

WAKEFIELD LA

PROPOSED

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2012/2013
COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

Elaine McHale
Corporate Director, Family Services

PROPOSED WAKEFIELD LA ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR THE 2012/13 SCHOOL YEAR

Glossary of Terms

“the LA” means Wakefield Metropolitan District Council acting in its capacity as local authority.

“the LA area” means the area in respect of which the LA is the local authority.

“school” means a community school, or voluntary controlled school. Community special schools are not covered by the policy.

“specified year” means the school year beginning at or around the beginning of September 2012.

“admission authority” in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the LA. The governing bodies of foundation (trust) and aided schools are the admission authorities for those schools.

“admission arrangements” means the arrangements for a particular school or schools which govern the procedures and the decision making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school.

Admissions to Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

The policy on admissions to community and voluntary controlled schools are determined by the Council following consultation with governing bodies. The administration of admissions is the responsibility of the School Admissions Team within Family Services.

Expressing a Preference

In the case of applications for admission to primary, infant and junior schools within the Wakefield area, applications from Wakefield residents should be made on Wakefield’s Common Application Form. Attendance at a nursery unit or co-located children’s centre attached to a primary/infant school or part-time attendance at a school below compulsory school age does not guarantee a place at that school. Applications for these part time places must be made separately to the school/centre concerned and are covered by the school’s separate part-time admissions policy. A separate application must then be made to the LA for a compulsory aged school place in line with the requirements of the Primary Co-ordination Scheme.

For admission to secondary schools, applications from Wakefield residents should be made on Wakefield’s Common Application Form.

Applications, at any time, from residents outside the Wakefield District should be made in accordance with the applicant’s “home” LA’s Common Application Form.

Repeat applications made for entry to the same year group at the same school will not be considered unless there has been a material change in circumstances since the original application. School Admissions will determine if there has been a material change in circumstances. Examples of a material change include a change of address. Where information was known at the time of the original application, or appeal, but parents chose not to use it, this information will not be considered as additional information or a change in circumstances.

Where parents submit a Common Application Form under a Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme, whether in the normal admissions round or in-year, which names more than one community or voluntary controlled school, all applications will be treated equally and eligibility for a school place will be decided in accordance with this Admissions Policy.

The Admissions Policy

If the number of preferences received for a school does not exceed the Admission Number, all preferences will be met (see explanatory note 1).

All applications received will be considered in the following order:

1. Applications received by the closing date in the normal admissions round:
 - for secondary applications the closing date is **31 October 2011**; and
 - for primary applications the closing date is **15 January 2012**.
2. For late applications received between the closing date for the normal admissions round and the end of the summer term the following dates will apply:
 - applications for secondary places received up to and including **26 November 2011** will be accepted as if they had been received by the closing date;
 - applications for primary places received up to and including **14 February 2012** will be accepted as if they had been received by the closing date.

Applications received after these dates will be regarded as late applications and will be considered after all applications received on time.

If there are more applications for admission to a school than there are places available, preference will be given in the following order:

- (a) Children in Public Care (Looked after Children) (see note 6);
- (b) (i) Children who live in the school's catchment area, who have brothers and sisters attending the school at the time of admission (see explanatory note 4);

- (ii) Other children who live in the school's catchment area (see explanatory note 2);
- (iii) Children who live in that part of the primary school's catchment area which is designated as an option area (see explanatory note 3);
- (c) Children who have brothers or sisters in attendance at the school (see explanatory note 4);
- (d) Other children, with priority being given to those living nearest to the school.

In all categories "live" means the child's permanent home address. A child is normally regarded as living with a parent or guardian and the LA will use the parent or guardian's address for admission purposes. An applicant cannot lodge a child with a friend or relation in order to gain a place at a school.

In all categories, when decisions have to be made between children satisfying the same criterion, children living nearest to the school, measured as the crow flies, have priority. The distance measured will be from the central (centroid) point of the applicant's property to the central (centroid) point of the school's ground. Measurement will be made using the LA's in-house admission system and mapping software.

