

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR SECONDARY ADMISSIONS 2010

BACKGROUND

Legislation requires Local Authorities (LA) to draw up a statutory scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in its area (excluding special schools, but including aided schools).

The DCSF (Department for Children Schools and Families) states, in its School Admissions Code, that "school admission arrangements should work for the benefit of all parents and children in the area. The arrangements should be as simple as possible for parents to use, and help them to make the best decisions on the school for their children". The purpose of a co-ordinated scheme is to ensure that every parent of a child living in the LA area who has applied for a place in the normal admissions round receives an offer of only one place on the same day. Any scheme should also aim to ensure that parents are treated fairly and consistently regardless of the status of the school for which they make an application.

When drawing up admissions arrangements, admissions authorities should aim to ensure that their admissions criteria are clear, fair and objective, for the benefit of all children, including those with special educational needs, disabilities or in public care. Bracknell Forest Local Authority's admissions criteria for its maintained schools reflect these requirements. Admissions arrangements should also enable parents' preferences for schools to be met to the maximum extent possible.

MAIN DETAILS OF THE CO-ORDINATED SCHEME

- **Equal preferences**

The DCSF states that a co-ordinated scheme is based on equal preferences. In other words all preferences are treated as equal initially. If more than one place can be offered, the single offer will be for the school the parent/carer has ranked highest. If a place cannot be offered at any of the preference schools, then a place will be offered at the next nearest school with available spaces in Bracknell Forest.

This system allows each preference that parents/carers give to be considered separately. If a child could be allocated a place at two or more of its preference schools, then the parents' ranking will be used as a tie breaker.

- **Information for parents**

Information regarding the scheme and the admissions arrangements will be published in the LA's Guide to Secondary Education in Bracknell Forest. This guide will be available by 12th September prior to the admissions year.

- **Making an Application**

Bracknell Forest residents can apply for a place for secondary school either on line or using the Common Application Form issued. It must also be used if residents wish to apply for a school outside the Borough. All applications will be recorded by the home LA and then sent to the maintaining LA for each of the preference schools in accordance with the co-ordinated scheme's timetable (by 27 November 2009).

If Non Bracknell Forest residents wish to apply for a Bracknell Forest school they should use their home LA form or internet access site to apply. That request will then be transferred electronically by that Local Authority to Bracknell Forest by the date in the scheme.

- **Common Application Form**

All applicants living in Bracknell Forest can use the LA's Common Application Form (CAF). Personalised copies of this form will be sent to the parents of those Bracknell Forest pupils in Bracknell Forest schools. Arrangements will also be made to ensure that parents of Bracknell Forest pupils in neighbouring LA's schools will also receive a personalised form. Parents of pupils in Bracknell Forest schools who are not Bracknell Forest residents will be sent a copy of their "home" LA's secondary information booklet and form from the Admissions Team of their "home" LA.

The form will allow parents to name three schools. Parents will be asked to rank their preferences. It will also allow them to give reasons for each preference.

The LA will initially receive all applications for Ranelagh for processing. The Supplementary Information Form will be returned directly to the school. The LA's common form will be the means for parents to identify Ranelagh as their preferred school.

If applicants wish for one or more of their preferences to be considered under the designated area criteria then they will have to send in a copy of their current council tax statement with their application in order to prove their residency. Service families can produce a Housing Executive letter or proof of redeployment.

Applications made on the Bracknell Forest Common Application Form for children within a Bracknell Forest primary school must be returned to the child's current Bracknell Forest primary school by 23 October 2009. The primary school will forward the form on to the LA's Admissions Team.

Bracknell Forest parents whose child attends a school in another LA and who wish to submit a paper application, can return their form either to their child's current school or directly to the Bracknell Forest Admissions Team by 23 October 2009. Bracknell Forest parents whose child attends an independent school will need to send their application form directly to Bracknell Forest's Admissions Team by 23 October 2009.

