

# D R A F T

## Procedure for 'In year applications' for places in primary and secondary schools in Stockton on Tees

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# Procedure for \*In Year applications for places in primary and secondary schools in Stockton on Tees

\*In year - means applications for admission to age groups other than the normal process for entry to primary and secondary school

## Background

A recent update of the School & Standards Framework Act 1988 through The Schools Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008 means that there is a duty on the Local Authority (LA) to co-ordinate in year admissions. This means that all applications for school places in all year groups, will be through the 'home' LA, whether the school is a community or voluntary aided (VA) school.

This procedure will form part of the LAs Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements for the management of allocations of all school places and the same principles will apply. Parents apply for a school through the LA that they pay their Council Tax to. LAs will then liaise with each other and with VA admission authorities in relation to securing the preferred school for the parents.

The change to dealing with all In Year applications through the LA will not in anyway relinquish the responsibilities of Voluntary Aided (VA) admission authorities or Academies who manage their own admissions. After receipt of an application requests for places would be referred to the individual VA schools for a decision. The decision would then be relayed to the parent by the LA and offer the right to appeal if appropriate.

The purpose of this procedure is to work in partnership with schools and parents to make sure that pupils attend their preferred school. If difficulties arise, parents are encouraged to work with the school to resolve any issues rather than move schools. Research by the Department for Children Schools and Families has shown that pupil mobility effects academic achievement not only for the individual pupil but for the whole school.

## Process

Requests are regularly received from parents to transfer their child/children's school and it can be for a variety of reasons. In certain cases it does not always benefit the child or the school and so the LA has laid out procedures which are followed upon receipt of such a request.

**All applications** for a place in a school within the borough of Stockton on Tees need to be made through the LAs School Admissions Section. An application form will need to be completed and which will be available in schools, council offices, local libraries or by ringing the Admissions Section on 01642 526605 or you can download one from the website [www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions). The application form will give parents the opportunity to put up to three preferences on the form and give reasons for the application.

Community or voluntary aided schools receiving applications direct to them must notify the LA and fax or email the form to the school admissions section – fax no. 01642 526607 or email: [schooladmissions@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@stockton.gov.uk) Documents would need to be password protected.

## Applications received for Community Schools

Applications will be dealt with as they are received into the Admissions Office on a daily basis. If there are two applications received and there is only one space available in the parents preferred school, priority will be given according to the LAs admission policy (Appendix 1). The policy can also be found in the Primary & Secondary Admissions booklet, copies are available in all schools, local libraries and council offices and displayed on our website [www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions) or you can ring school admissions on 01642 526605.

## **Applications received for other admission authorities**

Applications received by the LA for other LAs, VA schools or Academies (when if appropriate) will be forwarded to them by email or fax so that they can consider the applications according to their policy and inform the LA so they can send out confirmation to parents.

### **Procedure:**

The procedure is in three parts:

- Part 1 - explains how we will process applications from families who have moved into the Borough or moved house within the Borough and it would be no longer possible to take their children to their current school.
- Part 2 - relates to requests to change schools within the Borough, or from neighbouring authorities and where difficulties have arisen in their current school eg attendance or behaviour issues
- Part 3 - gives information about the process for dealing with application where the child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The form will give parents the option of putting up to 3 preferences. If one of the preferences is for a school which is not maintained by this LA, we will liaise with the appropriate authority and would aim to offer parents one of their preferred schools. We would always aim to offer the highest ranked school if at all possible. We would be give the right to appeal for any of the schools that were refused and the child's name would be automatically added to the waiting list of the appropriate school.

Under normal circumstances receipt of forms will be acknowledged within two working days and normally processed within five and ten working days. If there are issues with the transfer it may delay this process but will keep parents informed of the progress.

### **In Year Applications where the parent is requesting a Voluntary Aided (VA) (Roman Catholic (RC) or Church of England (CE) School or Academy.**

The same process will apply as in Parts 1, 2 and 3 but the application will be referred to the school for a Decision using their own over subscription criteria. However the LA will be responsible for informing parents about the place or right to appeal on behalf of the VA school or Academy. Appeals for VA schools or Academies will be directed to their governing bodies.

**Waiting lists** – Since the publication of the School Admissions Code in February 2009 all admission authorities **must** maintain a waiting list for at least a term. The LA is proposing to keep the waiting lists open for through year transfers for the whole of an academic year. It would be for the governing body of the VA school to decide how their waiting lists will be managed. There are specific rules about the way that waiting lists are managed which is outlined in the final paragraphs of page 5.

**Admission Numbers** – In order for the Co-ordination of transfers to run smoothly, schools will need to let the LA know (School Admissions section) their school numbers at the beginning of each school term. This will help in the allocation of places by the LA and also assist schools by the section not ringing the schools for their numbers every time we get an application in.

