

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Children and Young People's Services Cabinet Member and Advisers
2.	Date:	21st July 2010
3.	Title:	Admissions Consultation in respect of entry in the 2012/13 academic year. (All wards)
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

All admission Authorities must consult by 1st March, in the determination year, on the admission arrangements for those schools which they are responsible for. The consultation must take place for a minimum of 8 weeks between 1st November and 1st March and a final determination made by 15th April. This report advises on the proposed admission policy/coordinated scheme for the admission year 2012/13, this is in relation to the criteria used where a school is oversubscribed and any changes required as a consequence of requirements arising under the Admissions Code of Practice published by the Department for Education (DFE).

6. Recommendations: It is recommended that:

- i) **Consideration is given to the changes outlined in this report.**
- ii) **The report is forwarded to the Local Admissions Forum for information/comment.**
- iii) **The appropriate consultation with School Governing Bodies/other LAs takes place, as usual, mainly in the Autumn Term, 2010 and up to 1st March 2011 and**
- iv) **A further report is presented on any feedback from the annual admissions consultation in March 2011.**

7. Proposals and Details

All admission Authorities must consult by 1st March, in the determination year, on the admission arrangements for those schools for which they are responsible. The consultation must take place for a minimum of 8 weeks between 1st November and 1st March and a final determination made by 15th April.

Admission Criteria for Community Schools

The current admissions policy for the community schools for 2011/12 is attached as Appendix 1. No changes are proposed to the admission criteria for 2012/13.

Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

The Authority currently co-ordinates admission arrangements during the normal admission round. Following consultation last year this has been extended to cover in-year admissions for all year groups with effect from 2011/12. No further changes are proposed for 2012/13.

Waiting List

The Authority currently maintains waiting lists for pupils applying during the normal admission round. The new Admissions Code of Practice required that waiting lists are in place from September 2009 and continue for at least the first term of the academic year. Our consultation document last year proposed one term for secondary schools and a full year for Primary schools and this was approved. The new policy has operated since September 2009. It has worked successfully for Secondary Schools. For Primary Schools the change has been less successfully. The extension for a full year has led to unforeseen problems. This has occurred where pupils, who have been settled in school, have been offered a school transfer. The original intention was to use the waiting list to prioritise new applications but unless parents formally withdraw their child's name from the waiting list their original application still stands and has to be reconsidered (as a place becomes available it has to be offered to the highest name on the waiting list). Some of these pupils offered a transfer have been in school for over a term and in some cases two terms. Parents have been faced with a difficult decision which could unsettle their child. The change has not created a fairer allocation of places and has further delayed the admission process. The LA now wishes to maintain the Primary Waiting List for one term up to the 31st December to be in line with the Secondary list. We will consult during the Autumn Term on the proposed change to the Primary Waiting List.

Catchment Areas

The Authority is required to consult on the details of any catchment areas to be used as part of the admission process. The current school catchment areas are published on the RMBC website and available in hard-copy from the admissions team. No changes are proposed to the school catchment areas for 2012/13.

Statutory Closing Dates

The new code of practice introduces national closing dates for both Primary and Secondary applications for the admission round in 2012/13. The provisional date for Secondary is the 31st October and the provisional date for Primary is the 15th January.

Local Authority 'Admission to School' Booklets.

The local Authority has previously supplied a hard copy of the 'Admission to School' booklet to every parent applying for 'Admission to Primary School' and for 'Admission to Secondary School'. The information contained in the booklets is freely available on the Local Authority Website along with details on how to make an on-line-application. The Authority is currently able to satisfy 95% first preferences for primary and 97% first preferences for secondary school. Much of the information in the booklet is surplus to most parents' applications (most booklets are discarded once the application has been submitted). Where parents are unsuccessful with their application separate guidance is available on the appeal procedures. Many other neighbouring authorities now produce only a summary of the information which is sent to all parents with detailed information available on request or via the website. The Rotherham Authority has had to make a decision, prompted by the current financial position to adopt a similar policy and booklets will now only be provided upon request. All parents will still receive a short summary explaining how to apply for a school place, a copy of the Common Application Form and information on how to access the on-line system. Governing Bodies will be advised of this during the annual consultation.

Report to the Schools Adjudicator

The admissions authority is required to submit on an annual basis a report to the Schools Adjudicator by the 30th June on how the admissions arrangements have operated in the previous year. A template has been provided by the Schools Adjudicator for this purpose and the report has been submitted by the Authority to meet this deadline.

8. Finance

The change to the distribution of the admissions to school booklet will save on both printing and postage costs.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The current 'School Admissions Code has a stronger statutory basis than its predecessors and all admission authorities are required **to act in accordance with** rather than simply **having regard to** the provisions, as was the case with earlier versions. The Code seeks to promote equity and fair access and the setting of fair oversubscription criteria.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Any changes to admissions criteria/ co-ordinated schemes could have consequences for individual pupils. The current policies seek to provide a fair, equitable and sustainable solution to the admissions process.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The School Admission Arrangements Regulation 2008. The Admission Code of Practice (February 2009). The Authority's current admissions criteria for community schools is shown in Appendix 1. There is annual consultation on admissions arrangements, which takes place with school governing bodies and other LAs each Autumn Term and up to 1st March. The Authority's website contains detailed information on admission arrangements.

