

Children and Young People's
Department

David Armstrong MA
Acting Director

SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE WIRRAL AREA 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 co-ordination of primary school admissions that have been a longstanding feature of local practice.

The scheme applied to arrangements whereby children are to be admitted to primary schools in the academic year 2012/13 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 Foundation 2 – 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 and voluntary controlled 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 (2012). 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 primary schools either in Wirral or in the area of another local authority by completing the Wirral Parental Preference Form. Paper forms will be generated and distributed centrally by the Mainstream Admissions team of the Children & Young People's Department 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 3 schools
- rank the schools applied for in order of preference

1.4 Applications for all schools, including Foundation, Trust, Academy and Voluntary Aided schools must also be made on the common Primary School Application Form.

1.5 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.

1.6 Parents must return forms to the Children and Young People's Department by 15th January to ensure the allocation of a school place on 16th April or next working day (the National Offer date from 2014-15 onwards). Applications received after the

published deadline of 15th January will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 16th April.

- 1.7 Parents can apply for school places only from the 1st September preceding admission to Foundation 2, that is, at the beginning of the academic year in which their child's 4th birthday falls. Children are normally admitted to school at the beginning of the academic year in which their 5th birthday falls.
- 1.8 **Deferred entry and part-time places.** Parents can request deferred entry or part-time attendance up until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday).

Child's age 5 birthdate between	First term of compulsory education
1 st January and 31 st March	Summer term (April)
1 st April and 31 st August	Autumn term (September)
1 st September and 31 st December	Spring term (January)

- 1.9 **Applications from separated parents.** We will accept only one application form 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".
- 1.10 **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 28th February. Proof of residency received after 15th January 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 and voluntary controlled schools.

- 2.2 The Authority will provide Academy and Voluntary Aided Schools with details of those preference forms which include an application for their school by 31st January.
- 2.3 Preference ranking will not be shared with school admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2012 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.
- 2.4 The Governing Bodies of Academy and Voluntary Aided schools will rank each application by applying the school's admission criteria and notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their ranking by 24th February.
- 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 Academy and Voluntary Aided primary schools of those pupils who will be allocated places at their school by 9th April.
- 2.7 In March we will inform neighbouring LA's of any pupils who are not resident in Wirral and to whom the Authority can offer places at Wirral schools.

3.0 Determination of applications for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools

- 3.1 **Allocation of places.** Applications for all Community schools and also for Bidston Village CE Primary School, Holy Trinity CE Primary School (Hoylake), Millfields CE Primary School and St Bridget's CE Primary School (West Kirby) will be determined on the following basis:
- 3.1.1 All children who have applied before 15th January 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 will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities:
- 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")
 - Then children who live in the school's catchment zone in the following priority order:

- Children who already have older brothers or sisters (including half or step siblings living in the same household) at the school when they are due to start 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. We will also treat a brother or sister at a corresponding junior school as a sibling.
- 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 school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence.
- Children 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.

3.1.2 If places remain available, eligibility for children do not live in the school's catchment area will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities.

- Children who already have older brothers or sisters (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when they are due to start 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. We will also treat a brother or sister at a corresponding junior school as a sibling.
- 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 school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence.
- 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.

- 3.1.3 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 15th January in date order of receipt up to the school’s admission number. See paragraph 5.0 below.
- 3.2 Christ Church CE Primary School in Birkenhead shares part of its catchment zone with two other schools - Woodchurch Road Primary School and Woodlands Primary School. We give priority as detailed above in 3.1.1- 3.1.3.
- 3.3 **Aided schools and Academies.** Applications for Academy schools and the Catholic and Church of England voluntary aided schools will be determined by the governing bodies of these schools in accordance with their published admission criteria.
- 3.4 **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 or C of E 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.
- 3.5 **Special Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school.

