

Northumberland County Council Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools - 2014/15

Admission to First/Primary Schools

1. Introductions

- 1.1 Governing Bodies of all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, Parents and wider community groups who may have an interest in school admission arrangements have been consulted on the County Council's Admission Policy.
- 1.2 Catchment areas are a tool used to apply the over subscription criteria when a school has more applications than places. Catchment areas have no separate legal identity outside of the application of the admissions policy and determining entitlement to home to school transport.
- 1.3 For further information, the DfE Code of Practice on School Admissions and School Admission Appeals is available on the DfE website.
- 1.4 Northumberland County Council has a mixture of two tier and three tier partnerships. Two tier partnerships transfer between the primary phase and the secondary phase at Y7 applications for a secondary school must be completed in Y6. Three tier partnerships applications must be completed for transfer from first to middle in Y4 and from middle to high in Y8.
- 1.5 The Northumberland Local Authority area now has two 'all age' Academies, The Northumberland Church of England Academy in the Hirst area of Ashington and the Bede Academy in Blyth. Children admitted to the reception classes in the Academies are expected to remain in the Academy until they have completed their statutory period of education at age 16, and then transfer into the sixth form if they so wish.

In the case of the Bede Academy children from the South site will automatically transfer into Bede Academy North site at Year 7. Applications must be made on the Northumberland County Council Common Application Form.

Parents who want their children to transfer out of an Academy will need to apply for alternative school places in the usual way by contacting the School Admissions Team.

- 1.6 Northumberland County Council has an independent Choice Adviser within Parent Partnership who can help you make informed decisions about applying for school places.

2. The Admissions Policy

- 2.1 The County Council is obliged to admit all applicants to a particular school provided these do not exceed the school's Published Admission Number (PAN).
- 2.2 The Published Admission Number of each school for entry in September 2014 is published in the Admissions Handbook.

This publication will be available in November 2013 and can be provided by School Admissions team on request. Full admissions arrangements can be found on the Northumberland County Council website.

- 2.3 When a school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs where the school is named in the statement, priority for admission will be given to those children who are deemed to be 'looked after' or who have previously been 'looked after'

The priority order for considering applications is as follows:

1. Pupils living within the catchment area of the school and those on whose behalf firm evidence is presented that they will be living in the catchment area by the appropriate admission date.
2. Pupils with special circumstances, on whose behalf evidence of exceptional medical or exceptional social need is presented. For example, where one or both parents or the child have a disability that may make travel to a school that is further away difficult. Evidence must be supported in a written statement by a professionally involved third party, such as a doctor or a social worker.

*NOTE Supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the most suitable school and **must** be submitted at the time of application. **You will not be allocated a place under this criterion if you omit to send to the School Organisation Manager a written statement from a professional third party.***

3. Pupils with siblings already in the school and who are expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission who live within the greater catchment area of the school partnership.

<i>For the purpose of admissions siblings are deemed to be brothers and sisters, stepsiblings, foster siblings adopted siblings and other children who reside permanently in the household and are treated as siblings.</i>

4. Other pupils living within the greater catchment area of the school partnership and those on whose behalf firm evidence is presented that they will be living in the partnership catchment area by the appropriate admission date.
5. Pupils who have a sibling who already attends the school.
6. Pupils on whose behalf preferences are expressed on grounds other than those outlined above.

Parents will be asked to provide evidence of residency if the requested school is oversubscribed.

In instances where it is demonstrated that a place in a preferred school has been obtained on the basis of a false statement of address, the County Council reserves the right to discount the clause covering attendance at a feeder school when considering an application for a place on transfer to the next stage of schooling.

The Local Authority also reserves the right to withdraw a place at a school if information relating to address or any other matter is found to be false.

