

# **SECONDARY CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME**

Normal point of entry – 2013/2014



## Introduction

1. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in their area. Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges (UTCs) are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme except that in the first year of opening, a Free School, Studio School or UTC may choose whether to participate in the local qualifying scheme.

## Interpretation

2. In the scheme:

- **school** means a maintained community, foundation, trust or voluntary aided (VA) school (but not a special school) or an academy or UTC;
- **admissions authority** in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the Local Authority and, in relation to an academy, foundation, trust, UTC or VA school, means the governing body of that school;
- **Local Authority (LA)** means the local Council. The LA for Plymouth is Plymouth City Council;
- **the specified year** means the school year 2013/14, starting September 2013;
- **admission arrangements** means the arrangements for a particular school or schools which govern the procedures and decision making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school;
- **in-year admission** means any application for a place in the first year of secondary education or entry year to a UTC that is received on or after the date specified in Schedule 2, and applications for a place in any other year group received at any time from the commencement of the scheme;
- **eligible for a place** means that a child has been placed on a school's ranked list at such a point which falls within the school's published admission number (PAN);
- **nearest appropriate school** means the nearest academy, UTC, comprehensive school or community college to the applicant's home address with a vacancy;
- **PAN** means the Published Admission Number for the year of entry at a school.

3. The scheme shall be determined and processed in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
4. The scheme shall apply to every secondary school including academy, foundation, trust, UTC and VA schools in Plymouth (except special schools) and shall take effect from September 2012 for admissions to secondary schools in September 2013.
5. The scheme shall be based on the **equal preferences** system, as defined in the School Admissions Code of Practice.

6. Where a child is not resident with his or her parent, parental responsibility must be conferred by the parent directly on the person with whom the child is to reside and not on a third party or a commercial or charitable organisation. Where this involves a person who is not a close relative of the child, it is the responsibility of that person to refer the arrangement to social care as a private fostering arrangement.

## **SCHEDULE I**

### **PART I - THE SCHEME**

1. There shall be a standard form known as the common application form.
2. The common application form shall be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of secondary education (year 7) or the first year of entry to a UTC in the admissions round leading up to the date specified in Schedule 2.
3. The common application form shall be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences, in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 86, by parents resident in Plymouth wishing to express a preference for their child to be admitted to a school in Plymouth (including academy, foundation, trust, UTC and VA schools), or located in another LA's area (including academy, foundation, trust, UTC and VA schools).
4. The common application form and the written information that accompanies it shall:
  - a) invite the parent to express up to three preferences by completing the form - including, where relevant, any schools outside the Plymouth area - in rank order of preference;
  - b) invite the parent to give reasons for each preference;
  - c) explain that the parent will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:
    - i) a place shall be offered at the highest ranking, nominated school for which the child is eligible for a place; and
    - ii) if a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, a place shall be offered at an alternative school;
  - d) specify the closing date and where it must be returned, in accordance with paragraphs 9 and 10.
5. The City Council shall make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the common application form is available on the City Council's website and on request from the City Council in respect of admissions to year 7 of a secondary school or the entry year of a UTC. The website will also display a Parent's Guide which provides a written explanation of the scheme.
6. The City Council shall make appropriate arrangements and take all reasonable steps to ensure that every parent resident in Plymouth who has a child in their last year of primary education has access to a common application form and a written explanation.
7. All preferences expressed on the common application form are valid applications. The governing body of an academy, foundation, trust, UTC or VA school may also require parents who wish to nominate, or have nominated, their school on the common application form, to

provide such supplementary information as is required for the governing body to apply its over-subscription criteria to the application. Where supplementary information is required, the applicant shall return it direct to the relevant school.

8. When an academy, foundation, trust, UTC or VA school receives supplementary information, it shall not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed either the City Council common application form or, if resident in another area, their home area's common application form, and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary information is received directly by an academy, foundation, trust, UTC or VA school, the school shall inform the City Council so that it can verify whether a common application form has been received from the parent and, if not, contact the parent to ask them to complete one.

### **Processing common application forms**

9. The closing date for the City Council to receive applications for Year 7 or the entry year to a UTC is as specified in Schedule 2.
10. Completed common application forms for children who live in Plymouth shall be returned to the City Council either via a primary school or direct, so that the City Council can keep track of parents who do not complete a common application form.
11. Schools shall keep a record of all application forms forwarded to the City Council.

