

Appendix 4

Feedback on the Wirral Fair Access Protocol

Feedback	Commentary	Amendment?	Related section
Primary headteacher for primary cases	Already included	No	Appendix A (1)
Elective Home Education	Whilst it is a serious decision that should not be taken lightly, all parents have a legal right to educate their child at home. Some parents of home educated children will subsequently seek to return their child to mainstream education. Where a child in this position has been refused a place at the preferred school(s), they may be referred to the Fair Access Panel, principally under criterion (I) although others may also apply. Such referrals would usually be supported by the Council's Attendance Team where home education has been deemed to be unsuitable. The Wirral Fair Access Panel has a standing unwritten procedural agreement where, unless there are strong grounds to decide otherwise, the Panel would ordinarily decide that the child should return to their previous school. Strong grounds might for example include a house move so that the travel distance is now unreasonable, or where there are serious safeguarding or other concerns.	Yes	5.4
Reasonable Distance	The reasonable travel distance from home to school is under 2 miles for children under 8 years old, and under 3 miles for children and young people aged 8 and over. The Panel may also take into account the child's circumstances in deciding whether the distance is reasonable.	Yes	New paragraph 4.2
Panel minutes	There are no minutes from the Panel – a decision record is made however this identifies individual pupils and is not suitable for circulation. Schools receive individual notifications about any pupils where the Panel has decided a place should be offered via the Clerk or Admissions team. The overall net loss/gain is captured in the Grid which is provided to schools (see below). Any Headteacher who is not a Panel member may attend as a non-participatory observer on request, at the discretion of the Panel Chair.	No	Appendix A (1) and A (7) refers
Termly sharing of the Grid	The Grid weights transfers as +1 or -1 to provide a net gain/loss by school and year group. It is cumulative, calculated ahead of each Panel meeting, and takes into account Managed Moves; permanent exclusions; reintegrations from alternative provision and Fair Access decisions.	Yes	New item Appendix B(10)

Background from out of area schools	The Wirral Admissions team requests background information for secondary aged pupils requesting a transfer to a Wirral school. This is a locally agreed procedure, not a requirement and is not enforceable with out of area or overseas schools – it is not part of the Fair Access Protocol. The Fair Access Criteria are the same for every school in England. The background information request form has been amended to ask the current/previous school’s attention to relay any Fair Access issues they may be aware of, when their response to the request. The Protocol itself does not require an amendment.	No	Background request form amended
Other	Commentary	Amendment?	Related section
“Opt-out” schools still part of Protocol	The Protocol says that there will be a single point of entry for all in-year admissions. However, the 2021 Admissions Code introduced an opt-in system where own admission authority schools must actively opt-in to in-year co-ordination. To date, only one Wirral school – Upton Hall School FCJ - has decided to opt-out of in-year co-ordination. The Fair Access Protocol continues to apply to all opted-out schools and the Protocol has been amended to further clarify this.	Yes	3.1(b) and Appendix A(5)