

SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

This scheme fulfils the requirements of a qualifying scheme under the Education (Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (Secondary Schools)(England) Regulations 2002 for the area of Wirral Borough Council. It builds on the well-established coordination of secondary school admissions that have been a longstanding feature of local practice.

The scheme applied for admissions to secondary schools for the academic year 2005/2006, which was the initial year, and for subsequent years subject to any review. The following admissions authorities are covered by the scheme:

ADMISSIONS AUTHORITY	NUMBER & TYPE OF SCHOOLS
Wirral Council	12 Community Secondary Schools
<i>The governing bodies of the following schools:</i>	
St John Plessington Catholic College	Voluntary Aided School
St Anselm's College	Voluntary Aided School
St Mary's Catholic College	Voluntary Aided School
Upton Hall School FCJ	Voluntary Aided School
Ridgeway High School	Foundation
South Wirral High School	Foundation
Calday Grange Grammar School	Foundation School
West Kirby Grammar School for Girls	Foundation
Wirral Grammar School for Girls	Foundation
Wirral Grammar School for Boys	Foundation School

Applications for school places in the normal admission round (that is for admission to Year 7)

- 1.1 Wirral Authority will act as the co-ordinating authority for all applications.
- 1.2 All parents who live in the area administered by Wirral Borough Council must apply for places in maintained secondary schools either in Wirral or in the area of another local education authority by completing the Wirral Parental Preference Form.
- 1.3 Parental Preference Forms will be distributed to the parents of Year 6 pupils in September 2009. We will accept only one application form per child. If parents are separated, they must reach agreement as to the preferences for school places. If

agreement cannot be reached, or if neither parent has been granted a Specific Issues Order in this respect, then we will accept the application from the parent with whom the child is “ordinarily resident”. Parents who wish a different address to be used because they are moving house must provide verification of the move, e.g. independent evidence such as tenancy agreement or an exchange of contracts in a house purchase.

- 1.4 Parents will be invited to express preferences for up to five schools and to outline reasons in support of their preferences. Parents should rank schools in the order of their preference. Preference forms should be returned to the Children and Young People’s Department by 19 October 2009. Schools which receive preference forms directly should forward them to the Children and Young People’s Department.
- 1.5 If a child is eligible for a place in more than one school, they will be offered the school which their parent has ranked as the highest preference.
- 1.6 Applications for voluntary aided and foundation schools will be sent to the relevant admissions authorities by the Children and Young People’s Department. These authorities will be provided with copies of the parental preference forms and any supporting information provided by the parent by the 15th November 2009.
- 1.7 Applications for a school place in the area of another Local Authority will be sent to that Authority along with any details and supporting evidence provided by the parent by the 15th November 2009.
- 1.8 Aided and Foundation Schools in Wirral are required to send to the Children and Young People’s Department by the 19th January lists of pupils to whom they can offer places and lists of pupils in rank order who cannot be offered places.
- 1.9 On the 1st February 2010 the Authority will notify other Authorities of provisional allocations of places in Wirral secondary schools.
- 1.10 When the Authority receives from other Authorities details of their provisional allocation for Wirral children seeking places in schools maintained by them, the

Authority will then offer the highest preference if they are eligible for more than one school.

- 1.11 On 23 February Wirral Authority will inform schools and neighbouring Authorities of the final allocations. Letters will be posted to parents on 1st March.
- 1.12 If a parent is unsuccessful with all of their applications their child will be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school where there are places available after all preferences have been considered.

How decisions on applications for places in Year 7 will be made

- 2.1 Each secondary high school has an admission number. Places will be allocated up to but not beyond this number.

- 2.2 Community Schools

Places at community schools will be decided by the Director of Children's Services in accordance with the following arrangements:

- 2.2.1 Community All Ability Schools

Applications for community all ability schools will be ranked in order according to the following criteria:

- (a) Children who are in care.
- (b) Pupils who have a medical reason for attending a particular school. (A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence).
- (c) Pupils who have a brother or sister (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when the pupil starts school.
- (d) The Authority will then take account of where the child lives. We will give priority to those pupils who live nearest to the school. We use a computer

mapping system, based on Ordnance Survey maps, to measure distances from your home to the school gate nearest to your child's home using the shortest road route unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider a safe walking route.

