

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools)

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2004

1. INTRODUCTION

This document identifies changes to admission arrangements following the Education Act 2002, draft admission regulations and a new Admissions Code of Practice.

It details the LEA proposals on admission arrangements for 2004 for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and introduces a proposed co-ordination scheme for secondary schools. It also offers further guidance to Foundation and Voluntary Aided School Governing Bodies to help governors consider changes to their admission arrangements for September 2004 to reflect the new requirements. Finally a response form is attached to enable all schools to respond to the LEA proposals.

A web page is currently being developed so that schools can respond electronically and details of this will be forwarded early in the Spring term once it is operational. This web site will also allow Foundation and VA schools to publicise their proposed admission arrangements electronically to meet the consultation requirements.

2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES

- Establishment and publication of separate Nursery and Sixth Form admission arrangements
- Admission authorities (the LEA, and all VA and Foundation schools) will be required to consult on proposed admission arrangements with all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools as well as each other
- Clear duty on the LEA to challenge any admission arrangements of other admission authorities where these are not in accordance with legislation and the latest codes of practice
- Admission forums to be a mandatory requirement with responsibilities for monitoring and making recommendations for improvements to local admission arrangements.

- Requirement on LEA to co-ordinate admissions for all Norfolk schools to ensure parents are not offered more than one school place. Foundation and VA schools will still be responsible for applying admission arrangements but all offers will be made by the LEA.
- For Secondary schools the co-ordination is expected to commence from the 2004 admissions round if at all possible
- Parents to be enabled to express at least 3 preferences for a High school place from September 2004
- All high school places to be offered on 1 March each year by the LEA
- The LEA has included proposals (based on the DfES model) for a co-ordinated scheme in this document
- Secretary of State has the power to impose a co-ordination scheme if admission authorities cannot agree a scheme locally
- Primary school co-ordination to commence from September 2005 with offers being made by the LEA by 15 April each year
- A primary school co-ordination scheme will be developed during Autumn 2003 as part of the consultation on arrangements for September 2005

Responses to be returned by 14 February 2003

RESPONSES CAN BE EITHER BY THE ATTACHED RESPONSE FORM

**And returned to: Education Department
Admissions Section
County Hall
Norwich
NR1 2DL**

**OR USING THE ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION WEB SITE via
www.esinet.norfolk.gov.uk**

3. KEY ISSUES FROM THE DRAFT SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CODE OF PRACTICE (as laid before Parliament 15 November 2002)

3.1 BETTER LOCAL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

(Chapter 3 – Admissions Code)

3.1.1 Equal opportunities: The new code highlights over-subscription criteria which could contravene equal opportunities legislation and encourages admission authorities to give highest priority to children in public care.

3.1.2 Nursery Classes and First admission: All Schools with nursery classes will need to ensure that they have separate admission arrangements for Nursery and Reception and make it clear to parents that there is no automatic right of transfer from a Nursery class to Reception. The new code expects all admission authorities to offer parents the right to defer their first admission to school until later in the school year.

3.1.3 Sixth Forms: High Schools will need to publish their admission arrangements for VI Form including over-subscription rules and maximum intake limit for those pupils who wish to join the school at year 12.

3.1.4 Interviews: From the round leading up to admission in September 2005 no parent or child can be interviewed as any part of the application or admission process in any school except to assess suitability of a child for a boarding place.

3.2 SETTling ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

(Chapter 4 Admissions Code)

3.2.1 Consultation: There is a new requirement on all admission authorities (including Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools) to consult with Community and Voluntary Controlled schools before determining their admission arrangements.

3.2.2 The Adjudicator: The code clarifies the right to object to the finally determined arrangements of an admissions authority to the Adjudicator appointed by the DfES where local agreement cannot be reached. The code also highlights an expectation that LEAs challenge the admission rules of other admission authorities where these include bad practice as detailed in the new Admissions Code of Practice.

3.3 ADMISSION FORUMS

(Chapter 5 Admissions Code)

The LEA raised the issue of more localised admission forums to replace the current single admissions forum for the County to enable more consideration of local admission arrangements. As expected admission forums are now a

mandatory requirement. Forums will now be required to consider existing and proposed admission arrangements for all admission authorities within a local area and there is an emphasis on developing protocols for the allocation of vulnerable children and those who arrive in an area after an admission round to seek to ensure a more equitable distribution between schools.

