



## **HALTON LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHEME: CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS – 2011/12 ACADEMIC YEAR CONSULTATION**

- 1.0** This document is intended to fulfil the statutory requirements for admissions into reception classes in maintained infant and primary schools.
- 1.1** The DCSF School Admissions Code and associated regulations require some changes to the admission to primary school process for 2011, and schools and governing bodies must familiarise themselves with the new requirements to ensure that they comply with this scheme.
- 2.0** This Co-ordinated Primary Scheme applies to all those schools detailed on pages 7 and 8 of this document. Halton Borough Council (as the Local Authority - LA) is the Admission Authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools, and the Governing Body of each voluntary aided, academy, or trust school is the admission authority for the school.
- 3.0** The first important change the DCSF has introduced to the admissions process for the 2011 intake is that parents/carers **must** complete their home LA's preference form, therefore if a non-Halton resident is seeking admission to a Halton school, (or vice-versa) they must complete their own authority's form which will then be forwarded to the relevant authority and LAs will then share any cross border applications for consideration.
- 4.0** Halton residents will be required to complete a Halton preference form and will be given the opportunity to express a preference, with reasons, for up to 3 primary schools regardless of which authority the school is in. The LA must invite applications on the preference form and the preference form must comply with mandatory provisions and the requirements of the Department for Children Schools and Families School Admissions Code. This form will also be available on-line and parents are encouraged to apply for a school place via the Halton Borough Council website at [www.halton.gov.uk](http://www.halton.gov.uk).

- 5.0** Where a Voluntary Aided School requires supporting information e.g. asking for a reference from a priest or other religious minister for a faith school, or details of baptism etc parents may be required to complete a supplementary form and VA schools **must** inform parents of their requirements within their school's published admission arrangements.
- 6.0** Admission authorities (the LA for community and voluntary controlled schools, and governing bodies for voluntary aided, trust and academy schools) **must** ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. In Halton, as statutorily required, an Equal Preference Scheme is operated. Within the equal preference scheme all preferences are considered equally against each school's published admission criteria. After all preferences have been considered if only one school named on the preference form can offer a place the maintaining LA will send out an offer of a place. If more than one school can offer a place parents will be offered a place at whichever of those schools is ranked highest on the preference form. This may not be the first preference school. If a school becomes oversubscribed then places will be allocated in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria.
- 7.0** The second important change that, at the time of writing (October 2009) is being consulted upon by the DCSF, is the admission of children below compulsory school age. In summary the DCSF are proposing that admission authorities **must** provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday and that parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year. In Halton this already happens. However, the DCSF are now proposing that parents can request their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age. Furthermore, the DCSF advise that Admission authorities **must** accommodate these requests where it appears to be in the best interest of the child.
- 7.1** As recommended in the School Admissions Code the LA will allow parents/carers to defer their child's entry to school until the child is of compulsory school age, providing the parent applies, is offered, and accepts the place within the normal admissions timetable, and the place is taken up within the same academic year. It should be noted that if a child is presently attending a nursery class/early years setting they do not have an automatic right to transfer to the primary school to which the nursery/early years setting is attached. Parents/carers are required to indicate a preference for a primary school along with all other parents/carers.

## **8.0 APPLYING FOR A PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACE OR TRANSFERRING FROM INFANT TO JUNIOR SCHOOL FOR SEPTEMBER 2011**

- 8.1** Halton LA publishes an “Admission to Primary School” booklet (a Composite Prospectus). The preference form will be contained within this booklet and the booklet will be issued to all Halton Primary Schools and will be available at Halton Direct Link Offices, Halton Libraries, on line via the council’s website, and upon request from the Student Services Team. The booklet will be issued in **September 2010** and the on-line form will be available at the same time.
- 8.2** The preference form will seek three preferences in ranked order. The preference form must be returned to the Student Services Team within the Children & Young People’s Directorate no later than **15<sup>th</sup> January 2011**. On-line forms must also be completed by this date. This closing date is now a statutorily set closing date, and will move the admissions/allocation process back in comparison to previous years.
- 8.3** Halton resident parents may request information (a prospectus) regarding schools in neighbouring local authorities but **must** complete their preferences on their home LA form.
- 8.4** The Student Services Team will load all preferences onto the database and, week beginning **Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011**, will forward all application details, regardless of whether they are first, second and third preferences to all Voluntary Aided schools, Trust schools and neighbouring LAs where admission is being sought. The Admissions Committee of those governing bodies will be required to meet and determine which pupils will be admitted/declined against their admission criteria. Governing bodies must treat first, second, and third preferences equally against their admissions criteria. Voluntary Aided and Trust schools **must** notify the Student Services Team by **Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011** which pupils have been offered places and which have been declined. School **must** indicate under which criteria each child has been offered/declined a place.
- 8.5** The LA will then undertake a final data exchange with VA and Trust schools and neighbouring LAs to ensure that all children have an allocated school on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
- 8.6** When all preferences have been considered and allocations finalised, Halton LA will write out to all those parents/carers who have applied for a Halton LA community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided or trust school identifying the allocated school. This notification letter will be sent on **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2011** together with details of the appeal process if applicable. Parents/carers will be required to decline any offer of the school place within 10 school days. If the LA does not hear from the parent/carer then it is assumed the place has been accepted.

