

ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2012/2013

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA FOR ALL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Children with a Statement of Special Education Needs which names a particular school will be allocated places, after which places are allocated according to an agreed set of criteria, in strict order of priority.

Priority 1- Looked After Children - Children in the '**looked after**' system where the approved agencies agree that the preferred school meets the child's social, pastoral and educational needs; (see Footnote 1)

Priority 2 - Children living within the **defined catchment area*** of the school; (see Footnote 2)

Priority 3 - Sibling connection - Children who have a **older sibling**** at the preferred school not only at the time of application but also when the younger child is due to start; (see Footnote 3)

Priority 4 - Exceptional circumstances - Children with exceptional **medical, social or compassionate** grounds for admission and whose parents can show that entry to a particular school are necessary for the well being of their child. Parents are required to produce a medical certificate or other appropriate information preferably from an independent source. Applications on such grounds will not be considered by the Director of Children's Services or his advisory panel unless this supporting information is attached to application forms received by 31st October 2011 (secondary schools) or 15th January 2012 (primary schools); (see Footnote 4)

Priority 5 - Distance*** - Children who live **nearest** to the school by the shortest available walking route. (See Footnote 5)

General Notes

No priority is given to pupils living outside but attending a primary school within the catchment area of the relevant high school, i.e. the determining factor is the child's home address.

Footnote 1: *This is the 1st priority because the Council wishes to protect children in public care from further disadvantage that can arise from possible changes of school when the care placement changes.*

Footnote 2: *This is the 2nd priority because the Council gives high importance to try to ensure that children are able to attend the school within their local community.*

Footnote 3: *This is the 3rd priority to recognise the importance to daily family life, including travel arrangements, of having brothers/sisters at the same school where possible. The rule is **not** intended to favour parents with a previous but no longer current family connection with the school.*

Footnote 4: *This is the 4th priority to be sensitive to exceptional needs that individual children and families may have.*

Footnote 5: *The 5th priority is a measurable, objective way of allocating the remaining places.*

Where, at any school, applications exceed the number of places, the priorities will be applied in the sequence indicated above, i.e. after children in the 'looked after' system it will be catchment area children second, brothers and sisters third, special reasons fourth, then according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

If the admission of the top two categories can be satisfied, but there are insufficient places for all out-area brothers and sisters, priorities will be decided first by reference to special reasons, then according to distance.

Following the allocation of the top category there may be an occasion when it is not possible to offer places for all children living in the catchment area. In this situation the places will be allocated in the sequence of the criteria listed above, i.e. first to children with brothers and sisters who would still be at the school in September 2012, next to pupils with validated medical, social or compassionate grounds, and finally according to distance from the school.

In case where distance is not the final deciding factor i.e. two applications are at exactly the same distance then the final tie breaker will be a lottery undertaken by an individual independent of the Children's Services directorate.

*Living within the defined catchment area is defined as "a child residing with his/her Parent(s)/or carer(s) at his/her normal and genuine place of residence for the majority of the time".

** A sibling connection refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or a child of the parents/carer's partner, and in every case the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address.

*** Distance will be measured by the shortest available walking route using a road and/or made up footpath from the front door of the child's address (including flats) to the main entrance of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised digital map measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

Local Authority Nursery Class Admissions

The Council maintains nursery classes for pupils aged 3 or 4 years in the following 13 primary schools-

Schools with nursery classes:

Bromyard, St. Peter's Primary School	01885 483237
Hereford, Broadlands Primary School	01432 266772
Hereford, Riverside Primary School	01432 274653
Hereford, Lord Scudamore Primary School	01432 273951
Hereford, Marlbrook Primary School	01432 266643
Hereford, St. Martin's Primary School	01432 273633
Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School	01981 250338
Kington Primary School	01544 230363
Ledbury Primary School	01531 632940
Leominster Infants' School	01568 612029
Ross-on-Wye, Ashfield Park Primary School	01989 562738
Weobley Primary School	01544 318273

Each of the nursery classes, at 13 primary schools, serves quite a wide catchment area. The places available are allocated on a half time basis for either the morning or afternoon sessions on all days the nursery class is open. Acceptance of a place in an LA Nursery is for the full 5 half days of each school week, so that the children can experience the full range of learning activities. However, there can be a flexible induction period for 3 year olds in the first half term, in negotiation with the school, whereby a child may attend for fewer than 5 sessions. This arrangement may be extended to the end of the first term in exceptional circumstances.

You can apply for a place in a nursery class by contacting the headteacher of the school in which it is based. It is advisable to apply as soon as possible **after** your child's 2nd birthday. Some priority is given to children with special needs or according to family circumstances.

