

# PRIMARY CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME

Normal Point of entry 2016/17



## Introduction

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (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

1. In the scheme:

- **school** maintained community, foundation, free, trust or 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 an academy, foundation, free, trust 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 2016/17, starting September 2016;
  - **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.
2. 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.
3. The scheme shall apply to every primary and junior school in Plymouth including academy, foundation, free and voluntary aided schools (except special schools) and shall take effect from September 2015 for admissions to primary and junior schools in September 2016.
4. The scheme shall be based on the **equal preferences** system.

5. 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 an infant, primary or junior school
  - any other year group in the case of a new primary school opening or where an existing school extends its age range to admit children into a year group for the first time
 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 state funded school in Plymouth (including academy, foundation, free, trust and VA schools), or located in another LA's area (including academy, foundation, free, 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 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 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 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 an academy, foundation, free, 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 an academy, foundation, free, 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 an academy, foundation, free, 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.

### **Applications outside of the chronological age group**

Parents who wish their child to be admitted to a year group outside their chronological year group should contact the School Admissions Team for advice. Each case will be considered on an individual basis taking into account the parent's views, the views of the schools requested and any other professional connected with the case.

### **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, in the case where the admission authority is undertaking the ranking of applications against the admission criteria, the City Council shall notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, free, trust and VA school of every nomination that has been made for that school. The City Council will forward 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 undertaking the ranking of applications against the admission criteria, 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 the infant, primary and junior schools in their area 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 second 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 academy, foundation, free, 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 local 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. The following children are not entitled to a state education:
- children from non-European Economic Area (EEA) countries who are here as short term visitors - these are children who live abroad but have been admitted to the UK for a short visit, for example as tourists or to visit relatives;
  - children from non-EEA countries who have the UK Border Agency's permission to study in the UK - these children are allowed to study in England on the basis that they attend an independent, fee-paying school.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. The countries which constitute the EEA are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

### **Parental responsibility**

27. Any person with legal parental responsibility for a child is entitled to be involved in all major decisions affecting the child(ren) which includes where the child attends school. When an application is submitted for a school place, the person signing the application form is also confirming that everyone with parental responsibility is in agreement with the application. Occasionally, objections are later raised by a person with legal parental responsibility.
28. Where this happens, we will ask for evidence that the objecting parent/carer has legal parental responsibility and will also ask all parties for evidence of court orders relating to education or a special guardianship order.

29. In the absence of such an order, we will make a decision in the best interest of the child taking into account any views submitted by persons with parental responsibility, the child's residence and who has day to day responsibility for the child e.g. transport to school. Where an objection is raised, parents/carers will be advised to seek legal advice with a view to obtaining a final court order relating to education/special guardianship. Once we receive evidence of this order, the case will be reviewed.

### **Mode of attendance**

30. Children are entitled to a full time place in the September following their fourth birthday. Where parents/carers wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. Arrangements should be made with the school direct.
31. Once a place has been allocated, parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age or, for children born between 1 April and 31 August not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made. Deferred entry is arranged with the school direct. Deferred admissions will take place at the start of the January or April term as appropriate. If the child does not start at the agreed date, the place may be revoked and may be reallocated to someone else.

### **Waiting Lists**

32. 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. 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. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria.
33. 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.
34. 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 and where appropriate, waiting lists will be passed to own admission authority schools.

## PART II - LATE APPLICATIONS

35. 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.
36. 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 normally 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.
37. 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.
38. 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

39. 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 scheme applies to in-year admissions.

## PART IV - MANAGING COMPLIANCE WITH THE INFANT CLASS SIZE DUTY

40. Section 1 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002) and the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 limit the size of an infant class during an ordinary teaching session.
41. Infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) **must not** contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. Additional

children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The excepted children are:

- a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs specifying a school;
- b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- c) children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process;
- d) children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
- e) children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

42. 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 Education.
43. 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

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>From 1 September 2015</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Availability of Parents Guide and relevant application forms.</b></li> </ul>  |
| By 15 January 2016           | <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 academy, foundation, trust or VA school.</li> </ul> |
| By 8 February 2016           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The City Council sends to other Local Authorities details of relevant applications received.</li> <li>▪ The City Council sends to academy, foundation, free, trust and VA schools details of relevant applications</li> </ul>  |



|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
|                              | <p>received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The City Council notifies each community and academy, foundation, free, trust and VA school of the number of applications for the school and how the applications were ranked.</li> </ul>                    |
| By 29 February 2016          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Academy, foundation, trust and VA schools provide the City Council with ranked lists of applicants.</li> </ul>  |
| 29 February 2016             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>The allocation procedure starts.</b></li> </ul>  |
| By 21 March 2016             | <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 have been offered places in Plymouth schools.</li> </ul> |
| By 11 April 2016             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The City Council notifies each school of the applicants who have been offered places at the school.</li> </ul>  |
| 11 April 2016                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation procedure ends</li> </ul>  |
| 18 April 2016                | <b>The City Council sends allocation notifications to parents.</b>   |
| By 2 May 2016                | <b>Parents/carers to respond to allocation notifications.</b>  |
| 6 May 2016                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Latest submission date for applications to be included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> allocation round.</li> </ul>   |
| 27 May 2016                  | <b>The City Council sends allocation notifications to parents in respect of the 2<sup>nd</sup> allocation round.</b>   |
| 13 June 2016                 | <b>Parents/carers to respond to allocation notifications in respect of the 2<sup>nd</sup> allocation round.</b>  |
| <b>From 1 September 2016</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applications for Year R or Y3 are treated as in-year admissions.</li> </ul>   |