



HARD TO PLACE PUPILS PROTOCOL

Contact Officer: Nigel Chilton
Manager
Behaviour for Learning Service
Tel: (01642) 527153

October 2005

1) Introduction

- a) Section 5.10 of the Schools Admissions Code of Practice (DfES 2002) gives details of responsibilities for the Admission Forum in relation to this issue:

Forums are also responsible for seeking to promote agreements on arrangements for dealing with a range of difficult issues, including how to ensure that potentially vulnerable children (such as looked-after children as defined in Paragraph 7.22, or those who have special educational needs) are effectively provided for in admission arrangements. In particular, they are encouraged to discuss and agree protocols for the allocation of vulnerable children who arrive in the area outside the normal admission round, taking into account parental preference as much as possible. Similar consideration should also be given to the allocation of places to other children who arrive outside the normal admission round, when popular schools are full, and those who have been excluded from school (or who have a history of challenging behaviour) so that all schools play their part in accommodating these children. Once these arrangements have been reached, forums are also required to monitor how well they are working, how quickly the children are found places and the contribution every school in the area is making.

- b) In response to the above and Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Guidance on Hard to Place Pupils issued November 2004, the Admissions Forum commissioned a group of head teachers and local authority officers to draw up a draft protocol for its consideration with the aim of adoption in principle by the Admissions Forum in June 2005 and implementation by September 2005.
- c) This protocol outlines the local authority's arrangements to ensure the following categories of pupils are admitted on a fair and equitable basis to all schools:
- i) Children moving into the authority unable to find a place within normal arrangements.
 - ii) Looked after children.
 - iii) Permanently excluded pupils returning to mainstream school.
 - iv) Children withdrawn from school by their family following fixed term exclusion and unable to find another place.
 - v) Such other groups as may be determined as part of formal review of the policy to be in need of such additional support.

2) Aims of the scheme

The scheme is designed to:

- i) Acknowledge the real need of vulnerable young people who are not on any roll to be dealt with quickly and sympathetically
- ii) Reduce the time that these 'difficult to place/high need' pupils spend out of school
- iii) Ensure that schools admit pupils with challenging educational needs on a turn-taking basis
- iv) Be fair and transparent, and to have the confidence of all schools

3) **Main principles**

- a) In order for the scheme to be successful (and to comply with DfES guidance):
- i) **All** schools will take part.
 - ii) Schools will continue to admit local pupils who apply for an available place, under normal admission arrangements.
 - iii) Schools cannot say that they are over-subscribed if they are asked to admit a pupil under the scheme, and 'Hard to Place' pupils will be given priority for admission over any others on a waiting list or awaiting appeal.
 - iv) Schools must respond immediately to requests for admission so that the admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed.
 - v) The LA will take account of any genuine concerns about the admission, for example a previous serious breakdown in the relationship between the school and the family, or a strong aversion by the family to the religious ethos of the school. If there is the potential to make a choice between a youngster who has a denominational affiliation or one who does not then we would offer the 'denominational pupil' to the denominational school.
- b) The general rule should be that if a child moves into the area s/he attends a local school or the school named by the parents as their first preference. Head teachers should not refuse to admit a child if there is a place available, even if the child has a few behavioural issues or comes from a difficult family background. It is only in exceptional circumstances that schools may refuse admission. For schools which are their own admissions authorities, Head teachers and governing bodies are asked to agree a procedure whereby the Head in consultation with the Chair is empowered to make immediate decisions about the placement of a pupil so that there is not a further period of absence from school.

4) **Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Pupils with statements of SEN are not included within these arrangements as specific statutory requirements apply to them.

5) **Procedure**

If a pupil moves into the area, or moves to another part of the borough, and cannot find a school place, this may be for one of the following reasons:

- i) All the local schools are genuinely full in the relevant year group.
- ii) The preferred school is not full in the relevant year group but meets the criteria for refusing (as set out in the School Admissions Code of Practice P.32, para 7.7) due to a particularly high concentration of pupils with challenging behaviour or the child is particularly challenging.
- iii) The pupil has serious behavioural problems which the school cannot deal with (eg because it is in Special Measures).
- iv) The pupil cannot travel to the school that can be offered, either because it is too far away or because the pupil has specific difficulties (eg very poor English, ADHD, health problems, etc).

6) **Prioritisation**

- a) Pupils will normally be placed on a prioritised basis in one of the five groups of secondary schools and their local primary schools.

1 Billingham Campus St Michael's Northfield	2 Bishopsgarth Blakeston Norton	3 Grangefield OLSB Ian Ramsey	4 St Patrick's TCS All Saints	5 Conyers Egglescliffe
---	---	---	---	-------------------------------------

Where this may cause an imbalance of placements the following additional movement may apply:

Group 1 to Group 2
 Group 3 to Groups 1 & 2
 Group 4 to Group 5 or reverse
 Groups 1 & 2 to Groups 4 & 5 or reverse

- b) The Inclusion Officer, Behaviour for Learning Service, will maintain the register of placements within the scheme and the figures will be published to schools annually or on request.

7) Funding

No special funding arrangements will be put in place.

8) Additional Support

- a) Pupil Planning Meeting will determine whether any additional support may need to be made available to a school to support placement and, subject to resource pressures, will put this into place as soon as possible after the pupil is admitted.
- b) In certain cases, where it is necessary, the Behaviour for Learning Service or other local authority support services may be commissioned to assess the pupil's needs before admission.

9) Return of Permanently Excluded Pupils to Mainstream School

The current procedures (set out in appendix a) continue to apply subject to the amendment that allocation of places will be within the cluster arrangements described above and such placements will be counted as a placement under the main scheme.

10) Managed Moves

The current policy (as set out in appendix b) continues to apply.

11) Review and Monitoring

a) Pupil Planning Meeting

All cases where pupils need to be admitted under these arrangements will be reported to the Pupil Planning Meeting for the relevant phase who will provide on going monitoring. The Inclusion Officer will maintain, in conjunction with the Admissions Team a register of all pupils placed and will report annually on these to the Admissions Forum.

b) Admissions Forum

The Admissions Forum will put in place an interim review of the arrangements after they have been in operation for one year and will put in place a full review of the arrangements on a bi-annual basis.