

PRIMARY CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME

Normal point of entry – 2012/2013



Introduction

1. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in their area.

Interpretation

2. In the scheme:

- **school** means a maintained community, foundation, trust and voluntary aided (VA) school (but not a special school) or an academy;
- **admissions authority** in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the Local Authority and, in relation to a foundation, trust and 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 2012/2013, starting September 2012;
- **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 entry to an infant, primary or junior school 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 school 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 primary and junior school in Plymouth (except special schools) and shall take effect from *September 2011* for admissions to primary and junior schools in *September 2012*.
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 1

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 an infant, primary or junior school, 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 foundation, trust and VA schools), or located in another LA's area (including foundation, trust 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 will 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 will be offered at an alternative school.
 - d) specify the closing date and where it must be returned, in accordance with paragraph 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 and from all infant and primary schools as well as preschools in respect of admissions to year R and all infant schools in respect of admissions to year 3 of a junior school in Plymouth. The common application form shall be accompanied by 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 due to start primary school or who has a child in their last year of infant 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 a foundation, trust or VA school may require parents who wish to nominate, or have nominated, their school on the common application form, to provide

supplementary information, only where the supplementary information is required for the governing body to apply its over-subscription criteria to the application. Where supplementary information is required, the applicant must return it to the relevant school.

8. When a foundation, trust 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 a foundation, trust or VA school, the school shall inform the City Council so that it can verify whether a common application form or neighbouring area's 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 Council to receive applications for Year R and year 3 of a junior school 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 an infant or primary school or direct, so that the 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 foundation, trust 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.

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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 infant, primary and junior 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 date specified in *Schedule 2*, the City Council shall notify all parents by first class post that they are being offered a place at a school. This letter will 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 the 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 foundation, trust or VA schools where the child was not offered a place, so that the parent may lodge an appeal with the governing body;
 - 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 notification 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 notification 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 notification 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, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Waiting Lists

26. Each admission authority 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. 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.

27. Accordingly, where a child has been allocated a place:

- at the parent's first ranked preference school, he or she will 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 up 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.

PART II - LATE APPLICATIONS

29. 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* shall 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.

30. 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 notification date specified in *Schedule 2* but, if not, normally within four weeks of the City Council receiving the application.

31. 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.

32. Children who are the subject of a direction by the LA 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

33. 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.

PART IV - MANAGING COMPLIANCE WITH THE INFANT CLASS SIZE DUTY

34. Section 1 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002) and the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998 limit the size of an infant class during an ordinary teaching session to 30 pupils per school teacher. More detailed regulations say that:

“no infant class ...shall contain more than 30 pupils while an ordinary teaching session is conducted by a single school teacher”.

35. Regulations (the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998 as amended by the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2006) prescribe the limited circumstances in which pupils may be admitted as exceptions to the infant class size limit.

These exceptions are:

- a) children with statements of special educational needs who are admitted to the school outside the normal admissions round;
- b) children moving into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within a reasonable distance (the regulations require that admission authorities must check with local authorities before determining that a child falls into this category);
- c) children admitted after the initial allocation of places because the person responsible for making the decision recognises that an error was made in implementing the school's admission arrangements and a place ought to have been offered;
- d) looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- e) children admitted where an independent appeal panel upholds an appeal on the grounds that the child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been properly implemented, and/or the admission authority's decision to refuse a place was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made;
- f) children who are registered pupils at special schools and who, by arrangement with another school which is not a special school, receive part of their education at that other school;
- g) children with special educational needs who are registered pupils at a school which is not a special school and are normally educated in a special educational needs unit attached to that school, and attend an infant class in the mainstream school (i.e. not in the unit) where this has been deemed as beneficial to the child.

In the case of f) and g), the child will remain an exception for **any** time they spend in an infant class at the mainstream school or outside the special unit. However in **all** other circumstances the child will only remain an exception for the remainder of the school year in which they are admitted. Measures **must** be taken the following year to ensure the class falls within the infant class limit.

36. Schools are required to accurately complete Census returns for submission to the LA. The LA has a duty to check these returns before submitting to the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
37. Schools that do not comply with infant class size restrictions will be required to take qualifying measures in order to comply with the class size limit.

SCHEDULE 2

Timetable for admissions to Year R in an infant, primary or junior school

From 2 September 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of Parents Guide and relevant application forms.
By 15 January 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Supplementary information, as required, is sent direct to the relevant foundation, trust or VA school.
By 10 February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Council sends to other Local Authorities details of relevant applications received. • The City Council sends to foundation, trust and VA schools details of relevant applications received. • The City Council notifies each community and voluntary controlled school of the number of applications for the school and how the applications were ranked.
By 2 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation, trust and VA schools provide the City Council with ranked lists of applicants. • The allocation procedure starts.
By 31 March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Council has matched the ranked lists of all schools and allocated places. • The City Council notifies other LAs of applicants from their areas who have been offered places in Plymouth schools.
By 16 April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Council notifies each school of the applicants who have been offered places at the school.
20 April 2012	<i>The City Council sends allocation notifications to parents.</i>
By 4 May 2012	Parents/carers to respond to allocation notifications.
From 1st day of term 1 (autumn) 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications for Year R or Y3 are treated as in-year admissions.