- 8.7** Parents will have until Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011 to lodge any appeals with the LA.
- 8.8** The above process also applies to the transfer of children from infant to junior schools for admission into the junior school commencing September 2011.

## **9.0 OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

**9.1** If a Halton community or voluntary controlled school becomes oversubscribed, places will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria:

- 1) Children in Public Care – children who are subject to a care order, or are accommodated by the Local Authority
- 2) Siblings – pupils with elder brothers or sisters including half brothers and sisters and unrelated children living together as part of the same household, already attending the school and expected to continue in the following year
- 3) Pupils living nearest to the school measured using an Ordnance Survey address-point system which measures straight-line distances in metres from the address point of the school to the address point of the place of permanent residence of the pupil.

For admission to community and voluntary controlled schools the following notes apply:

a) Children who have a statement of special educational needs will be allocated a place at the school named in the statement. Where a child with a statement is allocated a place this will reduce the number of remaining places available to allocate within the above oversubscription criteria.

b) If oversubscription occurs within any one of the above criteria 1-3, places will be allocated on distance grounds as described within the distance criteria (3) above.

c) Where applications are received for twins, triplets etc, the LA will apply the oversubscription criteria and will oversubscribe the school if a family would otherwise be separated. Parents and schools should note that this does not apply to key stage one (infant classes) where statutory class size limits apply. If only one place is available the place will be offered to the oldest child of multiple birth.

d) The address to be used in measuring distance for the purpose of allocating school places will be the child's permanent home address. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility the LA will use the address of the person receiving Child Benefit for allocation

purposes. Parents may be required to submit evidence of Child Benefit upon request from the LA. It may also be necessary for the Council to carry out checks that the address given is genuine and parents may be requested to produce further documentary evidence of the child's address. The above criteria will apply without reference to the Halton Borough Council boundary.

e) Where applications are received from families of UK Service personnel and other Crown servants, school places will be allocated to children in advance of the approaching school year if accompanied by an official MOD, FCO or GCHQ letter declaring a return date with full address details and providing they would meet the criteria when they return to the UK.

f) If none of the parent's preferences can be met, in accordance with the DCSF School Admissions Code, Halton LA will allocate a school unless there are insufficient places remaining in the authority. In Halton, a place will be allocated at the nearest school to the home address measured in a straight-line distance measurement from the child's permanent residence to the school. This does not affect parent's rights to appeal for a place at the school(s) they have been refused.

## **10.0 LATE APPLICATIONS FOR HALTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Late applications for places at Halton Local Authority maintained community and voluntary controlled schools received after the closing date, but received in time for the initial allocation will be included where possible. However, as the exact date of allocation cannot be predicted, the LA cannot guarantee that any late application will be included in the initial allocation, therefore parents/carers are strongly urged to ensure their application is received by the closing date. If the late application is received after places have been allocated and the school(s) are oversubscribed, the child will be placed on the waiting list, the child's position on the waiting list being determined by the admission policy. Parents have the right of appeal if admission is refused and details on the appeals process are given in paragraph 15 below.

If parents are making a late application to a voluntary aided school the school will advise how this will be dealt with.

It will be necessary for the applicant to provide the appropriate evidence to support an exceptional case for late application.

## **11.0 CHANGE OF PREFERENCE**

If parents decide to change their preference after the closing date they will need to complete another preference form. If places have already been allocated the LA may not be able to meet the change of preference and the child's name will be added to the waiting list as detailed in paragraph 14 below.

## **12.0 CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

If a pupil moves house after the closing date parents/carers **must** notify the LA and request a new preference form. The preference form must be completed and returned to the LA immediately. If there is a place available at the school of preference a place will be offered. If the year group is oversubscribed then parents will be offered the right of appeal and any other preferences will be considered. The child will also be placed on the waiting list. The Local Authority will require documentary evidence to confirm a change of address.

