

ASHTON COMMUNITY SCIENCE COLLEGE

School Policy for

ADMISSIONS

The school has adopted and implemented the LEA's Code of Practice on the Admission and Transfer of Students. This Code and its rationale is outlined below

SCHEME FOR CO-ORDINATING IN YEAR SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The School Admissions Code requires that from the 2010 / 11 academic year all Local Authorities must have schemes for co-ordinating applications for school places which are made during the year - in year applications (Code – paragraph 3.6).

Local Authorities have the flexibility to decide upon a scheme which they feel best suits their residents but they must ensure that this complies with law and regulations.

The Co-ordinated In Year Scheme will apply to all Lancashire residents and they must apply to the Local Authority for school places, even if the school (s) preferred are situated in another authority area. It will apply to new to area applications, those who relocate within Lancashire and school transfer requests.

The Local Authority is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled school and individual Governing Bodies are admission authorities for voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies.

Lancashire's Co-ordinated In Year Scheme does not affect the rights and duties of the individual Governing Bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies to consult upon and determine admission arrangements for their own schools. The Governing Bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies will have a duty to prioritise in year applications when this is required to determine the priority of children for places at the school.

For the scheme to operate successfully it is essential that all admissions authorities in Lancashire and all neighbouring Local Authorities comply with the agreed arrangements and deadline dates, and with the requirements of the School Admissions Code (and relevant law and regulations).

APPLYING FOR SCHOOL PLACES

All applications from Lancashire residents **must** be made on Lancashire's in year application form. This includes an information sheet for parents about the process and related protocols (eg Fair Access and First Day of Term Protocols).

Application forms will be available via all Lancashire schools and at Area Pupil Access Teams (in Area Education Offices), the Customer Services Centre and

Libraries. In addition parents will be able to apply verbally (telephone or face to face or electronically) at these locations.

All applications must be returned to the relevant Area Pupil Access Team (there is a dedicated e-mail address in each area – see application form for details).

An essential element of the scheme is that all parents must apply on Lancashire's common in year application form and all applicants will receive a single school offer. The completion of Lancashire's in year application is the only legal means of applying for a school place for new to area families and those requesting a school transfer.

A pupil does not become a resident within a Local Authority area until they actually live there. Lancashire will however accept in year applications from parents who are intending to move into the area when they can provide evidence of an exchange of contracts on a property or a dated rental / lease agreement. Temporary addresses may however not always be accepted for school admission purposes – this will be determined by individual admission authorities and / or independent admission appeal panels (who will take advice from the independent clerk to the panel).

RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications **must** be lodged with the relevant Area Pupil Access Team on Lancashire's common in year application form (electronically, hard copy or verbal) in order to be considered. Any in year admission applications which are returned to schools or other offices **must** be receipted / recorded and then **immediately** forwarded to the Area Pupil Access Team (preferably electronically).

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS / PREFERENCES

The Local Authority will aim to issue an offer within 10 school days of receipt of each in year application (subject in some cases to the relevant background information being available and also subject in some cases to accuracy checks).

All parents will be entitled to express up to 3 school preferences.

All school preferences expressed by parents will be considered equally. In year applications which are received outside of the normal school admissions round will be considered without delay as they are received (Code – paragraph 3.2).

Where there are more applications than available places at a preferred school then the school's published admission criteria will be used by the relevant admission authority to determine which applicant has priority (the Local Authority for community and voluntary controlled school and individual Governing Bodies for voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies).

The in year admission criteria (priority for admission) for community and voluntary controlled schools will be as stated within Lancashire's admission booklets for parents (the booklet used in relation to annual reception or year 7 intakes).

Where there are more applications than available places at a voluntary aided or foundation school or academy then these will be referred to the school for the Governing Body to determine the order of priority within the school's published admission arrangements. Any supporting papers will also be forwarded with individual applications. At this stage parents should be given the option of completing the school's supplementary application form (SIF) if they wish to do so. In year applications for voluntary aided and foundation schools must however be considered

based upon the information provided by parents even if they decide not to complete a supplementary information form.

Schools and neighbouring authorities are requested to respond to the Area Pupil Access Team within 5 school days of receipt of any in year application which is referred for their consideration.

Decisions to refuse admissions cannot be made by a single individual (Code – paragraph 1.36) and Governors must adhere to this requirement where they are undertaking an exercise to prioritise in year admission applications.