It should be noted that admission to a nursery class is quite separate from admission to the main school. Consequently:

- i) there is no guarantee that a child in a nursery class will have a place in the reception class of the same school, especially since nursery classes serve an area that extends beyond the catchment area of the school;
- ii) the school cannot insist that nursery children remain at the school beyond the age of five.

Multiple Birth policy

If when places are offered under the Co-ordinated Schemes only one child from a multiple birth family can be admitted (one of a twin or triplet for instance) then subject to clause 3.24 of the School Admission Appeals Code ("unreasonable" test) places will be offered at the same school to the other children from the same multiple birth.

Admission to Reception Class – September 2012 Onwards **Co-ordinated Primary Admission Arrangements for Herefordshire**

Implementation of Scheme

This scheme will apply to all parents/guardians wishing for their children to be admitted to any maintained primary school within Herefordshire during the academic year 2012/2013.

Number of Preferences and Closing Date

All parents will be invited to state three first preferences, in ranked order, on a common application form, which will also apply to all voluntary aided and foundation schools and Academies. The closing date for applications will be the 15th January 2012.

Voluntary Aided Schools – Additional Information

To enable individual admission authorities to determine their allocation of places supplementary information may be required. Details of information that is required is stated in the school prospectus of the school concerned.

However, all parents **must** complete the common application form PA1 by 15th January 2012.

Date of Admission

Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term **following their 5th birthday**. In Herefordshire, however, most children start school at least a term earlier than the law requires. The Council's **standard admissions policy** entitles parents to places for their children, in one of the Council's maintained schools, according to the date of their child's 5th birthday, as follows:

- In the Autumn term if 5 between 1 September and 31 December inclusive
- In the Spring term if 5 between 1 January and 30 April inclusive
- In the Summer term if 5 between 1 May and 31 August inclusive

The Autumn term begins after the summer holidays, the spring term after the Christmas and New Year holidays, and the summer term after the Easter holidays.

Option for Delayed Entry

The law does not require a child to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. The date compulsory school age is reached is determined by dates set by the Secretary of State for the autumn, spring and summer terms. These dates are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March. Therefore parents are not obliged to take up the offer of a place in September and they can delay the admission until the beginning of the spring or summer term in the term after the child's fifth birthday.

Deferred Entry – for Summer Born Children

As previously stated parents are not obliged to take up places for their children any earlier than the law requires (i.e. currently from the term following their 5th birthday.) Schools cannot require children to start sooner than parents wish. If parents do wish to defer taking up a place for their child, they are strongly advised to discuss the matter first with the school or with the Pupil Admissions Office, and parents must apply by the closing date for applications (15th January 2012). Parents who have applied for and have been allocated a place for a particular school have every right to wait until the term specified in the Council's standard admissions policy or until compulsory school age. However there could be complications for pupils with birthdays between 1 May and 31 August, as the term for compulsory admission would be in September at the start of the following school year. In the case of a summer born child therefore the admission would normally be directly into

Year 1 (i.e. missing the reception class) in order to keep the child in his/her year group. In this respect a child would normally be placed directly into Year 1 and therefore would have missed the reception class but the school may not be able to guarantee a place if the class group had already reached 30. If parents wish, in these circumstances, to consider placing their child in a year group below the child's chronological age then please take check the information in the Herefordshire Local Authority policy "Children Out of Year Document" at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/education/37894.asp

Admission of children below compulsory school age

As a result of changes in the new School Admissions Code for admission to the 2011-12 school year, and subsequent years, all admission authorities for primary schools, including Herefordshire must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. However it must be made clear that when primary schools admit children below compulsory school age, then:

- a) the arrangements do not apply to those being admitted for nursery provision including nursery provision delivered in a co-located children's centre;
- b) 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 the reception class;
- c) attendance at the nursery or co-located children's centre does not guarantee admission to the school; and
- d) parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year;
- e) parents can request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Allocation of Places

Places in reception classes for all maintained schools are allocated on the basis of applications received on or before 15th January 2012. Applications should be sent to the Pupil Admissions Office. The date of 15th January 2012 applies for all admissions during the school year, including children who might be entitled to start school until January 2013 or April 2013.

The Council has defined that the single offer date for the 2012/2013 admission year will be:

Monday 23rd April 2012

Late Applications

Applications received after 15th January 2012 will be allocated to the preferred school on the understanding that admissions do not exceed the published admission number or

conflict with the requirement not to exceed 30 pupils in a key stage one class. When considering the late application the Council or the relevant Voluntary Aided or Foundation School will have regard to the reason for the delay in applying together with the distance to the nearest alternative school.