- (e) Where the final place in a year group is offered to one of twins (or triplets etc) it will be our policy to admit the other twin (or triplets, etc) too even if that means going above the admission number.

Admissions to Grammar Schools

- 3.1 Admissions authorities for the grammar schools in Wirral will only allocate places to children who have achieved the required standard. If they are over subscribed with children who have achieved the standard, they will not be able to offer places to all; they will use other non-academic criteria to decide which children should be offered places. Parents who wish their child to be assessed for grammar school education should inform the Children and Young People's Department by 27th September, 2010. The Authority will inform the governors of Upton Hall School and St. Anselm's College of the details of the children whose parents wish them to be assessed for a place at those schools; those children will be assessed by the schools themselves. The Authority will make the arrangements to assess all other children.

The Authority conducts the assessment arrangements for Calday Grange Grammar School, West Kirby Grammar School, Wirral Grammar School for Boys and Wirral Grammar School for Girls. All the grammar schools are foundation schools, they have criteria to determine which children will be given places if more children achieve the standard than there are places available.

The assessment is based on the results of two verbal reasoning tests that pupils take in the autumn term of the final year of primary education. The test does not take into account what pupils have learnt at primary school. They have been designed to predict a pupil's potential performance at secondary school and so preparation for the verbal reasoning tests, apart from the practice tests, is not

necessary. However, we will provide a familiarisation pack to help children prepare for the tests.

So that children are not disadvantaged because of their date of birth, in each case the score is changed by using conversion tables to take account of each child's exact age in years and months. The two test scores are then added together. Children who reach the required score will be deemed to have reached the grammar school standard unless their primary school head teacher refers them to the Independent Assessment Board.

Independent Assessment Board

As soon as the test results are known, the Authority will tell primary school head teachers the scores of their pupils and the required score for the grammar school standard. The Authority will invite head teachers to make representations on behalf of any children whose test results do not, in their view, reflect the children's potential. Since there is a strong relationship between verbal reasoning scores and potential, these cases will be quite rare.

The Authority will also refer to the Board the cases of any pupils who have been given extra time in the tests because of a disability.

The Authority will then arrange a meeting of an Independent Assessment Board. The Board is made up of four headteachers (two from primary schools, two from grammar schools) and is chaired by an inspector from the Children and Young People's Department. None of the Board will have any personal interest in any of the pupils they are asked to assess.

In some cases parents may feel that certain factors may have affected the child's academic performance (for example, if his or her education has been severely disrupted because of ill health, change of schools, or any other reason). If this does apply, it is important that parents should inform their child's headteacher, in writing, no later than 17 December 2009. The information will be considered by the Independent Assessment Board if the child's case is referred to the Board.

For each child whose case is referred, the Board will see:

- the child's verbal reasoning test scores and papers
- the representations made by the primary school head teacher with supporting evidence if necessary, and
- confidential information from parents and reports from other professional agencies such as educational psychologists, social workers, doctors and so on.

The Board then uses its professional judgement to decide whether the evidence clearly shows that the results of the verbal reasoning tests did not truly reflect the child's ability. The Board will decide in each case whether or not the child has reached the grammar school standard.

- 3.3 At the end of the process, the Authority will have a list of the children who have reached the grammar school standard. This does not necessarily mean that they will go to a grammar school; that will depend on the number of preferences that we have for the grammar schools. If a grammar school is oversubscribed, the Authority or the governors (in the case of a Foundation or Aided school) use other criteria to decide who should be given places.

Admissions to Foundation Schools

4. The governing bodies of Calday Grange Grammar School, West Kirby Grammar School for Girls, Wirral Grammar School for Girls and Wirral Grammar School for Boys, Ridgeway High School and South Wirral High School publish their own admission arrangements which include the criteria which the governing bodies will use if their school is oversubscribed.