Lancashire will liaise with neighbouring local authorities where parents have expressed a preference for a school or schools outside of Lancashire. Applications and any supporting information will be forwarded to neighbouring authorities as necessary. Lancashire will however make all offers (even for schools situated in other authorities) **for all Lancashire residents**.

Where more than one of a parent's preferred schools can be offered then the priority order on the parent's in year application will determine the single school offer which will be made (this will be for the school prioritised highest by the parent where there is an available place in the relevant year group).

The priority order as stated by parents must therefore only be used as a tie break and not as part of the initial allocation process.

Area Pupil Access Teams will as part of the consideration of in year applications:-

- Refer applications for voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies to the Governing Body for prioritisation within the school's determined admission arrangements (where this is necessary)
- Determine which will fall under the agreed Fair Access protocols for that locality (these applicants may be admitted to a school which is already full in the required year group).
- Refer any applications for pupils with full statements for special educational needs to the Area SEN Team who will deal with the admission request. This is a separate process from the in year admissions scheme.
- Refer any in year applications for children in care (CLA) for school year groups which are full to a senior member of staff for consideration of discretionary admission.
- Inform all parents, and relevant schools and neighbouring authorities of allocated places.
- Issue appeals forms and information
- Provide supplementary information forms for voluntary aided and foundation schools to parents if these are requested (also available from individual schools).

Parents will automatically be given an admission appeal form and appeal information where **none** of their preferred schools can be offered.

OFFERS OF SCHOOL PLACES

The Local Authority will aim to issue an offer within 10 school days of receipt of each in year application.

Where there is an available place at the parent's first priority school, or at only one of their preferred schools, then an offer of a place will be issued by Lancashire for

community and voluntary controlled schools or on behalf of the Governing Bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies. A copy of the offer letter and application will be sent to the Governing Body of the relevant voluntary aided school or foundation school or academy.

If the offer is for a school in another authority area then the school and the home authority will be notified of the school offer which is made.

Where more than one offer can be made then the parent's order of priority as stated on the application will be the tie break.

Where none of the preferences can be met an alternative Lancashire school offer will be made and the school initially offered will receive a copy of the offer letter and be informed if the parent (s) is / are lodging an appeal.

Where there is a tie for a single remaining place at any school (twins, triplets, same distance measure) then the agreed admission criteria for the school will apply – this is usually a random draw. Discretion for twins / triplets may be an option for admission authorities but this must not compromise class size legislation in primary school infant classes (reception, year 1 and year2).

For in year applications a pupil cannot be refused admission at a school unless the admission number has been reached (Code – paragraph 1.24). There are some specific exceptions but these are relatively rare and are defined within the School Admissions Code. The relevant admission authority will decide whether these discretions should apply.

From September 2010 schools which are their own admission authorities will be required to confirm the availability of places in each year group to the Local Authority when requested to do so (Code – paragraph 3.22).

Area Pupil Access Teams will have details of numbers on roll at every Lancashire school via the school census - but will also contact schools individually to verify any changes especially where the number on roll in the required year group is near to the published admission number and / or where the school is known to have regular turnover of pupils.

ACCEPTANCE OF OFFERS

The 2008 Co-ordination Regulations place a duty on Local Authorities to include a 2 week deadline for the acceptance of school offers by parents.

For in year applications in Lancashire the offer letter will include a paragraph explaining to parents that they have **14 days from their receipt of the offer letter** to contact the Area Pupil Access Team if they wish to refuse the school offer which has been made.

If parents do not contact the Area Team by the set deadline then the application and offer will be considered as having been completed (the deadline for parents to respond will be set by the Local Authority at 16 days from the date of issue of the offer letter to allow time for receipt via the mail).

If an initial offer is refused then an alternative offer will be made in liaison with the parent and this will include a similar deadline period for acceptance as the initial offer. When the second school offer is confirmed then appeal information will be made available if any parent decides to appeal for other schools at this time.

If an offered place is not accessed then a referral for non attendance may be made.

The parent(s) will be contacted at the address given on the in year application and asked if the offered school place is required. **Parents must respond within 7 days of any such letter** (Code – paragraph 1.50). Offers of places will be withdrawn where parents have failed to respond to reminder letters and have also failed to access the offered school place. The Area Pupil Access Team will have discretion to stipulate respond by dates when pursuing individual cases of places not being accessed.