Secondary Transfer – September 2012 **Co-ordinated admission arrangements for Herefordshire**

Introduction

Herefordshire will operate an inter-Local Authority scheme for September 2012 with Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. However, in respect of Monmouthshire and Powys the Council will continue to exchange preference information with the allocation being determined by the school's home authority.

The following sections describe the proposed co-ordinated scheme for Herefordshire.

Application Form and Closing Date

Parents are invited to indicate 3 preferences on a common application form, which will also enable parents to give reasons for their preference. All preferences are treated as equal initially, and sent out as equal to other admission authorities. However, if more than one school place can potentially be offered to an individual applicant, the single offer is for the school the parent ranked highest.

The Herefordshire application form invites all parents resident in the County to name 3 preferred schools, in order of preference, by 31st October 2011. It is made clear that parents should name all schools for which they wish their child to be considered for a place, including any voluntary aided and foundation schools and Academies and/or any maintained schools outside the County. There is agreement with other Councils that the closing date of 31st October 2011 will be respected even if this date is officially later than the other admission authorities closing date. This will be important if a parent expresses a preference for a school outside Herefordshire.

Initial Allocation Process

By w/c 14th November 2011, the Admission Office sends other admission authorities/LA's details of applicants for their schools.

Admission authorities then apply their admission criteria, including any selection tests, and will send the Admission Office by 6th January 2012 a list indicating the order in which all children for whom applications to the school have been made have priority by reference to the over-subscription criteria.

Although all applications need to be assessed and grouped against the criteria, admission authorities of significantly oversubscribed schools need not give individual rankings to applicants in the lowest priority groups for admission, if there is no likelihood of being able to offer them a place after elimination of multiple offers. The Admission and Transport Office

will draw up a similar list for any school for which it is the admission authority. After other admission authorities have sent their ranked lists to the Local Authority in whose area they are located, each Local Authority should have a list for each of its maintained schools.

Finalising the Allocation Arrangements

Herefordshire will then compare the lists for all schools in its area. When a child qualifies for one of the available number of places at more than one school, the Admission and Transport Office provisionally allocates a place at the school indicated by the terms of its co-ordinated scheme. It also adjusts the list for any other school for which a preference was expressed by that parent, moving another child who was previously not allocated a potential place up the list to the provisional place, which has been vacated.

By 10th February 2012, the Admission Office (whose own decisions on which school to offer, in the event of multiple potential offers, will have been made in accordance with its model scheme, i.e. the school ranked highest by the parent) will also have received similar notifications from other Local Authorities of any places which those Local Authorities or schools in their areas can offer in response to any preference expressed by one of their residents. Monmouthshire and Powys will not have a co-ordinated scheme in place by September 2012. But they will supply information to Herefordshire on applicants applying for schools in the county.

Herefordshire has agreed that the appropriate authority will make where the highest ranked school is situated in Monmouthshire or Powys the offer of the place, which is likely to be before the official date of 1st March. When this situation arises the Admission and Transport Office will only confirm that an offer has been made by another Council. That confirmation will be sent on 1st March.

Clearly, if no preferred school in the home Local Authority can be offered, the Admission and Transport Office need not look for an alternative place if it knows that another Local Authority will be making an offer.

Late Applications

Between 31st October 2011 and 10th February 2012 (final allocation list) it is likely that the Admission and Transport Office will receive late applications. The Council has agreed within its co-ordinated scheme to accept these applications, on the understanding that the delay was reasonable, for example service family moving to the 22 SAS regiment or a family moving into the area. Because the individual circumstances will vary from application to application the determination of the Director of Children & Young People or her nominee will decide what is reasonable. In the case of another admission authority the determination will be made by the Governing Body.

Applications received after 10th February 2012 will be placed on a waiting list based on the oversubscription policy. Allocations will be made against the preference order as vacancies occur although the Admission and Transport Office will endeavour to offer a suitable school at a reasonable distance to the child's home where vacancies exist. However, parents will be able to appeal against the decision that an offer to their preferred school has not been

made.

Offer of a Place

If any child looks like remaining unplaced, the Admission and Transport Office considers how to place them in schools within its area, having regard to any reasons expressed by the parent for their (unsuccessful) preferences. Each Local Authority then sends the schools, which it maintains, the final lists of pupils to be allocated places. On 1st March 2012 – the ‘national offer day’ for secondary schools – it writes to every resident parent who filled in its secondary application form, to tell them of their allocated school place. Where the school in question is its own admission authority, the Local Authority must state that the offer is being communicated on behalf of that school’s governing body.