3.4 CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

(Chapter 6 Code of Practice)

3.4.1 Secondary Schools: The new code sets out the requirement for parents to be offered the right to express 3 preferences for the admission round for pupils starting High school in September 2004. There is also a new statutory requirement on the LEA to implement a co-ordinated scheme for the offer of secondary school places for all pupils residing in Norfolk by the round leading to admission in September 2005 at the latest. This will include all preferences by parents resident in Norfolk who are seeking places at Norfolk Community, Voluntary Controlled, Foundation and VA schools and maintained schools in other LEAs. The duty remains with Foundation and VA schools to set and apply their own admission rules but all preferences must be on a common application form which must be sent to the LEA. The scheme must ensure that parents are only offered one place and the LEA has a new duty to offer all places including those on behalf of other admission authorities. All offers will be posted on 1st March, the new national offer date. The LEA has a duty to formulate a scheme by 31 March 2003 and by 1 January in future years. Consultation must then take place to seek agreement to the scheme. In the first year this must be agreed by 1 July 2003 if the scheme is to operate from September 2004 or by 15 April 2004 for schemes from September 2005. If admission authorities cannot agree a scheme locally, the Secretary of State has the power to impose a scheme.

3.4.2 Primary Schools (including Junior and Middle School transfers):

There is a requirement to develop a co-ordinated scheme for primary admissions and Junior/Middle school transfers. The scheme for primary schools will commence for admissions and transfers to school in September 2005. The duty will remain with Foundation and VA schools to set and apply their own admission rules but all preferences will be required to be on a common application form which must be sent to the LEA. The scheme will ensure that parents are only offered one place and the LEA will have a new duty to offer all places including those on behalf of other admission authorities. Offers of school places will need to be made by 15th April each year. All co-ordinated arrangements will need to make clear the rules that will apply to determine which preference is given to a parent who may potentially receive more than one offer of a place. There will also be a duty to allocate a place to pupils who may not be offered any of their preferences. The initial co-ordinated Primary scheme must be agreed by 1 July 2004.

3.5 APPLYING ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

(Chapter 7 Code Of Practice)

3.5.1 Vulnerable Children: Once admission forums develop and agree protocols to deal with vulnerable children (as described above) there will be an expectation that admission authorities will comply with this even if this means schools go above their admission limit.

3.5.1 Year 12: The code provides further guidance on admission to year 12. Applicants refused admission are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel.

3.5.2 Service Personnel: The code allows admission authorities to offer places to individual service personnel and other Crown servants who can confirm their return to the UK in advance of their arrival.

3.6 TIMETABLE FOR CHANGES FOR SEPTEMBER 2004 ADMISSIONS

20 January 2003 - New codes and regulations expected to come into force to apply to admission arrangements for September 2004 for High Schools and September 2005 for Primary Schools.

1 March 2003 - Admission authorities must have concluded consultation with all schools in Norfolk on their admission arrangements for September 2004

31 March 2003 - Admission forums must be established in time to affect proposed admission arrangements for the September 2004 intake

31 March 2003 - LEA must have formulated a co-ordination scheme for Secondary schools if co-ordination is to commence for September 2004 admissions

15 April 2003 - Admission arrangements must be determined for September 2004

29 April 2003 - Admission arrangements must be made available to all consultees

1 July 2003 - Secretary of State imposes a Secondary School co-ordinated scheme if agreement has not been reached with Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools and neighbouring LEAs.

4. LEA PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS **(Consultation re admission limits to follow)**

4.1 ADMISSION FORUMS

The LEA agreed through the last consultation process that admission forums would be re-constituted on a more local basis. It is proposed that 5 area forums will be set up covering the current 5 admission areas. Sub groups of headteachers and governors will be convened to consider local issues at both Primary and Secondary level to inform the area forums. The proposed constitution of each forum will be in accordance with the Code of Practice and nominations will be sought from schools, the dioceses, parent governors, and with representatives of the local community will form the core membership. Other representation will be considered by the forums and is likely to include representatives of early years, Service families, other LEAs and other local groups where this may be relevant.

4.2 LEA PROPOSED CHANGES TO ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2004.

The LEA do not propose significant change to the admission rules for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools which were agreed for the September 2003 admissions and published in the 2003-04 Primary and Secondary Information For Parents booklets. The following paragraphs detail the proposed changes for September 2004.

4.2.1 Children in Public Care: The LEA included as it's highest priority statemented pupils whose statement names a particular school for September 2003 to ensure that parents understand that after appropriate consultation has taken place there is a legal duty for a school to accept a child with a statement that names that school. It is proposed to include a new second over-subscription rule for children in public care living within the designated area for a school for all admissions at Community and Voluntary Controlled primary and secondary schools.