STARTING AT SCHOOLS

For new to area in year applicants and others without a school place schools **must** make arrangements for the pupils to take up the offered place without any delay.

This also applies to those referred under Fair Access Protocols and any admissions directed by the Local Authority to voluntary aided and foundation schools. Community and voluntary controlled schools are required by the School Admissions Code to comply with Local Authority admission requests.

For most school transfers within Lancashire the first day of term protocol will apply and the offer letter will confirm this for the parent (s). Schools should however in these circumstances make admissions arrangements for the pupil and confirm these with parent (s) prior to the first school day of the following term. The first day of term protocol may also apply for transfers within Lancashire which are confirmed via a successful independent admission appeal hearing lodged by the parent (s).

WAITING LISTS

The minimum legal requirement for waiting lists is that these must be kept until the end of the first term of the normal year of entry (for primary school Reception and secondary school Year 7 only).

In Lancashire waiting lists for pupils starting in Reception and Year 7 are kept by Area Pupil Access Teams until 31 August each year and then are kept by individual admission authorities up to 31 December each year (the end of each Autumn term).

The duty to offer school places does however remain with the Local Authority and liaison between schools and Area Pupil Access Teams is necessary to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the process. The Local Authority will issue offer letters from waiting lists for Reception and Year 7 (including letters on behalf of the Governing Bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies where individual admission authorities have confirmed that the offer can be made).

Where in year applications for reception and Year 7 are received too late for consideration within the normal admissions round these can be included on the relevant reserve lists (as identified by parents).

Reserve lists for all other year groups will not be kept for Lancashire schools.

APPEALS

Where an initial offer is for none of a parent's school preferences then an appeal form and appeal information will be issued with the offer letter.

For applications where any one of a parent's school preferences can be offered at the outset then appeal information will not be issued automatically. Parents will

however have been informed of their appeal rights via the information sheet attached to the common in year application form (if applications are made verbally the parent will be provided with the information sheet at the time of application).

In all cases the place offered will be kept open pending the outcome of appeals and will remain as the offer if appeals are unsuccessful.

PLACES BECOMING AVAILABLE

If a place at the preferred school becomes available after current / recent / previous in year applications have been refused then only the following applications will be considered as live for allocation purposes at that time:-

- Any outstanding appeals for the same year group at the same school (where the outcome of the appeal hearing has not yet been notified to the appellant). This includes any agreed re-appeals.
- Any current in year applications for the school which have not yet had an offer letter issued by the Local Authority.
- In year applications for the same year group at the same school which have had an alternative school offer issued **and** which are still within the 16 day acceptance period set by the Local Authority.

Others which previously expressed a preference for the school who have had an alternative offer confirmed, and where the 2 week acceptance period has elapsed, will not be considered further for the school. Similarly those who have had an appeal not allowed will not be reconsidered within the same academic year.

(pupils with statements for special needs where the statement names the particular school and fair access cases and other directions from the Local Authority will have priority over other live applications).

WITHDRAWING OFFERS OF PLACES

Where offered places are not accessed, and after non attendance referral and / or the issue of a notice letter to parents, then consideration of withdrawing offers can occur (parents have 7 days to respond to a reminder letter).

Where an offer has been made and this is then found to be based upon inaccurate or misleading information then the offer of a place may be withdrawn. This may apply after a pupil has started at the school if the admission authority considers that the place was obtained fraudulently or as a result of misleading information.

Places cannot usually be withdrawn if the pupil has attended the school for a full term or more (Code – paragraph 1.51).

Places may be withdrawn where the Local Authority has failed to comply with the instructions of a voluntary aided or foundation school or an academy ie if the offer made was not in accordance with the correct priority order within the school's determined admission arrangements as notified to the Local authority by the Governing Body.

The relevant admission authority **must** make the final decision about the withdrawal of places (advice will be available from the Local Authority).

The Local Authority and schools which are their own admission authorities will verify any information provided by parents on Lancashire's common in year admission application. This may include completing checks with third parties

and requiring additional evidence from the parents or third parties. The Local Authority is able to access Council Tax registration details without the consent of parents and will on occasion do so to verify address details. Checks on applications will be in accordance with the statement contained within Lancashire's admission booklets for parents.

Parents will confirm on the application that they will if required verify address and date of birth details prior to or after accessing an offered school place.