### **Determining offers in response to the common application form**

12. The City Council shall act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the common application forms. The City Council shall decide to offer or refuse a place only in response to any preference expressed on the common application form where:
  - a) it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or
  - b) an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or
  - c) an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The City Council shall allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 15 of this Schedule.

13. By the date specified in Schedule 2, where a parent has nominated a school outside Plymouth, the City Council shall also notify the relevant authority by this date.
14. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the City Council shall notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust, UTC and VA school of every nomination that has been made for that school, forwarding them a report detailing the relevant information contained in the common application form and any supplementary information received by this date, which schools require in order to apply their over-subscription criteria.
15. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the admission authority for each school shall consider all applications for its school, apply the school's over-subscription criteria (if appropriate) and provide the City Council with a list of those applicants ranked according to the school's over-subscription criteria. Schools who are their own admission authority may, subject to agreement by the City Council, defer this task to the City Council.

16. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the City Council shall match this ranked list against the ranked lists of the other schools nominated and where the child is:
- eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school shall be allocated to the child;
  - eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, he or she shall be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.
  - not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, he or she shall be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.
17. By the date specified in Schedule 2, the City Council shall inform each of its secondary schools of the pupils to be offered places at the school, and inform other LAs of places in Plymouth schools to be offered to their residents.
18. On the National Allocation Date (1<sup>st</sup> March each year or next working day should 1<sup>st</sup> March fall on a non-working day), parents shall be notified by first class post that they are being offered a place at a school. This letter shall include:
- the name of the school at which a place is offered;
  - the reasons why the child is not being offered a place at each of the other schools nominated on the common application form;
  - information about their statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
  - information about school waiting lists;
  - via the website, contact details for the school; the City Council; and those nominated academy, foundation, trust and VA schools where the child was not offered a place, so that the parent may lodge an appeal with the governing body;
  - the assessment decision to those parents whose child sat a grammar school selection test;
  - information about places still available at other schools;
  - a requirement to notify the City Council whether the applicant intends to accept the place allocated to the child.

Additionally, parents who applied for a school place online and who requested electronic confirmation will receive an email on the national allocation date to confirm the school allocated.

Allocation letters for this scheme will be issued by the City Council on behalf of all schools until the date specified in schedule 2 as the end of the co-ordinated scheme. Allocation letters must not be sent by individual schools. After this date, the in-year co-ordinated scheme comes into force.

19. By the date specified in Schedule 2, parents/carers must notify acceptance of a school place. Failure to notify acceptance may result in withdrawal of the place offered. Parents declining the offer of a place should notify the educational arrangements they plan to provide for their child.

20. Where no common application form is submitted by the national allocation date, a place shall be offered at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy in response to a late application. The City Council shall seek evidence to establish to which children this applies.
21. Neither the City Council nor any school shall inform any parent before the national allocation date of whether a place will be or has been allocated at any school to any child who is the subject of an application.

### **Children resident abroad**

22. Where the child is not currently resident in the United Kingdom, an application will be accepted on the provision of a photocopy of his/her passport confirming the nationality of a country in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland and proof of residence in Plymouth.
23. Where a child is not currently resident in the United Kingdom, an application will not be accepted from children whose nationality is of a country other than those of the EEA or Switzerland. No offer will be made by the LA to a child which may influence a decision by the Border and Immigration Agency to admit or refuse entry to the United Kingdom.
24. Where a child whose nationality is of a country other than those in the EEA or Switzerland, an application will be accepted on production of his/her passport. This will establish that the child has been admitted to the United Kingdom and make any visa restriction available for inspection. An address in Plymouth will also be required.
25. The countries which constitute the EEA are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

### **Waiting Lists**

26. For the duration of this scheme, the City Council shall maintain waiting lists and re-allocate any places that may have become vacant since the allocation date specified in Schedule 2 to applicants who have not yet been offered a place, for example, late applicants whose preferences have not yet been considered. With the exception of Devonport High School for Boys, a child will automatically be placed on a waiting list, to be re-allocated a place if one becomes available after the notification date, at any school ranked higher on the common application form than the school that was offered. By change of preference, a child may join a waiting list for a school not previously requested. In the case of Devonport High School for Boys, eligibility to join the waiting list is dependant upon score attained in the selection examination.
27. Accordingly, where a child has been allocated a place:
  - at the parent's first ranked preference school, he or she shall not be considered for re-allocation;
  - at the parent's second ranked preference school, he or she may be placed on the waiting list of the first ranked preference school, but not the third;
  - at the parent's third ranked preference school, he or she may be placed on the waiting lists of the first and second ranked preference schools.