## **13.0 WITHDRAWAL OF OFFER OF A SCHOOL PLACE**

Halton LA reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a school place in limited circumstances. These may include where a fraudulent/intentionally misleading preference form is received claiming a false sibling or false residence.

## **14.0 WAITING LISTS**

The LA will maintain waiting lists for oversubscribed community and voluntary controlled primary schools. The waiting list will comprise of those pupils refused admission to the school(s) of preference. This list will be maintained from the time of initial allocation until the end of the Autumn Term, at which point the waiting list will cease. If a place becomes available at an oversubscribed school, the place will be reallocated in accordance with the published over-subscription criteria detailed above. Parents should be aware that their child's place on the waiting list might alter, either up or down, dependent upon the movement of other applicants. The waiting list forms part of the co-ordinated scheme, therefore applications received up to the end of the Autumn Term will be considered within the scheme, following which any applications received after this date will be dealt with as an in-year admission and the in-year application process will be applied.

## **15.0 ADMISSION APPEALS**

Parents who are not offered a place at any of their preferred community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided trust or academy schools have a right of appeal to an independent appeals panel under section 94 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be submitted in writing but parents have the right to present their case to the panel in person. The Chairman of the appeal panel will be a lay-person having no connection with the LA. Other members of the panel will be suitably experienced persons.

Parents should note that the law requires that no 5, 6, or 7 year old in an infant class should be in a class of more than 30 pupils. Parents will have a right of appeal but an appeal panel can only uphold this appeal if it is satisfied that:

- a) the decision was not one which a reasonable admitting authority would make in the circumstances of the case, and/or
- b) that the child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been properly implemented.

The decisions of independent appeals panels are binding on the LA and on the school's governing body.

Applications for admission to Aided Church schools will be referred to the Admissions Committee of the governing body of the school concerned. The LA, acting on behalf of the governors, will notify parents of the result of their application. If the application is not approved parents will be notified of their statutory right of appeal.

## **16.0 SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

The LA as commissioner of school places is continually reviewing and monitoring the number of places available against projected pupil numbers and updates head teachers accordingly. It is possible that occasionally, there may be certain geographical areas within the borough where demand for places is higher than the actual number of places available, and the LA will, in discussion with the school, give consideration to admitting above a school's Published Admission Number (PAN). Admitting above a school's PAN will only be agreed between the school and the LA where it is confirmed that to do so will not affect the school in the longer term and will not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring schools and providing it does not breach infant class size legislation.

The figure in brackets denotes the school's proposed Published Admission Number for 2011 but may later as a result of the School Reorganisation Programme.

### **COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

All Saints Upton C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (30)  
Astmoor Primary (25)  
Beechwood Primary (15)  
Brookvale Primary (40)  
Castleview Primary (20)  
Daresbury Primary (15)  
Ditton Primary (60)  
Fairfield Infant (80)  
Farnworth C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (56)  
Gorsewood Primary (30)  
Hale C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (25)  
Halebank C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (15)  
Hallwood Park Primary (25)

Halton Lodge Primary (30)  
Hillview Primary (30)  
Lunts Heath Primary (45)  
Moore Primary (30)  
Moorfield Primary (45)  
Murdishaw West Community Primary (30)  
Oakfield Community Primary (40)  
Palace Fields Primary (40)  
Pewithall Primary (30)  
Simms Cross Primary (30)  
Spinney Avenue C E Voluntary Controlled Primary (30)  
The Brow Community Primary (25)  
The Park Primary (20)  
Victoria Road Primary (40)  
West Bank Primary (30)  
Westfield Primary (25)  
Weston Primary (15)  
Weston Point Primary (20)  
Windmill Hill Primary (15)  
Woodside Primary (30)

**TRUST SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

The Grange Infant (60)  
The Grange Junior School (60)

**VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS TO WHICH THIS SCHEME APPLIES:**

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND:**

Runcorn All Saints' CE Aided Primary (20)  
St Berteline's CE Aided Primary (43)  
St Mary's CE Aided Primary (35)

**CATHOLIC:**

Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary (30)  
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Primary (30)  
St Augustine's Catholic Primary (15)  
St Basil's Catholic Primary (60)  
St Bede's Catholic Infant (60)  
St Bede's Catholic Junior (60)  
St Clement's Catholic Primary (30)  
St Edward's Catholic Primary (20)  
St Gerard's Roman Catholic Primary & Nursery (25)  
St John Fisher Catholic Primary (30)  
St Martin's Catholic Primary School (30)  
St Michael's Catholic Primary (35)  
The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary (20)