- **On Line Applications**

Parents also have the option of completing an on-line application. Parents will be able to apply for a secondary school place on line via the Council's website. The site will be open for applications from 9 September to midday on 16 October 2009. On line applications have to be submitted by midday 16 October 2009.

If applicants wish for one or more of their preferences to be considered under the designated area criteria then they will have to send in a copy of their current council tax statement with their application in order to prove their residency. Service families can produce a Housing Executive letter or proof of redeployment. This is still a requirement for online applications.

- **Ranelagh School**

The governors of Ranelagh School will adopt the Common Application Form as their main application form. The school will distribute the Ranelagh Supplementary Information Form (SIF) on which applicants will be able to give additional information that will enable the Governors to apply their admissions arrangements. Governing Body will make the SIF available

to parents/carers both in hard copy and as a downloadable document on their school website. This will also be available from the Local Authority.

Ranelagh will supply parents with copies of the Ranelagh Supplementary information Form on demand. The SIF must be completed and returned to the school. On Line applicants will need to ensure that they complete and submit the SIF where necessary within the required timescales.

Bracknell Forest's Admissions Team will send data on applicants' preferences to Ranelagh electronically by 27 November 2009.

- **The allocation process – Bracknell Forest maintained schools**

When more applications than places are received for Bracknell Forest maintained schools the following criteria will be used.

- **Admissions Criteria**

The following criteria apply to the five Bracknell Forest community schools:

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs that names a specific school must, by law, be admitted to that school.

After this requirement has been satisfied the following rules will apply:

- (A) Looked After Children (Any request for the allocation of a place for a child who is in the care of the Local Authority or provided with accommodation in that authority in accordance with The Children Act 1989).
- (B) Children who live in the designated area of the school.
- (C) Children who have either strong medical or strong social grounds for admission to a particular school. The reason must be fully supported in writing by a relevant professional. The LA's decision in these matters is final.
- (D) Children who have brother(s) or sister(s) at the school (including sixth form), and who will still be attending school at the time of the applicant's admission. This will be checked as necessary before an offer is made. These siblings include children living as siblings in the same family unit and at the same address as the child and for whom the applicant has parental responsibility.
- (E) Children who attend a primary school that is formally linked with the secondary school.
- (F) Children whose parents have selected the school for co-educational or single-sex educational reasons when the local alternative is respectively single-sex or co educational.

And then all other applicants.

Children must be living in the designated area and/or attending a feeder primary at the closing date of 23 October 2009 to be considered under these criteria.

In some cases a tie-breaker will be required. If a school does not have places for all the children in one of the above criteria, priority will be given to children who fulfil a combination of higher admission criteria. The combination of criteria will follow the same order of priority as the basic list of criteria. (eg. an applicant who fulfils designated area will take precedence over one who fulfils sibling and feeder primary; an applicant who fulfils designated area and sibling, will take precedence over one who fulfils strong social/strong medical, sibling and feeder

primary etc) After this, if there are still insufficient places, and no distinction can be made between the applicants, a final decision will be made on the *radial distance* (straight line distance on a map) between the home and the school. Those living nearer to the school will be placed higher than those living further away. Radial distance will be based on the co-ordinates for the property and the school as defined in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and based on the Ordnance Survey's national system.

As soon as all applications have been received, including those submitted on line and from outside Bracknell Forest, the LA will consider all applications equally for its maintained schools and apply the admissions arrangements as published.

The LA will send out initial allocation lists to neighbouring LAs by 15 January 2010.

Allocation letters will be sent to parents by their home LA on 1 March 2010. The home LA will advise all parents of the result of their application. If they have been refused a place at one of their preference schools they will be informed of the reasons for refusal and the details of how to make an appeal.

- **The allocation process – Ranelagh School**

The Governors of Ranelagh School will make their decisions based on the information received from applicants on the common application form or on line and the SIF.

