

**SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION
ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOLS
FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-2014**

This scheme fulfils the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Wirral 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 in the academic year 2013/14 and for subsequent years, subject to any review.

The co-ordinated scheme applies to all schools, excluding special schools, maintained by Wirral Council and to preferences expressed by Wirral resident parents and carers for schools maintained by other English local authorities, academies and free schools. Admissions to other schools with independent status are not be covered by this scheme.

1.0 Applications for school places for admission into Year 7 - the normal admission round

1.1 Wirral Authority will act as the co-ordinating authority for all applications. Offers will be made by Wirral Council, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

Admissions Authority	Category of School
Wirral Council	All Wirral community schools
Governing body of school	All Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust and Academy schools
Maintaining Local Authority	Non-Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools

1.2 The admission arrangements for schools maintained by Wirral Council are published on the Council's website and in its information booklets, in line with the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code (2009). The Authority's information booklets

will be available electronically on the Council's website from 1 September. Hard copies will be available in primary schools, or will be obtainable by request from the Local Authority at the start of the autumn term. Admissions arrangements are also available from each school on request.

- 1.3 All parents who live in the area administered by Wirral 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. Paper forms will be generated and distributed by the Mainstream Admissions team of the Children & Young People's Department to the parents of Year 6 pupils in September. On-line applications are made through the Council's website.

The form provides an opportunity for the parent to:

- apply for up to 5 schools
- rank the schools applied for in order of preference

- 1.4 Applications for places sent direct by parents and carers to individual schools cannot be accepted and must be sent to the Local Authority for inclusion within these arrangements.

- 1.5 Preference forms should be returned to the Children and Young People's Department by 31st October to ensure the allocation of a school place on 1st March. Applications received after the published deadline of 31st October will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 1st March.

- 1.6 **Applications from separated parents.** We will accept only one application per child. It is essential that agreement is reached by the parents of a child 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".

- 1.7. **Changes of address.** Parents and carers must inform the Authority immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form. The Authority will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed; e.g. A letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date; A signed rental agreement showing the start of the tenancy and its duration. In addition the Local Authority may request further information – for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property. Information and supporting evidence must be received by 1st January. Proof of

residency received after 31st October will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date.

2.0 Dealing with Applications

- 2.1 The Authority will, by applying the Council's admissions criteria, rank the order of priority of each application for community schools.
- 2.2 The Authority will provide Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided Schools with details of applicants for their school by 22nd November. Details of preferences 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 22 November.
- 2.3 Preference ranking will not be shared with school admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.76 of the School Admissions Code 2009 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.
- 2.4 The Governing Bodies of Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools will rank each application by applying the school's admission criteria and are required to notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their ranking by 16th December.
- 2.5 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the Authority will allocate the highest priority preference.
- 2.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will notify the Governing Bodies of Wirral Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools of those pupils who will provisionally be allocated places at their school by 1st February.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 On 23rd February Wirral Authority will inform schools and neighbouring Authorities of the final allocations. Letters will be posted to parents by second class post on 1 March.

3.0 Determination of applications for Community schools

- 3.1 Each secondary school has a published admission number. Places will be allocated up to but not beyond this number.
- 3.2 All children who have applied before 31st October will be eligible for a place so long as there is space within the school's admission number. If there are more

applications than there are places available, then eligibility for community schools will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities:

- (a) Children in care, and children who were in care but have been adopted or are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order (“previously 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 of statutory school age (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when the pupil starts school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school.
- (d) Pupils who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child’s home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Authority’s electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system.

3.3 If places remain available at the school after all “on time” applicants have been allocated, places will then be allocated to late applications received after 31st October in date order of receipt up to the school’s admission number.

3.4 **Multiple births.** For community schools, 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 too even if that means going above the admission number.

3.5 Applications for Academy, Foundation, Trust and Aided schools will be determined by the governing bodies of these schools in accordance with their published admission criteria.

3.6 **Mandatory Allocation.** Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the schools applied for, children resident in Wirral will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate Wirral school where there are places available. “Appropriate “ means community school if the parents’ preferences indicate preferences for non-denominational education; or a Catholic school if the parents indicated a preference for education in a school of that denomination. The nearest school will be measured on shortest walking distance using the Authority’s electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system.