- at a school that the parent did not nominate on the common application form, he or she may be placed on the waiting lists of any schools that were nominated.
28. Waiting lists shall be kept until the date specified in Schedule 2 as the start of the in-year admissions procedure. From that date, the procedures outlined in the in-year co-ordinated scheme apply and where appropriate, waiting lists will be passed to own admission authority schools.

### **Selection Tests**

29. Where a selection test is part of the school's admission arrangements, parents will be invited to enter their children for the selection examination before the close date for submission of the common application form. The admission authority will take all reasonable steps to inform parents of the outcome of selection tests before the closing date for secondary applications on 31 October so as to allow parents time to make an informed choice of school - while making clear that this does not equate to a guarantee of a selective place.

### **PART II - LATE APPLICATIONS**

30. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is specified in Schedule 2. As far as is reasonably practicable, applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for good reason will be accepted provided they are received before the date specified in Schedule 2 as the start of the allocation procedure. What will be considered as good reason include:
- when a single parent has been ill for some time, or has been dealing with the death of a close relative;
  - where a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a property in Plymouth will be required in these cases).

The City Council will also consider other circumstances and decide each case on its own merits.

31. Applications received after the date specified in Schedule 2 as the start of the allocation procedure, but before the date specified in Schedule 2 as the start of the in-year admissions procedure, shall be considered after the allocation procedure has ended, the date for which is also specified in Schedule 2. If possible, late applicants will be offered a school place on the national allocation date but, if not, normally within four weeks of the City Council receiving the application.
32. Late applications made direct to any school on the common application form shall be forwarded to the City Council without delay. Where only the supplementary information is received, the school shall inform the City Council without delay so that it can verify whether a common application form has been received from the parent and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete one. The City Council shall enter the details onto its central database and, after consultation with the relevant admission authority, offer a place at the school highest in the parent's order of preference that has a vacancy or, if not, at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.
33. Children who are the subject of a direction to admit or who are allocated to a school in

accordance with the Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over any child on a waiting list.

### **PART III – IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS**

34. Applications received on or after the first day of the first school term of the admission year will be treated as an in-year application as will an application for admission to an age group other than the relevant age group. Note that a separate co-ordinated scheme applies to in-year admissions.

## SCHEDULE 2

### Timetable for admissions to Year 7 in a secondary school

From 3 September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Availability of Parents Guide and relevant application forms.</li></ul>
By 31 October 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Common application forms are returned to the City Council. Proof of date of posting will be required for applications received after this date in order to verify the submission date.</li><li>• Supplementary information, as required, is sent direct to the relevant foundation, trust or VA school.</li></ul>
By 3 December 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The City Council sends to other LAs details of relevant applications received.</li><li>• The City Council sends to academy, foundation, trust, UTC and VA schools details of relevant applications received.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The City Council notifies each community school of the number of applications for the school and how the applications are ranked.</li></ul></li></ul>
By 11 January 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Academy, foundation, trust, UTC and VA schools provide the City Council with ranked lists of applicants.</li></ul>
By 4 February 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The allocation procedure starts.</b></li></ul>
By 18 February 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The City Council has matched the ranked lists of all schools and allocated places.</li><li>• The City Council notifies other LAs of applicants from their areas who will be offered places in Plymouth schools on 1 March.</li></ul>
By 28 February 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The City Council notifies each school of the applicants who will be offered places at the school on 1 March.</li></ul>
1 March 2013	<b>The City Council sends allocation notifications to parents.</b>
By 15 March 2013	<b>Parents/carers to respond to allocation notifications.</b>
From 1 <sup>st</sup> day of term 1 (autumn) 2013 (1 September)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applications for Year 7 are treated as in-year admissions.</li></ul>