Where there is more than one application from a postal address contained within a block of flats, places will be decided by random allocation.

If two or more pupils live equidistant from the school, the distance each pupil lives by road from the preferred school will be measured and the place offered to the pupil who lives nearest by this means. In the event of this being equal, places will then be decided by random allocation.

Where a family of twins or triplets request admission and there is only one school place available, it will be left to the family to decide whether or not they wish to take up the place for one of their children and appeal for the second or third child in the same year group, or to decline the place.

For admissions purposes only one address can be used as a child's permanent address. Where a child resides with more than one parent/carer, at different addresses, the LA will use the preference expressed by the parent/carer at the address where the child lives the majority of the time during the school week as the main place of residence.

Children will be placed in the appropriate category depending upon their circumstances at the closing date for receiving applications for admission to school. Changes in address will be accepted in accordance with the provisions of the Secondary and Primary Co-ordination Schemes. In cases where there is an anticipated change in circumstances, documentary evidence will be required. In the event of any category being over-subscribed, places will be offered in the order of priority (a)-(d) detailed above.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs are dealt with under a different mechanism. Any child with a school named on their statement will automatically gain a place at the school named in the statement via the statementing process. Any child with a statement of special education needs who is admitted to a mainstream community/voluntary controlled school will be counted against that school's admission number.

Special Educational Needs is a term used if a child has difficulty accessing the curriculum, which may mean that he/she may need to have some form of specialist provision made for them in order to learn. It may be a general learning difficulty, an emotional, behavioural, sensory or physical disability or it may be a difficulty related to communication or speech and language. Further information can be obtained from SEN Group or Parent Partnership.

The Offer of a Place at a School

Decisions will be posted 2nd class to parents on the following days:

Secondary schools : **1 March 2012**

Primary, infant & junior schools : **11 April 2012**

Parents who have applied electronically will be able to access their offer of a school place via the on-line website after 12.00 midnight on the respective offer date.

Point of Entry

For junior and secondary schools, pupils will start school in the in-take year (i.e. Y7 for secondary schools and Y3 for junior schools) on the first day the school is open following 1 September 2012.

For infant/primary schools, those pupils with a date of birth between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2008 will start school on the first day the school is open following 1 September 2012.

These arrangements do not apply to those pupils being admitted for nursery provision including nursery provision in a co-located children's centre (see explanatory note 7).

Deferred Entry to Primary Schools

Where the LA offers a place at a primary or infant school, a parent who accepts that school place can defer entry to that school until the term after the child's fifth birthday.

There may be spring and summer term admissions as a result of parents who have deferred their child's entry.

Any deferred place at the school will be held for that child and will not be available to be offered to another child and the deferred place must be taken up

during the same school year for which the offer of the school place was made and accepted. Entry to a school cannot be deferred to the next academic year or beyond the beginning of the term following the child's fifth birthday.

Parents can also request that their child attends school part time instead of full time until the child reaches statutory school age. Schools must accommodate such requests where it appears to be in the best interest of the child.

Unsuccessful Applications

If a Wakefield pupil is not successful in securing a place at any school he/she has preferred, a school place will be allocated in accordance with the Wakefield Co-ordinated Admission Arrangement Scheme.

Any parent whose child is not offered a school place for which they have expressed a preference has the right to an independent appeal panel.

Waiting Lists

Pupils will be added to the waiting lists of community and voluntary controlled schools where they were refused a place in accordance with the provisions of either the Primary or Secondary Co-ordination Schemes or In-Year Co-ordination Schemes.

Places will be allocated from the waiting list when the number of pupils in the relevant year group falls below the admission number for that school. Waiting lists will be kept in strict priority order against the Admission Policy above.