The Governors will rank all the applications for their school and advise the LA at the beginning of the spring term 2010 of the results. Their ranked list will include all on time applications. The Governors will provide a statement explaining how places have been allocated and (where appropriate) the reasons why all the preferences have not been met. This statement will be sent to parents by their home LAs with their allocation letter on 1 March 2010.

On behalf of the Governors of Ranelagh School the home LA will advise all Ranelagh applicants of the results of their application. The home LA will advise those applicants who are refused a place of their right of appeal and of the arrangements in place for making an appeal.

- **The allocation process – non Bracknell Forest schools**

Parents who have applied for schools outside Bracknell Forest will be sent the results of their application by their home LA on 1 March 2010. In order to do this the maintaining LA will inform the home LA whether they are able to allocate a place at any of the preferred schools by 15 January 2010. The home LA will then consider all the preferences and possible offers. The home LA will offer a place at the school that was ranked the highest by the parent/carer.

All non Bracknell Forest admissions authorities will be expected to provide the home LA with a detailed statement explaining how places have been allocated and (where appropriate) the reasons why all the preferences have not been met by 19 February 2010. This statement will be sent to parents with the allocation letter on 1 March 2010.

- **The Allocation Process - Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs**

In accordance with the Code of Practice for Pupils with Special Educational Needs the parents of these pupils will be informed of their child's allocated secondary school by 15 February 2010.

- **Multiple Births**

Where the LA has received applications for twins or other multiple births and an offer can not be made to all of them then the LA will write to the parents offering place(s) and the parents will need to decide which child/ren take up the offer.

- **Appeals – Bracknell Forest maintained schools**

If parents have been refused a place at one or more of their preferences they will be informed of their right of appeal. All appeals for Bracknell Forest schools must be submitted by 26 March 2010. The LA will then endeavour to hear all appeals submitted by this date within 30 school days. All on time appeals will be heard by 6 July 2010.

- **Appeals – Ranelagh School**

The Governors will make arrangements for appeals. All appeals for Ranelagh School must be submitted by 26 March 2010. The Appeal Panel will then endeavour to hear all appeals submitted by this date within 30 school days. All on time appeals will be heard by 6 July 2010.

- **Waiting lists**

Applicants not offered a place at one of their higher preference school than that offered are placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be constructed using the same order of priorities as set out in the admissions criteria. Parents should be aware that their child's name can go up or down the waiting list according to the priority of new additions to the list. The LA will maintain the waiting lists for all Bracknell Forest maintained schools for the academic year for which they have applied. At the end of that year it will end and parents will need to reapply for a place, and be added to the appropriate waiting list in accordance with the criteria. The LA will maintain the waiting list for Ranelagh School until 1 September 2010 when Ranelagh will maintain their own. Once the child has left their primary school the feeder primary school criteria will be removed.

- **Applications made after the closing date for on line admissions but before 23 October 2009**

There will be no facility to submit an on line application after 16 October 2009 but parents can still submit a paper application during this time.

- **Non-returned Common Application Form (CAF)**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could have been made by the closing date of 23 October 2009 the application will be processed by the School Admissions Team after 26 March 2010.

- **Moving into Bracknell Forest**

Where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could not have been made by the closing date of 23 October 2009 (for example if they have just moved into Bracknell Forest) but the application form is submitted before 12 February 2010 the application will be considered on time. However evidence to support the reason for the late application will be required by the Local Authority. If the application is received on or after 12 February 2010 it will be processed after 1 March 2010.

- **Moving within Bracknell Forest**

If parents move house within Bracknell Forest after the closing date of 23 October 2009 and before 12 February 2010 they must contact the Local Authority to discuss any changes they may be able to make to their preferences. They will be accommodated if at all possible.

- **Changes of preference**

Parents who wish to amend their application (paper or online) before the closing date will be allowed to do so as long as they put their request in writing to the Admissions Team by the closing date.

Changes of preference after the closing date (23 October 2009) will only be allowed if the preferred school is not over subscribed and then only after 1 March 2010.

