

⁸⁰ The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008

Publication of Information for Parents

1.

This appendix provides guidance to local authorities and schools on the publication of information about the admissions process for parents.

Informing parents about determined admission arrangements and their right to object

2.

It is important that parents are involved in the admissions process locally to enable them to shape and influence the school system in their area. As set out in Chapter 4, parents have various rights of objection. To ensure parents are able to do this within the specified short timescale, it is important for local authorities and schools to provide clear information about the determined admission arrangements each year. The requirements on local authorities and schools in this respect are set out in Admission Arrangements Regulations.

3.

Once admission authorities have determined their admission arrangements, they **must**, within 14 days, give notice in writing to their local authority (where they are not the local authority themselves), other bodies consulted with and any parents that responded to the consultation. They **must** also place a copy of the determined arrangements on their website, where they have one, which **must** be displayed for the whole offer year, unless amended⁸⁰.

4.

Local authorities **must**, by 1 May in the determination year, publish on their websites, the determined admission arrangements for all schools, Academies, City Technology Colleges (CTCs) and City College for the Technology of the Arts (CCTAs), along with the following information which **must** be published in local newspapers:

(a) The determined admission arrangements for all schools in the area of the authority along with the fact that they are available on the local authority's website and for inspection in the local authority's offices (and any other areas they consider appropriate).

(b) A statement of a parent's right of objection to the Schools Adjudicator for maintained schools, and the Secretary of State for Academies, as set out in Chapter 4, along with where to submit the objection to, the date by which this should happen, and how to access further help from the local authority in making objections.

5.

Admission authorities for schools with pre-existing selection admission arrangements must comply with paragraphs 4(a) and 4(b) within 14 days of their arrangements being determined. Regulation 20(2)(b) of the Admission Arrangements Regulations sets out additional requirements for admission authorities for schools with a determined admission number that is lower than the current indicated admission number.

Composite prospectuses for parents: admission arrangements and how the admissions process works

6.

Parents need to be able to make informed decisions when applying for a school place for their child. Schools and local authorities must provide parents with all relevant information prior to them applying. It is easier for parents to understand local admissions systems that are clear, fair and objective. Above all, parents need to be able to understand whether they have a realistic chance of being offered a place for their child at any particular school and clear, timely information is critical to determining this.

7.

Each year, local authorities must publish a composite prospectus for parents by 12 September in the offer year, which contains information about each of the maintained schools, Academies, CTCs and CCTAs in the relevant area, to assist parents when applying for a school place. Information that is required for inclusion in these prospectuses is set out in the School Information Regulations and is summarised below. Whilst these prospectuses contain information on every school in the area, it is advisable for parents to also seek other information to assist them with making their choices, such as through schools prospectuses, school open days, and through DCSF achievement and attainment tables.

8.

Local authorities must publish their composite prospectuses on their websites and make hard copies available for distribution without charge to parents on request, as a minimum, at the local authority offices and in every school maintained by the local authority, and every Academy, CTC and CCTA, throughout the offer year.

9.

It is helpful for parents to have access to the information they need in one place. However, where there are many schools in an area, local authorities may wish to publish more than one composite prospectus covering each of primary schools and secondary schools separately; or schools in different regions within the area covered by the relevant area, providing they each cover all the required information set out in paragraph 11 below.

10.

If parents request copies of information that local authorities and school governing bodies publish free of charge in a version translated in to a language other than English or produced in Braille or audio tape, this must be provided free of charge.

Information to be included in the Composite Prospectus

11.

Local authorities are required to include a range of information in their composite prospectuses to ensure families have access to comprehensive information that enables them to make an informed choice of which schools to apply for.

General information

12.

Local authorities must publish the following information in their composite prospectuses:

(a)

The postal and website addresses and telephone numbers of the offices of the local authority to which enquiries in respect of primary and secondary education in their area should be addressed.

(b)

A summary of the local authority's co-ordinated scheme as determined each year alongside a clear explanation of the stages in the process of applying for a school place so that parents understand this procedure and the role the local authority and schools play within it. As a minimum, local authorities must include:

i.

How to apply to schools. In promoting sustainability, local authorities should encourage families to submit applications online wherever possible, explaining the benefits of doing so, whilst making clear that they can also submit a paper application.

ii.

The deadline for submitting applications.

iii.

The date on which parents will be sent the outcome of their application.

iv.

Information about parents' statutory right of appeal against refusal of a school place and the timetable for appeals.

v.

How late applications will be dealt with.

vi.

The arrangements for the transfer between maintained schools in the local authority at stages other than the normal admission round.

