES

5.1 Where the application is for a community, voluntary-controlled school or another admission authority school that the LA is co-ordinating admissions for, the Admissions Team will write to parents informing them of the result of their application within the timescales outlined above. Parents will be informed of their right of appeal if the school is not their preferred school.

5.2 When a school has been allocated, the Admissions Team will inform the relevant school by email that the offer has been made the same day.

5.3 Parents will be required to complete and return an acceptance slip to the school within **seven** school days of the decision letter being sent. The school and/or Admissions Team will contact parents to chase up any non-returns. If a parent refuses the offer it may result in the place being withdrawn unless the parent has submitted an appeal. In this case, wherever possible, the offer will remain until the outcome of the appeal is known. If an appeal for the preferred school is refused, the case may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

5.4 Where the application is for a Catholic school or an own admission authority school that is dealing with its own in year admissions, they **must** confirm the offer in writing and inform the LA's Admissions Team immediately.

5.5 Where the applicant for a Bradford LA school is resident in another LA, the decision letter will be sent by the applicant's home authority.

6 ADMISSION TO SCHOOL

Once a school place has been determined and the allocated school informed, the pupil should be admitted to the school within the following timescales:

i) Pupils new to the district or who have moved house

Pupils new to the Bradford district or who have had a significant house move (two miles under the age of eight, three miles over the age of eight) should normally be admitted to

school within **ten** school days of the offer being made.

ii) Pupils transferring from another local school

The authority's '**Mid Term Transfer Policy**' which is attached to this document, states that pupils who are transferring from one local school to another may only do so at the beginning of a new term. Therefore, in the case of such applicants, the offer of the school place will be from the start of the following term after the application has been made unless in exceptional circumstances the child may be admitted sooner by agreement between the schools, parent and the Admissions Team. Year group numbers will be amended to take into account the allocation and the reserved place.

7 WAITING LISTS

Parents can request that their child is placed on a waiting list for their preferred school(s). The Admissions Team will maintain waiting lists for all year groups for community and voluntary-controlled schools until the end of the school year in which the application was received (for primary schools) and the end of the term (for secondary schools).

Schools which are their own admission authority may choose to keep waiting lists or not. All waiting lists must be maintained in the order of the oversubscription criteria unless a place is requested through the Fair Access Protocol. If places become available during the year, all offers must be made in accordance with the Mid Term Transfer Policy.

8 CHILDREN WITH A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Applications for children with a statement of special educational needs will be dealt with the by Special Educational Needs Team (01274 385955) who will liaise with parents and schools to determine which schools can meet the child's needs.

9 FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

All LA's **must** have a Fair Access Protocol (FAP), agreed with the majority of schools in its area to ensure that outside the normal admissions round, unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. The FAP ensures that all schools admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour and children who arrive outside the admissions round who may have difficulty securing a school place. In these circumstances, all schools may admit above their PAN. The operation of the FAP is outside the arrangements of co-ordination and is triggered when a parent of an eligible child has not secured a school place under normal in-year admission procedures, even following the outcome of an appeal.

Due to pressure on school places in some areas of the district, a number of applications are dealt with through the FAP. Schools dealing with their own in year admissions must refer unsuccessful applications to the LA's Admission Team as soon as possible as the application may be dealt with through the FAP.

Pupil Mid-Term Transfer Policy

1. Introduction

This policy clarifies the roles of headteachers and the Local Authority when parents make a request to change school during the school year and sets out the process for dealing with such requests.

The aim of this policy is to enhance pupil progress by encouraging a considered approach to changes of school and provides a framework for the exchange of pupil information. The majority of pupil transfers take place for legitimate reasons, such as a change of address and the aim is not to inhibit parents' rights to express a preference for another school in appropriate circumstances.