Admission to Voluntary Aided Schools

5. The governing bodies of St John Plessington Catholic College, St Anselm's College, St Mary's Catholic College and Upton Hall School FCJ publish their own admission arrangements which include the criteria which they will use to determine priorities if their school is oversubscribed.

Children with Statements

6. All schools will be required to admit a pupil if he or she has a Statement of special educational needs naming the school.

Allocation of Places

7. Parents resident in Wirral will be informed in writing by the Director of Children's Services on the 1 March 2010 of the school allocated to their child. This will include the allocation of a place in a school of another Authority if the parent's application for a place there has been successful. The letter will also inform parents of their right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.

Late Applications

8. Preferences which are received by 31 October 2009 will be dealt with according to the arrangements described in paragraphs 1 to 3. Preferences which are received on or after 1 November 2009 will be dealt with after places have been allocated on the 1st March 2010. At that point some schools may be full and no more places will be allocated at those schools. In the case of schools which have places available, places will be allocated in accordance with the arrangements described in paragraphs 2 and 3. A second round of tests for grammar school assessment will be held in March 2009.

Places which become available after 1st March

- 9.1 Places which become available after 1st March, for instance because parents turn down a place that has been allocated, will be re-allocated up to the school's admission number. If there are more requests for to a particular school than there are places available, the Authority (for community schools) will use the same criteria as for the initial allocation. In most cases the re-allocation will be made depending on where the children live. If this is the case, the Authority will keep a list in order of those who will have priority because they live nearer the school in question.
- 9.2 In the autumn term the Authority will hold a waiting list for children whose parents would still like them to be considered for a place at a school which is full at the beginning of the term. If places become available after the start of the autumn

term, they will be offered to children on the waiting list, following the same criteria as when places were first offered. The waiting list will be kept open until the last day of the autumn term.

Admissions to schools other than at the normal time of admission

- 10.1 Admissions to schools other than at the normal admission age are managed in accordance with the arrangements set out for the admission at the normal time of admission. Parents will be invited to express a preference for one or more schools. Preferences for foundation or voluntary aided schools will be forwarded to the relevant governing bodies for consideration.
- 10.2 If a parent expresses a preference for one or more community schools, the Authority will request from the Headteacher of the child's current or previous school, information relating to the child's curriculum record, attendance and behaviour. This information together with a copy of the parent's preference form and any relevant documentation from other agencies such as the Education Social Welfare Service will then be forwarded to the Headteacher of the school(s) requested for comments. The Director of Children's Services will then decide whether or not to offer a place at the school.
- 10.3 The governing body of an aided all ability school will inform the Authority within 10 school days of receipt of the preference form whether they will offer a place.
- 10.4 If a parent expresses a preference for one or more of the foundation or voluntary aided grammar schools then their child will be assessed by the school or schools concerned and a decision made by the governing body as to whether to offer a place. The governing body will inform the Authority of the outcome of the application.
- 10.5 If there are places available in more than one of the preferred schools the Authority will offer the child the school of their parent's highest preference. Parents will be informed by the Director of Children's Services of the school allocated in writing. The letter will also inform the parent of their right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.

FAIR ACCESS OR IN YEAR ADMISSIONS PROTOCOL

1. All requests for places in year will be considered with reference to the Authority's current admission arrangements. The vast majority of requests will be agreed or refused with reference to two important factors: parental preference, and the availability of places within the relevant year group.
2. Where places are available in the relevant year group it is unlawful to refuse a parent's preference on the grounds of a pupil's previously poor attendance or behaviour. The School Admissions Code of Practice 2008 restricts refusal of parental preference to those situations where schools are either in special measures or have recently come out of special measures.
3. In view of the "Guidance on Hard to Place Children" (DfES 2004 and the subsequent Guidance on Fair Access Protocols 2007), there are a small group of pupils for whom the normal arrangements will be varied. These are as follows:
 - (a) Looked After Children will be placed in the school of their carers preference irrespective of the availability of places in the year group. However, the Authority will give careful consideration to the reasons given in support of a preference and monitor the flow of such requests.
 - (b) Children who have recently experienced a traumatic family or domestic event or for whom there are clear medical grounds to support placement in a particular secondary school. Such cases will be discussed in detail with the headteacher concerned before placement is confirmed. Again such placements will be made above the published admission number if necessary.