- 2.4 Where there are more applications than places available children from multiple births will be given priority within each criterion. If a further tie break is necessary distance between home and the school will be used to prioritise applications (see below).
- 2.5 Should it prove necessary, because places are limited, to distinguish between pupils in any given category priority will be given to those who live nearest to the school, measured in a direct line ('as the crow flies') from the front door of the home to the main gate of the school. The distance checker is contained within the EMS school admissions software using GIS data. Distance checking is an integral function within the school admissions software ensuring consistency in measurement
- 2.6 Applications on behalf of children who are resident in other Local Authority areas will be considered in the same way as applications from Northumberland residents.
- 2.7 Children with disabilities will be treated no less favourably than other applicants for admission. Schools are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage, and no child will be refused a place on the grounds of disability. A pupil has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 2.8 The County Council reserves the right to vary these criteria to take account of revisions to legislation or its interpretation by the court
- 2.9 In cases when an application for a place has been unsuccessful, the child's name will be placed on a reserve list for the school in question under the appropriate Co-ordinated Scheme.
Under the Co-ordinated Scheme, reserve lists will be maintained until the end of the first term of the school year to which they relate. No further arrangements will be made to maintain reserve lists after 31 December 2014.
- 2.10 Those parents whose application to a school has been unsuccessful will be notified of their right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, gives this right to all parents whose application for a school has been unsuccessful. The decision of an Appeal Panel is binding on both the Admission Authority and the school. The DfE Code of Practice on school admission appeals can be found on the DfE website at: www.DfE.gov.uk.

3. Co-ordinated Arrangements

- 3.1 **The following arrangements come under the auspices of the relevant Co-ordinated Scheme and are common to all admission authorities in Northumberland and neighbouring local authorities.**
- 3.2 The last date for receipt of requests for places for September 2014 will be determined by the relevant Co-ordinated Scheme.

Application forms submitted after the closing dates will result in late offers being made.

- 3.3 In line with the Co-ordinated Scheme for First or Primary Schools, parents of children starting in Reception at a First and Primary School will be informed of the outcome of their application on **16 April 2014**.

Parents applying for places in other year groups in all schools will be notified under the arrangements of the relevant Co-ordinated Scheme

- 3.4 The parents of **all** pupils who are starting school must complete a parental preference form. This is referred to in the Co-ordinated Scheme as the COMMON APPLICATION FORM. This also includes anyone living in the catchment area of school or whose children are already attending a pre school setting attached to a school.
- 3.5 Parents should complete only one common application form but may make a request for more than one school on that form. They should rank the schools in order of preference, setting out the reasons for their preferences in accordance with the criteria used for prioritising applications. Some Admission Authorities (Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided schools, Academies, Foundation or Trust Schools) may require parents to complete a supplementary form, but only if the additional information is necessary for the school to apply its admission arrangements. Parents may make requests for more than one school, but will only be offered one school place.
- 3.6 First and Primary Schools are asked to help ensure that all children whom they know are due to start school in a reception class, complete and return a form before the closing date.

4. Admission into School of Children Under the Age of Five Years

Admission will be once a year on a full time basis in September if the child is four by 31 August 2012.

5. Deferred Entry in to First and Primary Schools

A parent may, on request to the Headteacher, defer the entry of a child so that the place is taken up at any time during the academic year in which the application applies to (i.e. the Reception year). However, this can be no later than the beginning of the term following the child's fifth birthday; that is, when the child reaches compulsory school age. When a child's fifth birthday falls in the summer term (1 April to 31 August), parents may request entry is deferred until the beginning of Year 1, but there can be no guarantee that a place will be available in oversubscribed schools and a new application for the next school year must be submitted. In such cases, schools are not obliged to admit children into a year group other than that of the child's chronological age.

6. Enrolment into a Reception class

Pupils attending a Pre-Reception or nursery class attached to a school cannot be guaranteed a place in the reception class of that school. To guarantee a place would discriminate against:

- younger children (i.e. those whose fourth birthday falls between 1 April and 31 August) who, because of their age, could not attend a pre-reception or introductory class
- children who are attending a nursery class in another school or setting
- children whose parents choose not to use any of the pre-school provision available.

Parents of children attending a pre-reception or nursery class must apply if they wish their child to be admitted into the school's reception class. That application will be considered alongside all other applications. In the event of over subscription, attendance at a school's nursery, pre-reception or introductory class does not give a child priority over applications for children not attending the school's nursery, pre-reception, or introductory class.

Schools are asked to help ensure parents understand this when they apply for a place in a pre-reception, introductory or nursery class.

6 Publication of the Local Authorities Information for Parents (2014/15) booklet

The Information for Parents publication for September 2014 entry will be available from the beginning of **November 2013**. Schools must make their own prospectus available to parents 6 weeks before the closing date for applications. This means that schools prospectuses should be available by **1 November 2013**.

7 Admissions timetable

1 November 2013:	E-admissions portal opens.
1 November 2013:	Common Application forms together with Admissions Information and School Prospectuses issued to parents.
15 January 2014:	Closing Date for Applications: E-admission portal closes
16 April 2014:	Parents notified of the outcome of their applications for school places
30 April 2014:	Last date for offers to be accepted by parents.