

Statutory Consultation

Admissions Arrangements (Policies) for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for 2013/14

**In The Round Reception (at the beginning
of the autumn term in September each year)**

In year (at any other time of the year) in any Year Group

Community And Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools

Why Consult On The 2013-2014 Admission Arrangements (Policy)?

1. Manchester City Council (as local authority – LA) is admission authority for community and voluntary controlled primary schools and sets their admission policy. Over the past three years the primary arrangements (policy) have operated well. For example, the LA's information literature is extensive and informative; about three quarters of parents/ carers now apply for places on line; all parents/ carers have been advised of their allocated schools in line with the published notification date and more than 95% of children have been allocated a place at a preferred school.
2. Consultation on the primary school arrangements (policy) for 2013/ 2014 is being carried out on the basis that changes may be needed to take account of operational developments over the past three years and changes in the law.
3. Admission arrangements for voluntary aided schools, foundation schools, and academies are set by each individual governing body, which is the Admission Authority for their establishment. The governing body is responsible for drafting, consulting on and determining its own admission arrangements.

Current Arrangements (Policy) For Admission To Primary Schools

Admission to Reception In the Round (at the beginning of the autumn term)

Published Admission Number (PAN)

4. Every community and voluntary controlled primary school has a set number of Reception places, known as the Published Admission Number (PAN). Places will normally only be offered up to the PAN. A child cannot be refused admission (on the grounds of prejudice to the provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources) unless the PAN has been reached. The PAN for the 2013/14 academic year for each community and voluntary controlled primary school is set out at appendix A.

5. The parents/ carers of any child (regardless of where they live or whether or not the child has attended a nursery) may state a preference for any school they so wish. Where there are fewer or the same number of applications than places, every child will be offered a place as of right. Where there are more preferences than places, the applicants will be placed in admission order, according to the oversubscription criteria set out at appendix B.

Admission Numbers for Other Year Groups

6. The number of places in each of Y1-Y6 is usually the same as the PAN. However, as a number of schools have been expanded since 2008, the number of places in Y1-Y6 at some schools will differ from the PAN.

Current Arrangements (Policy) – Operational Issues Arising Over The Past Three Years: All Year Groups.

A Test of Reasonableness

7. As some schools are more popular than others, some children are unable to secure a place at their highest preference school (or at any of their preferred schools). Parents/

carers often choose to keep their child's name on the waiting list for the preferred school(s) and then lodge an appeal with the Independent Appeal Panel. Not all appeals are successful and the child involved can remain out of school for an extended period.

8. In these circumstances and to try and prevent absence from education, the LA will offer a place at the nearest alternative school, where one is available. If this is at a school within two miles of the child's home address, the offer is deemed reasonable. Parents/ carers who refuse to accept a reasonable alternative offer make themselves liable to prosecution for their child's non attendance. This may seem harsh, but:

- i. two miles is not an arbitrary measure – it is the statutory qualifying distance for free travel passes;
- ii. in an increasing number of cases alternative offers are being accepted, thereby avoiding any complications arising from non attendance;
- iii. most other LAs use the two mile test of reasonableness.

9. It is proposed that the two mile test of reasonableness should become an explicit part of the primary school admission arrangements (policy).

Oversubscription Criteria – All Year Groups

10. The operation of primary admission arrangements (policies) and schemes of co-ordination have at times throughout the past three years, been badly hampered by a lack of primary places (particularly in Reception), caused by a major increase in primary pupil numbers from 2008. Although creation of extra places to meet increased demand has been very successful, attempts to comply with parental preference or to match children without places (often new arrivals) to vacancies and to newly created places is far from straightforward.

11. A major challenge is that, where extra places have been created, they cannot be offered direct to those children without a place (new arrivals). They must be offered to children on the school's waiting list. This invariably includes many children already on roll at another school, who are holding out for a place at a higher preference school. This can cause significant delay before those children without a place are actually able to attend a school.

12. The dilemma, is to balance the need to comply with parental preference for those children already in the system with the need to ensure that new arrivals are able to access school places quickly, as is their statutory right. In seeking a solution, paragraph 3.26 of the COP states that "admission authorities must not adopt procedures or criteria that disadvantage children who arrive in their relevant area outside the normal admission round. Arrangements must be in place for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to be quickly registered at a school whether they are residing permanently or temporarily in the area."

13. In the circumstances it is proposed that consideration be given to amending current oversubscription criteria within the primary admission arrangements (policy) for all year groups, so that children new to the area are prioritised above children who are attending a school or who have had (but declined) a reasonable offer of a school place. The new oversubscription criteria would then be as follows:

Category 2	Children with Exceptional social/ medical needs
Category 3	Children with a brother or sister already on roll
Category 4	Children who arrive after the closing date (for stating preferences) who cannot be made an offer of a place at a preferred school or at a reasonable alternative
Category 5	Children who were in the system at the time of the closing date, who have an offer of a place at a preferred school or at a reasonable alternative, who want a place at a higher preference school.

Waiting Lists – All year Groups

14. To strengthen the above proposal, an option is to change the arrangements for managing waiting lists for community and voluntary controlled primary schools. Current practice for In the Round Reception admissions, is for initial waiting lists for to be maintained for one (the autumn term) only. At that point they are cleansed, to remove the names of any children who have changed address and who may be placed elsewhere or who no longer need a place in a Manchester primary school. The up to date waiting lists are then restarted and cleansed again at the end of the spring term. This ensures that waiting lists are more accurate and that they operate more efficiently.

15. It is proposed that waiting lists for in year Reception–Y6 in community and voluntary controlled schools be managed in the same way as for In the round admissions to Reception. Crucially, this will prioritise children arriving outside the normal admission round, in a way which is not currently possible.