## **PART ONE**

1. This section relates to all families who want a place in a school who:

- have either recently moved into the Borough or
- have moved a considerable distance within the Borough resulting in difficulty in traveling to their current school

- 1.2 Applications for transfers from parents whose children already have a place in a local school, in Stockton on Tees or local Boroughs, will be dealt with as they are received. Start dates for any change of school will be agreed for the beginning of a school term for half term, unless there are circumstances which may warrant an earlier start eg if the pupil has poor attendance and the parent is in attendance procedures, an earlier start date may be appropriate.
- 1.3 If a parent approaches a school for a place under either of the conditions above, they should ask them to complete an In Year Application Form and return it to the School Admissions Section. Forms can also be requested from the school admissions section on 01642 526605.
- 1.4 So that there is no delay in a child starting at the school it is essential that parents are asked to return the forms to the LA as quickly as possible.
- 1.5 On receipt of the form the LA will process, confirm a start date with the school and then advise parents. If a place cannot be given at the preferred school the LA will look at the parents other preferences. A letter will be sent to parents to confirm arrangements.
- 1.6 Parents will be given the right to appeal against any decision not to allocate places at their preferred schools, they will be given a period of two weeks from receipt of the letter to lodge an appeal. If the refusal is for a VA or Academy a copy of the refusal letter will be forwarded to them. If the parent subsequently puts in an appeal, the appropriate admission authority will need to organize the setting up of an independent appeal panel and will need to provide a full report of why a place could not be given. There are statutory timescales for this laid out in the School Admission Appeals Code, copies can be downloaded from the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) website <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode/>
- 1.5 The Law and Democracy Service is responsible for the organization and setting up of all admission appeals within the Borough and can be contacted on 01642 524990. This service is also available to VA Schools and Academies.

## **PART TWO**

- 2 This relates to requests to change schools within the Borough, or from schools in other LAs where difficulties have arisen in their current school.
  - 2.1 If a parent approaches the LA asking for a move of school due to experiencing difficulties at their current school eg curriculum, social, breakdown in relationships, the LA will ask whether the parent has discussed these difficulties with the current school. If they have not, will suggest that they make an appointment with the headteacher or relevant member of staff to try and resolve the issues before the request for a transfer is pursued further.
  - 2.2 If the parent has already discussed with appropriate staff within the school and still feel they wish to pursue a request for transfer, the Admissions Section ask the parent to complete an 'In Year application form'.
  - 2.3 When the application is received, if it is found that there are attendance or exclusion issues, the section will liaise with the Attendance and Exclusion Team to ascertain if there has been any intervention from the team.
  - 2.4 Sometimes with attendance issues, the best way forward for the pupil concerned might be agree a managed move. Information about managed moves can be found on the Stockton on Tees website [www.stockton.gov.uk/citizenservices/schooleffectiveness/behaviour/inclusion/](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/citizenservices/schooleffectiveness/behaviour/inclusion/)  
The Headteacher of the schools involved, parents and pupils would have to agree to this before arrangements are put in place.

2.5 If there has been a history of exclusions or a permanent exclusion, this would be dealt with by the Inclusion Service and a place may have to be allocated through the \*In Year Fair Access Protocol which is managed by the Inclusion Team. A copy of this can be access from the same link above.

\*The In Year Fair Access Protocol has been agreed by all schools to ensure that the allocation of pupils with challenging behaviour/exclusions/permanent exclusion is made proportionately so one school or Academy is not required to take a high number of excluded pupils due to having spaces in their school.

The School Admissions Section would complete a report to the Access Panel\*, which meets every two weeks to get their views on which school should be approached, colleagues from the Inclusion Team would generally liaise with the school and family with regard to this.

\*Access Panel - the aims of the panel are to:

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

## PART THREE

3. This section relates to pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

These requests will be forwarded to the Manager for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and parents informed that this will now be dealt with by this service.

Contact No. 01642 527135 Fax. No. 01642 528345

3.1 If a child has Special Educational Needs (SEN), even if they do not have a statement, the Local Authority may recommend a place at a particular school which has a specialism in a particular area of education. Such provision may include; specialist facilities for children with physical difficulties, provision for children with visual impairments, provision for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Junior Support Bases (for learning needs) and Infant Assessment and Support Classes. Should a place within one of these specialist provisions be proposed by the Local Authority, arrangements would be co-ordinated by the Special Needs Section.

## Waiting Lists

Since the publication of the School Admissions Code in February 2009, all admission authorities **must** maintain a waiting list for at least a term and so will operate this system for through year transfers.

If there are a number of pupils on the waiting list in the same year group, the LA's admission policy will be applied to allocate available places eg if a family move into a school's admission zone and request a place in the same year group, they would have priority over other pupils already on the Waiting List but who are out of zone.

This would also apply to waiting lists for VA schools and Acadmies.

**For information - this is an extract from the School Admissions Code relating to waiting lists.**

*School Admissions Code, Page 72 para's 3.19, 3.20 and 3.21.*

3.19 *Each admission authority **must** maintain a waiting list for at least one term in the academic year of admission, for every oversubscribed school, and they **must** include the fact they will do this in their school's published admission arrangements, making clear that children will be ranked in the same order as the published oversubscription criteria. Waiting lists **must** be clear, fair and objective and **must not** give priority to children based on the date either their application was received or their name was added to the list. For example, if a child moves to an area outside the normal admission round and his higher priority against the published oversubscription criteria, they **must** be ranked above those with lower priority already on the list.*

- 3.20 *As soon as school places become vacant, they must be filled from the waiting list, even if this is before admission appeals have been heard unless an exception applies (see para 2.16). Placing a child's name on a waiting list does not affect an applicant's right to appeal against an unsuccessful application.*
- 3.21 *Children who are subject of a direction by a local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol **must** take precedence over those on a waiting list. Admission Authorities **must** make clear in their admission arrangements that these children will take precedence over any child already on that list. Legislation enables this to be done immediately without the need to apply to the Schools Adjudicator for a variation in determined admission arrangements.*

Betty Johns  
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