In-Year Admissions

All applications made outside the normal admissions round (i.e. in-year applications) for community and voluntary controlled schools should be made on the Wakefield's Common Application Form, which is available from the School Admissions Team. Applications will be processed in accordance with the "In Year Co-ordination Scheme". Parents can express up to 3 school preferences.

Where there are sufficient places, an application will normally be agreed. The Admission Number for a school is set for the school's in-take year. As a general rule, this admission number then remains with that year group as it moves through the school. There may be exceptions, for example, if accommodation in a school is removed, then the admission number may change for subsequent year groups.

If a place is not available, a refusal letter is sent outlining the rights of appeal. If the application is from a Wakefield resident then a place will be allocated at the next nearest community and voluntary controlled school with places. Should the child be already attending a Wakefield school then no school will be offered as an alternative. The child's name will be added to the waiting list for the school in the order against the Admissions Policy above.

Should a vacancy arise at the school, the place will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list.

Fair Access Protocol

The LA has agreed a Fair Access Protocol with its primary and secondary schools. This means that, in some circumstances, pupils defined in the Protocol will have a higher priority for admission to schools and/or year groups, which are already full, than all other pupils seeking admission to that school. Full details of the Protocol can be obtained from the LA.

6th Form Applications

The following community or voluntary controlled schools in Wakefield have a sixth form provision:

Hemsworth Arts and Community College; and
Minsthorpe Community College, A Specialist Science College.

Each school is required to publish a separate admissions policy for entry into Year 12.

Application for admission to the sixth form, including pupils currently attending the school, must be made via the online prospectus and common application process (www.applywakefield.org.uk).

A pupil will only be admitted to the sixth form of a school provided they meet the sixth form admission criteria of the school preferred.

False Information

Any place offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, e.g. giving a false address, will be withdrawn. It is for the parents or guardian to satisfy the LA of their circumstances, as they apply to the admission criteria at the time of application.

Explanatory Notes

1. Admission Numbers

Each maintained school has an Admission Number (AN) for each “relevant age” group. The admission number for each year group is set with regard to the capacity assessment for the school taking into account the nature and type of school buildings and provides for an acceptable amount of space for each pupil. Each year, the LA consults with the Governing Body of the school before the AN is set. In the case of year of entry, a child may not normally be refused admission to a school on the grounds of prejudice to efficient education or the efficient use of resources unless the number of applications for admission exceeds the admission number, or a child is offered a school which is ranked higher on a Common Application Form under the respective Co-ordinated Admissions Policy.

2. Catchment Areas

The LA believes it is important that schools should serve their local communities and so each one has its own catchment area. However, parents are required to express a preference, stating their choice of school, even if this is the catchment area school.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that there will be a place for every child in its catchment area school, it cannot be guaranteed that this will always be the case.

If parents are in any doubt about the catchment area school for the area in which they live, they need to contact their local school or the School Admissions Team at County Hall. Further information is also available for parents in the Secondary and Primary Guide for Parents.

3. Option Areas (Primary schools only)

The home addresses of some parents may fall into an area that forms part of the catchment area of two schools. Parents will be informed if they live in such a designated 'option area' and will be asked to indicate their preferred school.

4. Brothers and Sisters

This category includes children with brothers or sisters (including step-brothers or sisters residing at the same address) of statutory school age, living at the same address, in attendance at the same school, or a school on the same site, on the date of admission.

5. Families Living Outside the District Boundary

Children from families living outside the Wakefield Metropolitan District boundary will be considered alongside those who live within the Wakefield Metropolitan District.

6. Children in Care

This refers to children who are:

- subject to a care order made by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - for the courts to grant a care order they have to be satisfied that a child is suffering or would suffer 'significant harm' without one; and
- Children who are accommodated by the local authority on a voluntary basis under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

7. Point of Entry

Parents of children who are admitted for nursery provision must apply for a place at the school if they want their child to transfer to reception class.

Attendance at nursery or a co-located children's centre does not guarantee admission to school.