- **Split residence orders**

It is increasingly common that parents are agreeing, and courts are sanctioning, split residence orders under Section 8 of The Children Act. Further advice on this matter can be obtained from the School Admissions Team. Any details regarding split residency, or the child's living arrangements, must be submitted at the time of application. It is the parents' responsibility to provide this information. The School Admissions Team may take legal advice on these matters as they relate to a specific case and their decision is final. A main address will need to be used to process the application. If the second parent/carer's address is different from the first they will not receive any information/letters unless this is requested.

- **Home address**

The address where the child lives at the closing date of 23 October 2009 will be used to process the application. It is for the applicant to satisfy the Admissions Authority that they live at the address that they state. If fraud is suspected then further proof may be requested. If fraud is established then any offer of a school place will be withdrawn. If a parent/carer owns a property within the Borough which they rent out and then rent another property themselves within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school, unless the owned house has been rented out for 12 months prior to the closing date for the return of the Common Application Form, their owned property will be the address used for determining their designated area.

- **Applicants from abroad**

If families are moving (for the first time) into the Bracknell Forest area from abroad, then they (including the child) must be resident before an application for a school place can be accepted. Proof of residency will be required. If they are living abroad and returning to a property that they own, in the local area, then they will need to produce written proof confirming the details and timing of the relocation. Further advice on the documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team. Service families can produce a Housing Executive letter or proof of redeployment.

- **Social (Psychological) Grounds or Medical Grounds (category C)**

If a child or a member of their family who lives at the same address has a serious medical or psychological need that would cause significant hardship if the child could not attend the preferred school they must indicate this on their application form.

All schools have the resources to work with special educational needs and common childhood complaints such as asthma.

If parents have indicated on their application form that they want the application to be considered on either social or medical grounds they will be sent a form which must be completed and returned to the School Admissions Team along with supporting evidence from a relevant professional for example a letter from a registered health professional such as a Doctor, Consultant, Specialist, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Therapist, Qualified Counsellor or Social Worker/ Care Manager. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure this supporting information is supplied along with the application form and is in by the required closing date.

This evidence must set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the **only** school that the child can attend and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. It will not be possible to consider the application under this criteria if they do not supply supporting evidence. The LA reserves the right to ask parents to supply further evidence or clarification where the LA considers necessary. It is important that applicants seeking to rely on these grounds provide the fullest supporting evidence they can by the closing date of 23 October 2009. It will be for the parents to produce this evidence at their own expense whenever necessary. Where further evidence is required it will need to be supplied by at the latest 2 weeks from receipt of the application. If no further communication is received by the parent at this date it will be considered under the next appropriate criteria.

Applications on social or medical grounds will be considered first by three members of the School Admissions Team (at the School Admissions Teams absolute discretion) if it is felt that further advice is required then the application will be passed to the relevant professional within the Local Authority – for example an Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officer, Special Needs Officer although this list is not exhaustive and if it is felt necessary further advice would be sought from an outside agency. The professional will be asked to indicate if they feel that the school is the **only** school that the child can attend and will indicate this on the application form.

If it is felt that the circumstances are not exceptional, the application will be considered against the remaining admissions criteria.

The decision will then be recorded and parents will be sent a letter informing them if their application is being considered under this criteria.

The focus of the decision making process that the School Admissions Team will go through to apply these grounds is to look at how all the evidence advanced by the applicant indicates that the particular school and only the particular school can meet the needs of the particular child under consideration. Applicants should be aware that this is quite a hard test to meet. That is why it is important that applicants submit the very best evidence that they can in support of their applications by the due date.

Note: being required to drop off or collect children at two different schools at the same start or end time will not usually on its own be considered to be a ground warranting consideration under the social, psychological or medical ground.

Going to a Nursery School or Early Years provider will not usually on its own be considered to be a ground warranting consideration under the social, psychological or medical ground.

- **Definitions**

Parent is defined as all those who have parental responsibility for a child as set out in the Children Act 1989.