4.0 Offer of Places

- 4.1 Parents resident in Wirral will be informed by the Director of Children’s Services of the school allocated in writing by second class post on 16th April or next working day. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 If places become available before the start of the autumn term, the Authority will allocate them to children whose parents have either lodged an appeal but not been successful or who have expressed a continuing interest in a place at the school concerned. Parents can do this by returning the reply slip attached to the allocation

letter or by e-mail to the address indicated in the letter. If there are more children interested in a particular school than places available, the Authority will use the same criteria to determine priorities as is used for the initial allocation.

4.4 Children whose parents applied before 15th January will have priority over children whose parents applied after that date, provided they tell us that they continue to want a place at that school.

4.5 All offers of places for schools covered by the scheme will be issued by the Authority.

5.0 Late applications

5.1 Applications received after the published deadline of 15th January will be dealt with after the offer of places have been sent to parents on 16th April or next working day. We will send details of late applications for academy and voluntary aided schools to the governors of the schools concerned by 23rd April or, for applications received after that date, within five days of receipt.

5.2 We will deal with preferences for community and voluntary controlled schools in the date order we receive them. We will allocate places up to the school's admission number. If we receive several applications on the same day for the same school, we will use the scheme of priorities given in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above.

5.3 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 for any Wirral school and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, where possible, lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.

5.4 Applications for Catholic or Church of England Aided Primary Schools and the Academy received after the published deadline of 15th January will be determined by reference to the schools' published admission arrangements and the governors will inform the Children and Young People's Department of the outcome of the applications. 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, where possible, lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.

5.5 Parents and carers must accept or decline the offer of a late place within 10 working days of the offer date.

6.0 Waiting Lists

- 6.1 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. The Authority will write to the parents of those children included in paragraph 4.3 who have expressed a continuing interest. This waiting list will be held open during the Autumn Term. Priority on the waiting list for community and controlled schools will be given to children in accordance with the criteria given in paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. Each added child requires the waiting list to be ranked again in line with the published admission criteria.
- 6.2 The Authority will contact parents directly if a vacancy does occur. Schools must not notify parents that a place has become available but must inform the Authority in order that an offer can be made by the home Authority. The Authority will cease to hold the Foundation 2 waiting list at the end of the Autumn Term.

7.0 In Year applications outside the normal round of admissions

- 7.1 '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.
- 7.2 Applications for all schools including Academy and Voluntary Aided schools must be made on a common Primary 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.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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.

7.5 If the parents have discussed the request with the headteacher the transfer request form will be acknowledged and parents informed that the Mainstream Admissions team will request completion of appropriate documentation to forward to their preferred school. Requests for transfer in Y6 other than moves from outside Wirral will be discouraged on educational grounds, but parents have the ultimate right to proceed with the request.

7.6 We arrange for children in Years 1 and 2 to start at a community or voluntary controlled primary school in a similar way as Foundation 2 (Reception) age children. The appropriate year group is determined by the chronological age of the child.

Key Stage 1 - We will offer children places at their catchment school as long as this will not bring the class size to more than 30 and if we cannot offer an alternative school place within two miles of the parents home address.

We will agree a place in an out-of-zone school as long as:

- i) there is room within the admission number; and
- ii) there are not already 30 children in the class.

Where a school, which is below its admission number, has organised its Key Stage 1 into classes of 30 and the only way to admit another child would require the Authority to take Qualifying Measures (that is, it would require the Authority to provide additional resources in terms of staff and accommodation at the school), these are grounds on which the Authority may refuse an application.

Key Stage 2 – Children are automatically entitled to a place at their catchment school even though the school may be on or above its admission number.

We will agree a place in an out-of-zone school as long as there is room within the admission number.

7.7 **Infant Class Size limit exceptions**

There are a limited number of exceptions to the Infant Class Size limit of 30. These children remain an excepted pupil for the time they are in an infant class, or until the class numbers fall back to the infant class size limit. They are:

- Children with statements of special educational need (SEN) admitted outside the normal admission round
- Looked after children and previously looked after children
- Children admitted because of a procedural error made by any admission authority in the original application process
- Children admitted following an appeal upheld by an independent appeals panel
- Children who move into a catchment area outside the normal admission round for whom there is no other school place within a shortest walking distance of 2 miles
- Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admission round
- Twins and children from multiple births when one of the siblings is the 30th child admitted
- Children with SEN who are normally taught in an SEN unit attached to the school or who are registered with a special school, but attend some infant classes within a mainstream school

7.7 **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.