(All pupils in categories (a) and (b) have to meet the appropriate standard for admission to grammar school. There would also be a requirement on the relevant admission's authority to consider any religious reasons given in support of a placement request).

4. There is a small group of pupils for whom placement and transfer requests are problematic because of their poor records of attendance or behaviour. Headteachers should not support transfer requests for such pupils but should refer the case to the Principal Officer (Admissions and Exclusions). A decision will then be taken on whether the possibility of a 'managed move' to an alternative school should be discussed with headteachers and the parent. For pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and on the roll of a Wirral school it is open to the headteacher to refer the case to the Principal Officer (Admissions and Exclusions) to consider the possibility of a managed transfer.
5. Pupils in category 4 above who have moved to live on the Wirral will have their parent's request considered with reference to the normal admission arrangements. It is unlawful to refuse their preference if there are places available in the relevant year group.
6. Pupils who have been permanently excluded will normally be placed on the roll of WASP (Wirral Alternative School Provision). In a minority of cases where the exclusion was as the result of a 'one off incident' such pupils will be transferred immediately to an alternative school. Such transfers will be agreed with the parent and relevant headteacher. All secondary schools will take a minimum number of 1, or the number of permanent exclusions in the previous academic year, as the agreed quota of permanently excluded pupils for placement.

The majority of such pupils will have spent some time in the relevant alternative base or PRU. The transfer to a school will be decided at the Wirral Excluded Pupils Monitoring Panel (WEMP) on which headteachers are represented. All such placements will be initially on a trial basis for a minimum of six weeks. Confirmation of placement or the school roll will be subject to satisfactory report.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFERS AND PLACEMENTS

The Authority coordinates all parental requests for in-year transfers and placements.

1. Upon receipt of a transfer request Pupil Services staff will establish whether or not the request has been discussed with the headteacher of the pupil's current school.

If this is not the case, parents will be advised to contact the headteacher to discuss their request.

2. If the parents have discussed the request with the headteacher the transfer request form will be acknowledged and parents informed that Pupil Services will request completion of appropriate documentation to forward to their preferred school. Requests for transfer in Y10 and Y11 will be discouraged on educational grounds, but parents have the ultimate right to proceed with the request.
3. The Transfer of Information Form will be sent to the pupil's current school for completion. The headteacher of the school must sign this information form. The form should be returned to Pupil Services within 10 school days.
4. Upon receipt of the Transfer Request Form from the current school the decision will be taken either to refuse or to proceed.
5. If it is decided to proceed with the request, all relevant documentation will be forwarded to the requested school and the headteacher asked for comments. This documentation should include the parents' request form, reports from the current school and any other information from ESWs, Social Workers, EPs etc. (In the case of a voluntary aided or foundation school the request will be forwarded to the governors of the school).
6. The headteacher of the requested school should reply to the Authority within 5 school days, with comments expressing any reservations regarding admission of the pupil. The Authority will enter into discussion with the headteacher regarding any reservations. These discussions should be undertaken within 5 school days. Where it would be helpful, the Principal Officer (Admissions and Exclusions) may facilitate meetings between the parents and the schools involved in order to resolve any difficulties.
7. For Community Schools the Authority will consider all available information and decide whether to agree or refuse the request. For Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools a decision will be communicated to Pupil Services.

8. If the request is agreed headteachers will be informed of the decision, with any relevant explanation. Parents will be informed in writing and advised to contact the headteacher of the new school to arrange admission.
9. If the request is refused headteachers are informed of the decision and parents are informed in writing and given details of their statutory right to appeal. If a parent lodges an appeal, copies of the relevant documentation will be sent to the preferred school.
10. The time taken for a transfer request to be processed should be as short as possible. The Authority guarantees that parents will be informed of the outcome of their request within 15 school days.