3.7 **Special Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school.

4.0 **Admission to Grammar Schools**

4.1 Admissions authorities for the grammar schools in Wirral will allocate places only 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.

4.2 **Request for Assessment.** Parents who wish their child to be assessed for grammar school education should inform the Children and Young People's Department by 7th May in Year 5 using the Request for Assessment form.

4.4 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 Academy schools, they have criteria to determine which children will be given places if more children achieve the standard than there are places available.

4.5 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.

4.6 **The selection tests.** The assessment is based on the results of two verbal reasoning tests that pupils take in September of Year 6. 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 is not necessary. However, we will provide a familiarisation pack by 31st May to help children prepare for the tests. Two practice tests will also take place in September of Year 6 prior to the real 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.

4.7 **Referral to Independent Assessment Board (IAB).** In October 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 referrals to the IAB 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.

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 30th September. If the child's case is referred to the IAB, the IAB will consider the written information. 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.

4.8 The Board will meet in October before results are sent out to parents, and is made up of four headteachers (two from primary schools, two from grammar schools) and is administered by an officer 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.

4.9 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.

4.10 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 governors use other criteria to decide who should be given places.

4.11 The Authority will send the outcome of the assessment tests and the IAB (where applicable) to parents by second class post by 21st October. Parents who have provided an e-mail address on their request for assessment form will receive their child's test results by e-mail.

5.0 Determination of applications for Foundation, Trust, Academy and Aided schools

- 5.1 The governing bodies of Foundation, Trust, Academy and Aided schools publish their own admission arrangements which include the criteria which they will use to determine priorities if their school is oversubscribed.
- 5.2 **Special Educational Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with a Statement of special educational needs naming the school.

6.0 Offer of Places

- 6.1 Parents resident in Wirral will be informed in writing by second class post by the Director of Children's Services on 1st March of the school allocated to their child.
- 6.2 Where online applications have been received, the parent or carer making the online application can log on to their online account on the published date to view the school place offered and can also request to receive their offer by e-mail.
- 6.3 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 and e-mail will also inform parents of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.
- 6.4 Parents should, wherever possible, submit an appeal within 20 days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

7.0 Late Applications

- 7.1 Preferences which are received on or after 1st November will be dealt with after places have been allocated on 1st March. 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 up to the school's admission number in accordance with the arrangements described in paragraphs 3 and 5.
- 7.2 Late applications for grammar schools will require separate arrangements for testing.
- 7.3 Parents will be notified in writing by the Children and Young People's Department. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, submit an appeal within 20 days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application. Parents and carers must accept or decline the offer of a late place within 10 working days of the offer date.
- 7.4 If places become available before the start of the autumn term, the Authority will re-allocate them up to the school's admission number. If there are more children

interested in a particular school than places available, in the case of Community schools the Authority will use the same criteria to determine priorities as is used 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.

7.5 If at the end of the Summer Term a school is believed to be full, the Authority will close the procedures and make no more reallocations. However, it may be that places will become available at the beginning of or during the Autumn Term. The Authority will keep a waiting list of children whose parents are interested in obtaining a place at the school if a place becomes available, 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.

8.0 **In Year applications outside the normal round of admissions**

8.1 'In year' applications are those made during the school year into any year group, other than at the normal point of entry (i.e. the normal admission round). This will include applications from parents and carers of children moving into the authority from another authority's area, moving within the authority, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.

8.2 Applications for all schools including Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools must be made on a common Secondary School Transfer Form. Parents/carers seeking places 'in year' will be advised to complete their 'home' local authority's common application form stating up to three school preferences ranked in priority order.

8.3 Schools should not deal with transfer application forms. Any forms received by schools should be forwarded to the Mainstream Admissions team in the Children and Young People's Department. The Authority coordinates all parental requests for in-year transfers and placements.

8.4 Upon receipt of a transfer request Mainstream Admissions staff will establish whether or not the parent has discussed the request 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.

8.5 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.

- 8.6 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 will have no bearing on whether a place is offered. The headteacher of the school must sign the form and return it to Mainstream Admissions within 10 school days.
- 8.7 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, social worker, educational psychologists and so on, will then be forwarded to the Headteacher of the requested school(s).
- 8.8 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 Exclusions Officer or Managed Move Officer may facilitate meetings between the parents and the schools involved in order to resolve any difficulties.
- 8.9 For Community Schools the Authority will consider all available information and decide whether to agree or refuse the request within 10 school days of receipt of the application.
- 8.10 The Governing Bodies of Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools will notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their decision whether a place will be offered within 10 school days of receipt of the application.
- 8.11 If a parent expresses a preference for one or more of the 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.
- 8.12 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the parent's highest eligible preference will take precedence. Headteachers will be informed of the decision.
- 8.13 All parents will be informed by the Children and Young People's Department of the school place allocated by letter and advised to contact the headteacher of the school to arrange admission. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible,

make an appeal within 20 days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

8.14 In accordance with the School Admissions Code 2010 admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child solely because:

- (a) they have applied later than other applicants;
- (b) they are not of the faith of the school in the case of a faith school;
- (c) they have followed a different curriculum at their previous school;
- (d) information has not been received from their previous school;
- (e) they have missed entrance tests for selective places.

8.15 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 Admissions Code of Practice 2010 restricts refusal of parental preference to those situations where schools are either in special measures or have recently come out of special measures.

8.16 If the request is refused headteachers are informed of the decision and parents are informed in writing and given details of their legal right to appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application. If a parent lodges an appeal, copies of the relevant documentation will be sent to the preferred school.

8.17 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.

8.18 **Children of UK service personnel.** Places for these children will be allocated in advance if accompanied by an official letter with a relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address.

8.19 **Overseas applications.** Parents who have already moved to the UK from overseas who are British or European Economic Area nationals, or who have an endorsed passport showing right of abode, can apply for places for their child at any school covered by this scheme. The Authority may ask to see passports for verification.

Parents or children in these categories who do not yet live in the UK can apply before the date they move to the UK. However, the address to be used in the allocation of a place will be the address that the child is living at on the closing date, unless a subsequent house move has been accepted up to the last date for changes in the

coordinated scheme. A UK address will only be used once the child is residing at that address, and evidence will be required of this, as in paragraph 1.7 of this document.

9.0 The Fair Access Protocol

9.1 All requests for in-year places will be considered with reference to the Authority's current admission arrangements and procedures for in year placements. The 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.

9.2 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; admissions authorities will be expected to admit the following categories of pupils above the admission number. These are as follows:

- Children in care will be placed in the school of their carer's 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.
- 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.
- Children of refugees and asylum seekers, homeless children, children with unsupportive family backgrounds where a place has not been sought.
- Children without a school place and with a history of serious attendance problems.
- Traveller children.
- Children who are carers
- Children who have been out of education for two months or more
- Children from the criminal justice system or pupil referral units who are being reintegrated into mainstream education

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.

9.3 **Permanent Exclusions.** 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

Exclusions Officer to consider the possibility of a managed move. The Managed Move protocol is covered by a separate document, available on request.

- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 The majority of such pupils will have spent some time in the relevant alternative base or Pupil Referral Unit. 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.

Admission Authorities in Wirral	
Wirral Council	
Community Secondary Schools (4)	
Mosslands School	
Pensby High School for Boys	
Pensby High School for Girls	
Wallasey School	
The Governing Bodies of:	
Academy Schools	
Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls (Senior)	
Caldy Grange Grammar School for Boys *	
Hilbre High School *	
Oldershaw School	
Prenton High School for Girls	
Ridgeway High School *	
St Anselm's College	
University Academy of Birkenhead	
Weatherhead High School for Girls *	
West Kirby Grammar School for Girls	
Wirral Grammar School for Boys	
Wirral Grammar School for Girls	
Woodchurch High School *	
Catholic Aided Schools	
St John Plessington Catholic College	
St Mary's Catholic College	
Upton Hall School FCJ	
Foundation Schools	
South Wirral High School	
Trust Schools	
Bebington High School Sports College	

* Status subject to confirmation.

A full list of schools and a map showing locations is provided in the Authority's information booklets for parents, available on-line at:

www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions

The scheme will be amended if there are further changes to the status of schools.