7.8 **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 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 1.10 of this document.

- 7.9 **Waiting Lists.** The Authority will not keep waiting lists for places in Year 1 and above. Parents may wish to contact schools directly to establish whether there is space in their child's year group prior to completing an in year transfer request form. The Authority will confirm the availability of a place with the school before issuing a formal offer of a place. Schools must not offer places to parents.
- 7.10 The Authority will provide Voluntary Aided Schools and the Academy with copies of those application forms which include a preference for their school.
- 7.11 The Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided schools and the Academy will consider each application by applying the school's admission criteria and notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their decision within 5 days of receipt of the application.
- 7.12 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the parent's highest priority eligible preference will take precedence.
- 7.13 All parents will be informed by the Children and Young People's Department of the school place allocated by letter. 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 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.
- 7.14 If the relevant body is refusing admission the Local Authority will write to the parent advising them that the application has been refused and informing the parent of the legal right to appeal against the decision. Where a house move from outside the area or within Wirral is the reason for requesting an in year transfer and none of the preferred schools are able to offer a place, the Authority will, where possible, indicate on the refusal letter the nearest appropriate school with vacancies at the time of application, where "nearest" uses the shortest walking distance from the Authority's electronic Ordnance Survey address point based routing system. 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 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

8.0 Pupils transferring from Infant to Junior Schools

- 8.1 All children who are on roll at one of the Infant Schools listed below at the time of transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 are eligible to transfer to the linked junior even if they

do not live in the school's catchment area. Children who live in the catchment area of the Junior School are also eligible.

Black Horse Hill Infant School to Black Horse Hill Junior School

Brackenwood Infant School to Brackenwood Junior School

Greasby Infant School to Greasby Junior School

Overchurch Infant School to Overchurch Junior School

Town Lane Infant School to Higher Bebington Junior school

8.2 Admissions to St John's Junior School are detailed by the governing body in accordance with the school's admission arrangements.

9.0 The Fair Access Protocol

9.1 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. This must not, however, cause an infant class to exceed 30, except in the case of children in care. These are as follows:

- Children in care and previously 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. These children can be admitted as excepted pupils in infant classes which would otherwise be subject to qualifying measures.
- 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 school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence.
- Children of refugees and asylum seekers, homeless children and 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.

- 9.2 **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 child to Gilbrook Outreach Service.
- 9.3 Pupils who have been permanently excluded will normally be placed on the roll of Gilbrook School or WASP (Wirral Alternative School Provision). Schools should contact the Exclusions Officer as soon as the exclusion has taken place. The Exclusions Officer will consider whether the pupil can be transferred immediately to an alternative primary school. Such transfers will be agreed with the parent and relevant headteacher. All primary 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.
- 9.4 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.

Admissions Authorities in Wirral

Wirral Council

Community Primary Schools (60)

Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools (5)

The Governing Bodies of:

Academy Schools

Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls (Junior)

Church of England Aided Primary Schools

Christ Church (Moreton) CE Primary School

Dawpool CE Primary School

St Andrew's CE Primary School

St Peter's CE Primary School

St Saviour's CE Primary School

The Priory CE Primary School

Woodchurch CE Primary School

Catholic Aided Primary Schools

Christ The King Catholic Primary School

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Ladymount Catholic Primary School

Our Lady and St Edwards Catholic Primary School

Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

St John's Catholic Infant School
St John's Catholic Junior School
St Joseph's (Birkenhead) Catholic Primary School
St Joseph's (Upton) Catholic Primary School
St Joseph's (Wallasey) Catholic Primary School
St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School
St Paul's Catholic Primary School
St Peter & St Paul Catholic Primary School
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School
Joint Denominational Aided Primary Schools
Holy Spirit Catholic and CE Primary School

A full list and map is provided in the Authority's information booklets for parents, available on-line at www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions.