

Wokingham Borough Council – School admission arrangements 2017-2018

Analysis of Issues

The changes proposed are:

- Clarification to criterion B to make it clear that it applies to “families who have exceptional medical or social needs as the grounds for their child’s admission to a particular school”
- Amendment to the residency requirements to meet criteria D and E
- Amendment to the wording relating to Crown Servants following the issuing of guidance by the Department for Education
- Amendment to how we operate waiting lists and the requirement for parents to confirm annually, at the end of each academic year, whether they wish their child to remain on the waiting list for the following academic year
- Proposal to increase the designated area of Nine Mile Ride Primary School to include a small area of the borough identified as not currently included in the designated area of any school
- Proposal to prioritise two year olds attending school nurseries in the Foundation Stage 1 (F1) admission policy.
- Proposed timetable for co-ordinated schemes.

Clarification to oversubscription criterion B

It is proposed to clarify the wording of criterion B to make it clear that it applies to “families who have exceptional medical or social needs as the grounds for their child’s admission to a particular school”. Previously this referred to “children who have exceptional medical or social needs as the grounds for their admission to a particular school”. However note 2 suggested that we would consider evidence from an independent professional aware of the case relating to the child, parent/carer or other children living at the same address. As the criterion applies to families, it is proposed to ensure that the wording is clear within the criterion.

Amendment to the residence requirements to meet oversubscription criteria D and E

The residency requirements were the subject of an internal audit carried out in summer 2016 in response to parental concerns that school places may have been allocated unfairly to children on the basis of misleading information provided by their parents claiming to live within the designated area of schools for whom the local authority could not allocate to every child within the designated area.

In response to the audit and to ensure that the wording is clear; this section has been revisited and various minor amendments/additions are proposed namely:
The inclusion of the wording “An address will not be accepted where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a private fostering or formal care arrangement.”

The inclusion of wording specifically related to circumstances where a family has more than home. “Checks will be made to determine whether an address declared on the

application form is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, evidence will be required as to which is the main home showing that the other property is either let out on a long term rental (6 months plus), that the property is uninhabitable, or that the address is in the process of being sold and family live permanently in the declared property. This evidence is required to prove where an applicant was living at the time of making the application”.

Further clarification is proposed to the paragraph relating to moving to a house which is within or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school to make it clear that this is “after allocation”.

Clarification that applicants will be asked to declare that the address used is “expected to be” their place of residence beyond the date of the pupil starting school. The audit report suggested that parents in rental properties would have difficulty to state categorically that the address would be their place of residence in September due to the nature and timing of rentals. Furthermore, it is proposed to make clear that “in deciding whether a place was allocated on the basis of a misleading or fraudulent application, an admissions panel will consider any supporting evidence giving reasons why the move as necessary prior to the child starting school”.

It is proposed to include under the list of further information that may be required “the address where child benefit or other benefit (if applicable) is paid”.

Amendment to the wording relating to Crown Servants

The Department for Education issued guidance relating to Crown Servants. The council’s policy has always included reference to Crown Servants within the section relating to service families. Whilst Wokingham Borough Council has not had many requests for admission as a returning Crown Servant; it is proposed to strengthen how such applications will be considered as follows:

“Families of crown servants returning from overseas to live in the Wokingham borough may apply for a place in advance of their move provided the application is accompanied by an official letter confirming the posting to the UK and the expected relocation date.

Where a parent is unable to provide confirmation of a relocation address, an indication of the area may be provided, narrowed down as far as possible, to which the family intend to return. Preferences will be considered but applications will be considered under criterion G (other children) until the parent is able to provide confirmation of the new address such as proof of exchange of contracts or a signed rental agreement. If a place cannot be offered at a preferred school; no alternative school will be offered until confirmation of the relocation address within the borough is received but the right of appeal will be advised.

It is the responsibility of parents to keep the school admissions team informed of any changes to their planned address during the application process.

For information, the measuring point for service families with an assignment order to move to the service accommodation has been expanded to state that “in the absence of a new home postal address, the authority will use the former Hazebrouck Barracks (co-

ordinates: Easting 476869 and Northing 166249) as the postal address to determine distance to a preferred school.”

Clarification to waiting lists

An amendment is proposed to how we operate waiting lists and the requirement for parents to confirm annually, at the end of each academic year, whether they wish their child to remain on the waiting list for the following academic year in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

Proposal to increase the designated area of Nine Mile Ride Primary School

Children’s Services seeks to ensure that all areas within the borough are included within the designated area of at least one school to enable families to receive priority to that school.