Contact Names:

Report Author – David Hill, Manager, School Organisation Planning and Development, tel. 822536 , email david-education.hill@rotherham.gov.uk

The admission criteria for community and controlled schools for 2012/13 is shown below and is unchanged from the current criteria.

Primary Reception

Places will be allocated in the following order of priority:

Those who on the closing date are:

- i) Relevant looked after children (see note 2 below).
- ii) Children who have a specific medical reason confirmed by a medical practitioner which the Authority is satisfied makes attendance **at that particular school essential**.
- iii) Children with a compelling social reason which the Authority is satisfied makes attendance **at that particular school essential**. The kinds of overriding social reasons which could be accepted are where there is evidence that the pupil's education would be seriously impaired if he or she did not attend the preferred school. Parents should ensure that they attach full supporting information to the Common Application Form.
- iv) Children who on the closing date live in the catchment area of the school as defined by the Authority who will also have an older brother or sister on the roll of the preferred school or its associated junior school at the time of their admission. Parents should ensure that they attach full supporting information to the Common Application Form.
- v) Children who on the closing date live in the catchment area of the school as defined by the Authority.
- vi) Children who on the closing date live outside the catchment area of the school as defined by the Authority whose older brother or sister will be on the roll of the preferred school or its associated junior school at the time of their admission.
- vii) Children who on the closing date live nearest to the school measured in a straight line on a horizontal plane (as the crow flies).

Year 3

Places in Year 3 at a Junior School will be allocated in the following order of priority:-

Those who on the closing date are:

- i) Relevant looked after children (see note 2 below).
- ii) Children in attendance at Y2 in the associated Infant School.

- iii) Children who have a specific medical reason confirmed by a medical practitioner which the Authority is satisfied makes attendance **at that particular school essential**. Parents should ensure that they attach full supporting information to the Common Application Form.
- iv) Children with a compelling social reason which the Authority is satisfied makes attendance **at that particular school essential**. The kinds of overriding social reasons which could be accepted are where there is evidence that the pupil's education would be seriously impaired if he or she did not attend the preferred school. Parents should ensure that they attach full supporting information to the Common Application Form.
- v) Children who on the closing date live in the catchment area of the school as defined by the Authority who will also have an older brother or sister on the roll of the preferred school at the time of their admission.
- vi) Children who on the closing date live in the catchment area of the school as defined by the Authority.
- vii) Children who on the closing date live outside the catchment area of the school as defined by the Authority whose older brother or sister will be on the roll of the preferred school at the time of their admission.
- viii) Children who on the closing date live nearest to the school measured in a straight line on a horizontal plane (as the crow flies).

Secondary Year 7

Places will be allocated in the following order of priority:-

Those who on the closing date are:

- i) Relevant looked after children (see note 2 below).
- ii) Children who on the closing date have a specific medical reason confirmed by a medical practitioner which the Authority is satisfied makes attendance **at that particular** school essential. Parents should ensure that they attach full supporting information to the Common Application Form.
- iii) Children who on the closing date have a compelling social reason which the Authority is satisfied make attendance **at that particular** school essential. The kind of overriding social reasons which could be accepted are where there is evidence that the pupil's education would be seriously impaired if he or she did not attend the preferred school. Parents should ensure that they attach full supporting information to the Common Application Form.
- iv) Children who on the closing date live in the catchment area of the school as defined by the Authority whose older brother or sister will be on the roll of the preferred school in Years 8-11 at the start of the academic year 2012.
- v) Children who on the closing date live in the catchment area of the school as defined by the Authority.

- vii) Children who on the closing date live have an older brother or sister on the roll of the preferred school in Years 8-11 at the start of the academic year 2012.
- vi) Children who on the closing date are on the roll of one of the associated Primary/Junior/Junior and Infant schools as identified by the Authority.
- vii) Children who on the closing date live nearest to the school measured by a straight line on a horizontal plane, (commonly known as measurement, “as the crow flies”).

Notes

1. Where the admission number for any school is likely to be reached mid category, places will be prioritised within that category by reference to the distance between the home address and the school. Highest priority will be given to those living closest to the school measured in a straight line on a horizontal plane (commonly known as measurement, “as the crow flies”).
2. Where any final place at a school is available and two or more pupils are judged to be living equidistant from the school (e.g. in flats), the final place will be allocated by the drawing of lots by officers of the authority.
3. A ‘relevant looked after child’ is a child that is looked after by a local authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the time an application for admission to a school is made, and who the local authority has confirmed will still be looked after at the time when he/she is admitted to the school.
4. Places will be allocated in accordance with the LA’s co-ordinated admissions schemes for Primary and Secondary schools. In assessing preferences, the LA will operate an ‘equal preference’ system, which means that no priority will be given according to the ranking of the preference, except where a potential offer can be made in respect of more than one school. In that situation, the final offer of a place will be made at the highest ranked of the potential offer schools.
5. Children issued with a statement of Special Educational Needs will gain a place at the school named in the statement as part of that process.