2. Background

There is an expectation that pupils will remain at school for the usual period of time and only change schools at the end of the primary phase. Both primary and secondary schools liaise closely to ensure smooth transition and pastoral arrangements are aimed at providing pupils with continuity between phases. However, many schools in the Bradford District experience high levels of pupil mobility during the school year which impacts on the attainment and achievement of pupils and on school staff in terms of induction, administration and tracking pupils' progress. This mobility undermines the pupil's continuity of progress and that of other pupils when school staff have to manage pupils leaving or joining classes mid-year. It can also impede financial and staff planning.

There is evidence that mid-year movement is often disruptive to the statutory SEN process. This is particularly important during a child's early years at school, when the first steps towards assessing educational needs are taken. If this process is delayed because of changes of school, the result is often a lack of appropriate support throughout the remaining phase of education.

3. Legal Framework

Under the Schools Standards and Framework Act (1998) as amended by the Education Act 2002, a parent has the right to express a preference for a place at a school at any time. The LA (or in the case of VA, foundation schools and academies, the governing body) has a legal duty to comply with the parents' preference to admit the pupil on to the school roll, unless to do so would 'prejudice the provision of efficient education, or efficient use of resources'. This means that the school must admit the pupil unless that particular year group is at or above the published admission number.

While it is essential that children who have no school place are found one quickly, section 433 of the Education Act 1996, permits deferment of admission until the start of a school term, subject to certain exceptions (see paragraph 5). This would particularly be the case where requests for school transfer has been made that do not involve a house move or where there is no need for an immediate move (see exceptions below). In such cases, schools can arrange for a child to start at the beginning of the next term. This does not conflict with the parent's right to 'express a preference', but does allow schools to manage the movement of pupils transferring mid-year.

The LA also has powers to direct admission to a foundation or voluntary-aided school in its area and can refer matters to the Secretary of State for consideration in relation to academies.

4. School Transfer Process

Any in-year admission request (whether the child is already attending a Bradford District school or is new to the area) shall be co-ordinated by the local authority. An *'In Year Common Application Form'* is available from the Admissions Team or can be downloaded from the Bradford Council website and must be returned to the Admissions Team.

For applications where no house move has taken place (or one less than two miles for under eight years, and three miles for over eight years of age), parents will be required to ask the child's current

school to complete part two of the application form. This section asks for information such as attendance, reasons for the transfer request and other factors which may have affect the child's education and therefore the suitability of a school place. If the form is returned without part two completed and no house move has taken place, the form will be returned to the parent for them to forward to the child's current school.

The information provided by the current school will assist in determining whether the transfer request should be dealt with under the Fair Access Protocol and/or by LA officers to determine whether the transfer request comes under one of the exceptions given below.

If the preferred school has places in the appropriate year group, the Admissions Team will inform parents that a place is offered and arrangements can then be made for the admission to take place at the start of the next school term.

5. Exceptions

Mid-term transfer of a pupil may only take place sooner than the start of the next term, if:

- the headteachers of the current and receiving schools agree that it is in the best interests of the pupil that transfer should take place sooner;
- the pupil has moved house to live more than three miles from the present school (if the pupil is aged over eight years) or over two miles (if the pupil is aged under eight years);
- the pupil has been unable to transfer at the start of the term as a result of illness or for other reasons beyond the parents' control;
- the admission is into Year 7 and Reception only, where a place becomes available from the waiting list during the autumn term;
- it has been determined that the admission of the pupil comes under the 'Fair Access Protocol' or other significant circumstances apply making the child vulnerable; and
- the admission is due to a successful appeal heard by an independent appeals panel.

When a request for transfer has been agreed and the offer of a place made, the receiving school must liaise with the current school regarding the admission date and pupil data.

For pupils with a Statement of special educational needs, parents have the right to request the LA substitute the name of the maintained school in the Statement. The LA must comply with the request of change of school in certain circumstances and usually only following an annual review, an amendment to the Statement or appeal to the SEN Tribunal. Should parents of a pupil with a Statement contact a school directly, the headteacher should contact a SEN officer for advice.

6. Information for parents

Guidance notes that accompany the 'in-year common application form' informs parents of the detrimental affects that changing schools has on their child's progress and that such decisions should not be taken without careful consideration. Governors may wish to add similar statements to their school booklets and websites.