(c)

A copy of the Common Application Form. Local authorities must include details in their prospectuses and online of how to complete and submit these forms.

(d)

A full explanation of the local authority's Fair Access Protocol, with an explanation that children without a school place must take precedence over children on a waiting list attending another school.

(e)

A summary of the local authority's sustainable modes of travel strategy and what travel arrangements the authority makes as follows:

i.

Local authorities are required to make free travel arrangements for 'eligible' children, who are those for whom travel arrangements always have to be made i.e. children with special educational needs, a disability or a temporary medical condition, children who cannot be expected to walk to school because of the nature of the route, children who live outside statutory walking distance, and children from low income families. Children who are 11 or over, from low income families and whose parents have chosen the school on the grounds of religion or belief are also eligible.

ii.

Local authorities have a discretionary power to make travel arrangements for any children not covered by the above provision. Local authorities should indicate the extent to which they meet all or part of the travel costs.

Information in respect of each school mentioned

13.

To enable local authorities to compile and publish composite prospectuses for parents which include accurate and the most up to date information, the governing bodies of each maintained school in the local authority's area must provide the local authority with the information by 8 August in the offer year in respect of the admission arrangements set in the determination year. Academies, through their funding agreements, must also provide their local authority with the information as required, which should be by 8 August unless otherwise agreed. As the local authority is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, the governing bodies for these schools must provide information specified at paragraph 10(g) and any other information set out below, on request by the local authority.

(a)

The name, postal address, website address (where they have one), and telephone number of the school, including a contact name to whom enquiries should be addressed.

(b)

the classification of the school as broken down by one of each of the following sub-categories:

i.

Either community, foundation, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, Academy, CTC or CCTA.

ii.

Either primary, middle or secondary.

iii.

Either co-educational or single-sex.

iv.

Either day or boarding, or a school taking both day and boarding pupils

v.

In the case of a selective school, the basis of that selection as set out in paragraphs 2.76 to 2.98 of the Code.

vi.

In the case of a school designated as having a religious character, the religious denomination or denominations of the school.

vii.

In the case of a school designated with a specialist status, the subject or subjects of that specialism.

(c)

The expected number of pupils on roll at the school and the school's age range.

(d)

The published admission number for each stage of entry, along with the number of preferences expressed for places in the previous application year. Where possible, schools should indicate the number of successful applications admitted in the previous year, including the criteria under which they were accepted, and whether this reflects the pattern of recent years.

(e)

The determined admission arrangements for the school for each point of entry (e.g. including for entry to the school sixth form where relevant). This will include the oversubscription criteria that will be used to allocate places if there are more applicants than places available at a particular school in accordance with Chapters 1 and 2 of this Code. It will also include whether the school has adopted the use of a supplementary information form as part of their admission arrangements, and information about how a copy of that form can be obtained. Supplementary information forms must, as a minimum, appear on the Local Authority's website and school's website (where they have one) and be available on request in hard copy at the local authority's offices.

(f)

Whether the determined admission arrangements are the subject of an objection referred the Schools Adjudicator, or the Secretary of State for Academies, and the date on which that was referred.

(g)

In the event that the school is oversubscribed the length of time the waiting list will be maintained for.

(h)

Information on how parents can access sources of general information about the school, including information on annual school achievement and attainment

tables, published reports of recent school inspections, school open days and the school's uniform policy.

14.

Local authorities must include all the relevant information as set out above in their composite prospectuses in respect of each school in the composite prospectus area. Where an objection has been raised against a school's admission arrangements and the Schools Adjudicator has not reached a decision in time for the publication date, local authorities must still publish in their composite prospectus the determined admission arrangements along with a statement that an objection is still outstanding and the arrangements may be subject to change, and details of how to access the final arrangements. Where admission arrangements have been amended following publication of the composite prospectus, local authorities must provide details of these revised arrangements, as a minimum, on their websites and in hard copy on request⁸⁶.

15.

Admission Forums must review the composite prospectus made available to parents and advise local authorities on what more is needed to raise the standard to ensure that it is the best it can possibly be.

16.

In addition to the published information they provide, it is good practice for local authorities to work with schools and other partners to offer targeted Choice Advice to parents who are unable to or unsure about how to use the information provided about applying for school places. Choice Advice may be delivered in or out of school and should take the form of group or one-to-one sessions for those needing additional support. The aim of these sessions is to ensure that every parent has the right information to make the optimum choice possible for their child. Further detail of how local authorities can deliver Choice Advice is contained in Appendix 2.