Sibling is defined as children who have brothers or sisters living in the same family unit and at the same address and for whom the applicant has parental responsibility.

SECONDARY SCHOOL IN YEAR APPLICATIONS 2010/11

The LA will manage all in year applications. It will be necessary for all schools to inform the LA at regular intervals of their numbers on roll. This information may be collected electronically.

If an application is received after the academic year has started then it will be treated as an “in year” application. A separate application form should be completed. These are available from the LA for all Bracknell Forest maintained schools and for Ranelagh School. The information in

the secondary scheme regarding the allocation process, waiting lists and appeals are the same for in year applications.

The LA will allocate places for all its maintained schools. The LA will issue refusals if necessary and give details on the appeals process. It will pass on applications for Ranelagh School to the Governors so that they can make a decision about a place. The Governors will then inform the LA who will formally send out the offer or refusal on behalf of the Governors. The LA will give details about the appeals process on behalf of the Governors. If a place can be offered to a resident from another Local Authority then this information will be passed to that authority.

- **RANELAGH SCHOOL**

The co-ordinated scheme does not affect the duty of the Governors of Ranelagh School (a Voluntary Aided school) to set and apply their own admissions arrangements.

- **Entitlement to sixth form education**

**SECONDARY TRANSFER TIMETABLE
SEPTEMBER 2010 ENTRY**

| Date | Action |
|--|--|
| | |
| Midday 16 October 2009 | Closing date for Online applications |
| | |
| 23 October 2009 | Closing date for paper applications (CAFs) |
| | |
| By 27 November 2009 | Electronic information to be sent to neighbouring authorities |
| | |
| By 27 November 2009 | Electronic information to be sent to Aided/Grammar schools |
| | |
| Start of the spring term 2010 | Aided and Grammar Schools to advise "home" LA of allocated places and waiting list (all to be ranked according to admissions criteria) |
| | |
| By 15 January 2010 | Send out initial allocation information to neighbouring Berkshire authorities |
| | |
| By 15 February 2010 | Inform parents of statemented pupils of their allocated school |
| | |
| By 15 February 2010 | Send out details of final allocation to neighbouring Berkshire authorities |
| | |
| By 19 February 2010 | Give indicative numbers to Secondary schools |
| | |
| 1 March 2010 | Allocation letters to parents |
| | |
| After 1 March 2010 | Full details to secondary/receiving schools |
| | |
| 26 March 2010 | Closing date for receipt of appeals |
| | |
| The LA will endeavour to hear all appeals submitted by the closing date within 30 school days. All on time appeals will be heard by 6 July 2010. | Appeal Hearings |

**TIMETABLE FOR THE PRIMARY CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
2010/11**

| Date | Action |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| By 1 July 2009 | Governing Bodies of schools to advise LA about the admission of rising fives |
| September 2009 | Guide to Primary Education in Bracknell Forest to be published. Common application forms to be produced and sent to parents. |
| September 2009 – 15 January 2010 | Applications to be submitted to the LA with proof of residency and date of birth of child. |
| midday on 8 January 2010 | Closing date for Online applications |
| 15 January 2010 | Closing date for paper applications (CAFs) |
| By 15 February 2010 | SEN Team to inform parents of statemented pupils of their allocated school |
| By 12 March 2010 | LA to transfer information to Aided schools |
| 19 March 2010 | Closing date for receipt of supplementary information forms by VA schools |
| 22 – 26 March 2010 | Aided schools governors to meet to allocate places |
| By 1 April 2010 | Aided schools to advise LA of allocations All schools to confirm to the LA that they have not made any offers to the children in the year group in question (ie. offered too early) |
| 23 April 2010 | Offer letters to be sent out by the LA* |
| By 21 May 2010 | Parents to accept offers Appeals to be submitted |
| Summer Term 2010 | LA to advise schools of final allocation details Schools to send out registration forms. Appeals to be heard |

*The LA will always offer places in line with the Borough's admissions policy.