4.2.2 Children in Public Care (Norwich High Schools only): The only variation to this will relate to the 5 Norwich High schools whose admission rules do not operate on designated areas. It is proposed that looked after children in Norwich are given the second priority on the following basis. Those living north of the River Wensum will have priority for the preferred north Norwich high school (Blyth Jex or Heartsease). Those living south of the River Wensum will have priority for the preferred south Norwich high school (City of Norwich, Earlham or Hewett).

4.2.3 Equal Opportunities: The over-subscription rules have been reviewed in the light of the detailed advice regarding equalities in the new code and it

has been concluded that no changes are required at this time on the remaining existing LEA rules.

4.2.4 Delegation of VI Form Responsibility: The LEA does not have common admission arrangements for VI Forms as schools have managed this process in previous years. It is proposed to formally delegate this responsibility to the 20 Community and V.C. High schools with VI forms highlighting the new requirements.

4.2.5 Timetable for 2004 Admissions: The proposed timetable for the admissions round is attached at Appendix A. The high school timetable reflects the dates set in the draft regulations. Junior/Middle transfer and First admissions retain the timetable used in previous years. This will change for September 2005 as a result of the required primary school co-ordination for the 2005/06 intake.

4.3 LEA PROPOSED SECONDARY SCHOOL CO-ORDINATION SCHEME

4.3.1 DfES Model Scheme: The LEA proposes to adopt the DfES model secondary school scheme which, when compared with other approaches, accords closely with the proposals consulted upon last year. By this means it will ensure that parents continue to have a high priority for a place at their local school, provided it is one of the 3 expressed preferences.

4.3.2 Co-ordination for September 2004: The LEA has concluded that with the introduction of multiple preferences for the admission round for September 2004, co-ordination is essential as with no co-ordination a number of parents are likely to receive multiple offers whilst others may not receive an offer of any of their preferences. This is unfair to parents, means that final numbers at individual schools are uncertain and is likely to add to the number of appeals unnecessarily. Additionally some 85% of respondents in the 2002 admission consultation supported the proposal to co-ordinate admissions.

4.3.3 Common Application Form: The common application form will seek up to 3 preferences from parents and will ask for preferences to be stated in rank order. After the closing date the LEA will forward all preferences cast to other admission authorities. If the school is over-subscribed the governors will then be required to apply their over-subscription rules and place in rank order all preferences for their school. These must then be returned to the LEA who will then compare lists and where a child potentially has the offer of more than one place, the LEA will consider the highest ranked place only and re-allocate the lower potential offer(s) this frees up in all cases. The LEA will undertake limited co-ordination of offers with neighbouring LEAs to seek to resolve cross border preferences. Wherever possible, the LEA will also allocate the next nearest school with a place to any family who cannot be offered any of their preferences. All places for pupils living in Norfolk will be notified by Norfolk LEA on 1 March (the national offer day) with confirmation of who is offering the place and to whom to appeal, if any preference is not met. The admissions timetable (Appendix A) has been expanded to include the DfES model process which will be required to undertake co-ordination.

4.3.4 Late applications will be accepted where a parent can demonstrate a valid reason for not meeting the closing date in accordance with recommendations within the Code of Practice. This will include parents returning from abroad or moving from other parts of the country and service personnel who receive confirmation of a move after the closing date. All other late applicants to be dealt with as follows: those who are received after the closing date but before the national offer date will be given a lower priority than all preferences received by the closing date and if a number are received these will be sorted using over-subscription rules. Any preferences received after the national offer date will be considered alongside any other preferences which may be held on a waiting list for a school. All preferences at this stage will be considered equally against the over-subscription rules.

4.4 CO-ORDINATED PRIMARY SCHOOLS SCHEME

A scheme will be developed early in the 2003/04 Academic Year to enable appropriate consultation with primary schools prior to implementation for the admission round for September 2005.

4.5 SIBLING DEFINITION

For the purposes of applying the over-subscription criterion for a sibling the LEA propose to confirm our current definition, namely that we expect the children to live at the same address and to share at least one common parent.

4.6 HOME ADDRESS

Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of the week, the home address will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for the majority of the week (including weekends). The LEA will expect evidence to support this, including the prime contact address held by the current school and which parent receives the child benefit in cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the week with both parents.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

DfES Draft Codes of Practice, Draft Regulations and consultation response summary:

www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/archive/archive1.cfm?CONID=195

Education and Cultural Services Admissions Paper 13/11/02:

www.norfolk.gov.uk/committee2000/htm/cabinet/educult131102/educult131102item8.pdf

2002 Admission Arrangements Consultation document

www.norfolk.gov.uk/committee2000/htm/cabinet/educult060302/educult060302item11.pdf

TIMETABLE FOR SEPTEMBER 2004 ADMISSIONS
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HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDING CO-ORDINATION INTERNAL DATES(NB Internal timetable in *ITALICS*)

