

# PRINCIPLES AND RULES FOR PUPIL ADMISSIONS & TRANSFERS

## REPORT BY ADMISSIONS AND TRANSPORT MANAGER

LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

21 JUNE 2007

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### Purpose

1. To consider the proposed Principles and Rules for Pupil Admissions and Transfers, for use by Herefordshire Schools, outlined below.
2. Given a recent complaint to the Ombudsman it is felt beneficial to review advice to schools, which was originally issued in 2001. The revised guidance is set out below.

### Financial Implications

3. None.

### Considerations

#### Pupil Admissions and Transfers

4. All parents should be given the same basic information, i.e. that applications are dealt with by the Pupil Admissions Office and that appeals are possible if places have to be refused when the year group is full.
5. All parents should be treated equally, whether they are in-catchment or out-catchment, and regardless of their own or their children's circumstances.
6. When the Pupil Admissions Office requests information about current pupil enrolments, such information should be provided promptly so that parents can have a decision quickly (if there are uncertainties, because of transfers in progress, then such complications should be referred to explicitly – they are not a reason for delay).
7. Parents and children must not be interviewed individually before enrolment has occurred - it is of course in order to give parents making inquiries written information about the school, tell them about how the school operates and what it expects of parents and children, and show them around the premises.
8. Parents should not be contacted individually before their children have been enrolled at the school. Any queries should be raised through the Pupil Admissions Office or the relevant primary school.
9. Children must not be tested or assessed by the school before enrolment.

10. The school should not comment to any parent on their chances of being successful – parents should simply be referred to the Pupil Admissions Office for the latest information.
11. No school should encourage parent to apply for their own or any other school – there are particular dangers in doing so if the school is oversubscribed, particularly in the case of parents living in the catchment areas of schools that are also oversubscribed.
12. No primary school should write a letter of support for a child, currently at their school, whose family are appealing for a particular secondary school at the time of transfer.
13. Oversubscribed schools should not encourage any parent to believe that there is a good chance of admission through dropouts or if they are persistent.
14. No parent should be told that the school would like to admit their children if the LEA agree.
15. Parents must not be told anything about the position relating to other applicants or children who might be leaving.
16. Parents must not be given the names or other personal details of other applicants.
17. The school should not make comments to parents about the consistency and competence with which admissions are dealt with by the Pupil Admissions Office or the wider LEA.
18. The Published Admission Number must be treated as the limit for admissions to the relevant year group, and should not be regarded as variable in relation to individual applicants, except through the discretionary decisions of the official appeals panel.
19. Individual parents should not be supported by the school at appeal. If the school believes that there is space to accommodate beyond the PAN in a year group, that flexibility should be expressed in general terms and not in relation to individual applicants.
20. Oversubscribed schools should not keep lists of disappointed earlier applicants or contact individual parents when vacancies occur. All such lists and contacts with parents should be through the Pupil Admissions office. Any breach of this rule could result in an LEA Direction for the admission of other applicants with a higher or equal priority on the admissions criteria.

## COMPLAINTS BY SCHOOLS ABOUT THE WORK OF THE PUPIL ADMISSIONS SECTION

21. If schools have complaints about the way admissions, transfers or exclusions have been dealt with, such complaints should be taken up initially with the Admissions & Transport Manager (Andrew Blackman). If necessary, complaints can then be raised with the Head of Commissioning & Improvement – Schools & Services (George Salmon), then the Director of Children's Services, and, as a last resort, with the Chief Executive. Such complaints should never be shared with parents.

### **Recommendation**

**That the Principles and Rules be considered and a decision be made whether to implement or not.**