A small area has been identified which is not included within the designated area of any school in the borough and it seeks to address this anomaly by its inclusion within the designated area of Nine Mile Ride Primary School.

The area in question includes Spring Gardens at the bottom of Church Lane. We are proposing to incorporate the area not covered by Finchampstead CE Aided Primary School into the designated area of Nine Mile Ride and to redraw the line at this point to follow the Devil’s Highway as a defined geographical feature.

As the northern section of the designated area of Finchampstead CE Aided Primary School follows the Devil’s Highway, it is proposed to redraw the southern section of the Nine Mile Ride to at least this line to incorporate land not included in the admission arrangements of Finchampstead CE Aided Primary School.

No further changes to designated areas are proposed, therefore subject to the above, designated areas agreed as part of the 2016/2017 admission arrangements will be applied to 2017/2018.

Proposal to prioritise two year olds attending school nurseries in the Foundation Stage 1 (F1) admission policy

The council previously agreed a specific criterion as part of the Foundation Stage 1 (F1) admissions policy to prioritise two year olds admitted to school nurseries. It is proposed, to ensure continuity in early years education, to remove that criterion and clarify the policy as follows:

“Some nurseries or foundation stage units might admit children after they become two years old if they are entitled to the free extended provision. Where there are more applications than places available children who are entitled to the free extended provision will be ranked according to the following oversubscription criteria detailed under the heading “Allocation of places (oversubscription criteria)” above.

Where any criterion is oversubscribed, children will be ranked according to the straight line distance that they live from the school with priority being given to children who live

closest to the school.

Once such children are placed on roll at a nursery, they will be automatically entitled to take up a three year old place and the number of places for three year olds will reduce.”

- **Date changes to the co-ordinated schemes**

The proposed timetable for the co-ordinated schemes is below and the proposed arrangements have been changed to reflect it.

PROPOSED TIMETABLE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES 2017/2018	
Date	Action
July 9, 2016	State-funded schools to provide school information to enable composite prospectus to be compiled
By September 11, 2016	Application packs for secondary transfer to be distributed via primary schools and on request
By September 12, 2016	Composite prospectus published on council’s website
September 11, 2016	Online admissions open for applications for transfer to secondary school
October 31, 2016*	National closing date for secondary transfer applications
November 26, 2016	Secondary transfer applications to be forwarded to Wokingham Borough own admission authority schools for consideration
November 2016	Application packs to be posted for entry to primary to parents who are either attending Wokingham borough early years’ settings or who have registered with the school admissions team or who are transferring to junior school to be distributed via infant schools or on request,
November 12, 2016	Online admissions open for applications for entry to primary and transfer to junior school
January 15, 2017*	National closing date for evidence to be provided to meet Wokingham Borough Council criteria for those transferring to secondary school; transferring to junior school; or starting school.
January 15, 2017	Ranked lists to be submitted to the local authority by own admission authority schools for secondary transfer
February 10, 2017	Entry to primary and junior transfer applications to be forwarded to Wokingham Borough own admission authority schools for consideration
February 16, 2017	SEN Team to inform parents of pupils transferring to secondary

	school or to junior school with statements of special education need of their allocated school
By February 28, 2017	Appeals timetable published to website (own admission authority schools will publish details on the school's website)
March 1, 2017	National secondary offer day – letters posted by first class post
March 15, 2017	Secondary transfer: Deadline for accepting the offer of a place Late applications to be processed Waiting list information available
March 15, 2017	Ranked lists to be submitted to the local authority by own admission authority schools for the entry to primary and junior transfer
March 30, 2017	Closing date for notification of a secondary appeal to be heard together
March 31, 2017	Final co-ordination with other local authorities for entry to primary and junior school transfer
April 18, 2017 (next working day)	National offer day for primary applications for those starting school and transfer to junior school offer day – letters posted by first class post
May 3, 2017	Entry to primary and junior transfer: Deadline for accepting the offer of a place Late applications to be processed Waiting list information available
May 18, 2017	Closing date for notification of an entry to primary or junior transfer appeal to be heard together
End May/early June 2017	Local authority to advise schools of final allocation details
May/June 2017	Secondary appeals to be heard in accordance with published timetable
June/July 2017	Starting school and junior transfer appeals to be heard in accordance with published timetable

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* Dates may change to the next working day if the School Admissions Code is revised permitting national closing dates to be adjusted if the date falls on a weekend.

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