DATE	EVENT
15 September 2003	Release of letters and information to parents inviting preference of school.
24 October 2003	Closing date for receipt of parental preferences.
<i>14 November 2003</i>	<i>Home LEA sends applications for schools in other LEAs to those LEAs and to Foundation and VA Schools</i>
<i>30 January 2004</i>	<i>Admission authorities return ranked list of all preferences cast for their school to the LEA (NB for heavily over-subscribed schools it will not be necessary to rank applications in the lowest priority groups for admission where there is no likelihood of being able to offer them a place after the elimination of all potential multiple offers).</i>
<i>13 February 2004</i>	<i>LEA applies agreed scheme for own schools and informs other LEAs of offers that Norfolk schools can make. Other LEAs inform Norfolk of offers they can make</i>
<i>By 27 February 2004</i>	<i>Latest date for acceptance of "late applications"</i>
<i>By 27 February 2004</i>	<i>Schools informed by own LEA of final results, which may include offers to pupils living in other LEAs</i>
1 March 2004	Offers made to parents by LEA , including offers to parents living in other LEAs. Parents informed of right of appeal against any refusal and to whom to appeal
May/June 2004	Appeal Hearings

PRIMARY SCHOOLS**TRANSFER FROM FIRST/INFANT TO MIDDLE/JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Early January 2004	Release of letters to parents inviting preference of school.
Mid February 2004	Closing date for receipt of parental preferences.
Mid March 2004	Parents informed that a place is available at their preferred school. Parents notified that their preference of school could not be accommodated and given details of the appeals procedure.
Late May/June 2004	Appeal Hearings

FIRST ADMISSION

On Going	Parents 'record their interest' in a place at their preferred school for admission of their child during the forthcoming School Year.
February 2004	Parents invited to re-affirm their interest in their preferred school.
Late March 2004	Final date for parents to register their interest in a place at their preferred school.
Early May 2004	Parents informed that a place is available for their child at their preferred school. Parents notified that their preference of school could not be accommodated and given details of the appeals procedure
June/July 2004	Appeal Hearings.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Type and Phase of School: (Please circle as appropriate)

Community	Voluntary Controlled
Primary	Secondary

1. Admission Forums

(Paragraph 4.1)

	YES	NO
Do you support the proposal to form 5 area forums based on the 5 admission areas?		
Do you have any other comments on the proposal?		

2. Priority for children in public care (excluding 5 Norwich High Schools)

(Paragraph 4.2.1)

	YES	NO
Do you support the proposal to include a new second over-subscription criterion for children in public care living within the designated area for a school (excluding the 5 Norwich High Schools)?		
Do you have any other comments on the proposal?		

3. Priority for children in public care (5 Norwich High Schools only)
(Paragraph 4.2.2)

	YES	NO
Do you support the proposal to include a new second over-subscription criterion for children in public care living north of the River Wensum for The Blyth Jex and Heartsease High and for those living South of the River Wensum for CNS, Earlham and Hewett?		
Do you have any other comments on the proposal?		

4. VI Forms Admission arrangements
(Paragraph 4.3)

	YES	NO
Do you support the proposal to continue with the current arrangement of VI Form admissions being dealt with directly by Community High Schools?		
Do you have any other comments on the proposal?		

5. Proposed timetable
(Paragraph 4.4)

	YES	NO
Do you support the proposed timetable as detailed in Appendix A?		
Do you have any other comments on the proposal?		

6. Secondary Co-ordination proposals

(Paragraph 4.5)

	YES	NO
a) Do you support the proposal to introduce co-ordination as described for September 2004 High School admissions (the DfES model scheme)?		
Do you have any other comments on the proposal?		

7. Sibling Definition

(Paragraph 4.7)

	YES	NO
a) Do you support the proposal to clarify what is meant by a sibling for the LEA's application of the various sibling criteria?		
Do you have any other comments on the proposal?		

8. Home address

(Paragraph 4.8)

	YES	NO
a) Do you support the proposal to clarify which address will be taken into account when applying over-subscription criteria for families where the child lives with each parent for part of the week in the LEA's arrangements?		
Do you have any other comments on the proposal?		

N.B. Responses to be returned by 14/2/03

9. General Comments

	YES	NO
Do you have any other comments regarding admission arrangements for September 2004?		
Please detail or attach further information if required.		

Responses to be returned by 14 February 2003

RESPONSES CAN BE EITHER BY THE ATTACHED RESPONSE FORM

And returned to: Education Department
Admissions Section
County Hall
Norwich
NR1 2DL

OR USING THE ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION WEB SITE via
www.esinet.norfolk.gov.uk