

**PROPOSED ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2010/2011**

**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 her advisory panel unless this supporting information is attached to application forms received by 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009 (secondary schools) or 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010 (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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2009, next to pupils with validated medical, social or compassionate grounds, and finally according to distance from the school.

\*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 from the front door of the child's address (including flats) to the main entrance of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

### **Admission to Reception Class – September 2010 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 2010/2011.

#### **Number of Preferences and Closing Date**

All parents will be invited to state two first preferences, in ranked order, on a common application form, which will also apply to all voluntary aided schools. The closing date for applications will be the 15th January 2010.

#### **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 2010.

### **Date of Admission**

Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term **following their 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **Local Arrangements and Option for Delayed Entry**

**A child who has his or her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday between 1 January and 31 August** might be allowed to start earlier depending on the school. Each school makes its own decision, after considering whether or not they are able to provide the accommodation, staffing, curriculum and care arrangements for their children.

However, parents are not obliged to take up this early offer of a place 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 (15<sup>th</sup> January 2010). 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.

### **Allocation of Places**

Places in reception classes for all maintained schools are allocated on the basis of applications received on or before 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Applications should be sent to the Pupil Admissions Office. The date of 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010 applies for all admissions during the school year, including children who might be entitled to start school until January 2011 or April 2011.

The Council has defined that the single offer date for the 2010/2011 admission year will be:

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010**

### **Late Applications**

Applications received after 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010 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 2010** **Co-ordinated admission arrangements for Herefordshire**

#### **Introduction**

Herefordshire will operate an inter-LEA scheme for September 2010 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 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009. 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 schools, and/or any maintained schools outside the County. There is agreement with other Councils that the closing date of 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009 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 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009, the Admission Office sends other admission authorities/LEAs details of applicants for their schools.

Admission authorities then apply their admission criteria, including any selection tests, and will send the Admission and Transport Office by 8<sup>th</sup> January 2010 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 LEA in whose area they are located, each LEA 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 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010, the Admission and Transport 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 LEAs of any places which those LEAs 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 2010. 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 1 March. When this situation arises the Admission and Transport Office will only confirm that an offer as been made by another Council. That confirmation will be sent on 1 March.

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

### **Late Applications**

Between 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010 (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 Education or his 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 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010 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 LEA then sends the schools, which it maintains, the final lists of pupils to be allocated places. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010 – 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 LEA must state that the offer is being communicated on behalf of that school's governing body.