16. The potential risk in making this change is that children who are allocated a lower preference school (or no school at all) may currently join any number of waiting lists. They may stay on the list all year round and in many cases, given the high levels of pupil transience generally, eventually secure a place at a higher preference school. Giving a higher priority to children without any offer could look like “queue jumping” which may deter other parents/ carers from accepting alternative offers whilst remaining on a waiting list. This would cause an increase in the number of children out of school. A partial compromise could be to allow parents/ carers to actively apply to have their child’s name re-instated to the waiting list for the first term of the next school year.

17. The two options are, therefore:

- i. retain the current arrangements (ie same oversubscription criteria and all year round waiting lists);
- ii. change the oversubscription criteria in favour of children without any school place and clear waiting lists termly. Parents/ carers of children with alternative places or with a reasonable alternative offer will be advised of the need to re apply should they wish there child’s name to remain the waiting list.

External Challenges

18. Over the past three years there have been no challenges to the primary (Reception) admissions policy from the Ombudsman, the School Adjudicator or through the Courts.

New Admissions Code of Practice

19. Following extensive national consultation the Department for Education has very recently issued a new statutory Code of Practice for school admissions (a summary of the main points is provided at appendix C). Generally, the Code seeks to simplify matters relating to admissions. It also contains some optional provisions in respect of admission arrangements (policy). The new optional provisions would not appear to improve existing arrangements, such as giving a higher admission priority to the children of members of staff. One mandatory provision is that adopted children who were previously in care, must be given the same highest priority for places as looked-after children.

20. There appears to be nothing else in the new COP which would improve Manchester's existing primary school admission arrangements (policy).

Appendix A

Planned Admissions Numbers for 2013/14 entry

Primary Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

School Name	PAN	Ward
Abbey Hey Primary School	60	Gorton North
Abbott Community Primary School	30	Miles Platting & Newton Heath
Acacias Primary School	60	Levenshulme
All Saints Primary School (Gorton)	30	Gorton North
Alma Park Primary School	60	Levenshulme
Armitage C.E. Primary School	60	Ardwick
Ashbury Meadow Community Primary School	30	Bradford
Aspinal Primary School	30	Gorton South
Barlow Hall Primary School	45	Chorlton Park
Beaver Road Primary School	90	Didsbury East
Birchfields Primary School	90	Rusholme
Bowker Vale Primary School	60	Higher Blackley
Briscoe Lane Primary School	45	Miles Platting & Newton Heath
Broad Oak Primary School	75	Didsbury East
Broadhurst Primary School	30	Moston
Brookburn Community School	60	Chorlton
Button Lane Primary School	60	Brooklands
Cavendish Road Primary School	60	Chorlton Park
Chapel Street Primary School	75	Gorton South
Charlestown Community Primary School	45	Charlestown
Cheetwood Primary School	30	Cheetham
Chorlton C.E. Primary School	30	Chorlton
Chorlton Park Primary School	90	Chorlton Park
Claremont Primary School	60	Moss Side
Crab Lane Primary School	45	Higher Blackley
Cravenwood Community Primary School	60	Crumpsall
Crossacres Primary School	60	Sharston
Crosslee Primary School	45	Charlestown
Crowcroft Park Primary School	30	Longsight
Crumpsall Lane Primary School	60	Crumpsall
Green End Primary School	60	Burnage
Harpur Mount Primary School	60	Harpurhey
Haveley Hey Community School	60	Sharston
Heald Place Primary School	90	Rusholme
Higher Openshaw Community Primary School	45	Bradford
Holy Trinity C.E. Primary School	30	Harpurhey
Irk Valley Community School	90	Crumpsall
Ladybarn Primary School	60	Withington
Lily Lane Infants School	75	Harpurhey
Manley Park Primary School	60	Whalley Range
Mauldeth Road Primary School	45	Withington
Medlock Primary School	60	Ardwick
Moston Fields Primary School	45	Moston
Moston Lane Community Primary School	60	Harpurhey

New Moston Primary School	75	Moston
Newall Green Primary School	90	Baguley
Northenden Community School	30	Northenden
Old Hall Drive Primary School	60	Gorton South
Old Moat Community Primary School	60	Old Moat
Oswald Road Primary School	90	Chorlton
Park View Community Primary	45	Miles Platting & Newton Heath
Peel Hall Primary School	30	Sharston
Pike Fold Primary School	45	Crumpsall
Plymouth Grove Primary School	60	Ardwick
Rack House Primary School	60	Northenden
Ravensbury Community School	60	Ancoats & Clayton
Ringway Primary School	45	Woodhouse Park
Rolls Crescent Primary School	60	Hulme
Sandilands Primary School	60	Brooklands
Seymour Road Primary School	60	Ancoats & Clayton
St Agnes CE Primary School	60	Longsight
St Augustine's C.E. Primary School	30	Harpurhey
St Barnabas CE Primary School	30	Bradford
St Chrysostom's CE Primary School	60	Ardwick
St Clement's C.E. Primary School	30	Bradford
St James' CE Primary School (Gorton)	30	Gorton North
St John's CE Primary School (Longsight)	45	Longsight
St Luke's C.E. Primary School	60	Ardwick
St Margaret's C.E. Primary School	75	Whalley Range
St Mary's CE Primary School (Moss Side)	60	Moss Side
St Pauls CE Primary School	45	Withington
St Wilfrid's C.E. Primary School (N.H.)	30	Miles Platting & Newton Heath
Temple Primary School	90	Cheetham
The Willows Primary School	60	Woodhouse Park
Varna Street Primary School	60	Bradford
Webster Primary School	60	Hulme
Wilbraham Primary School	75	Fallowfield

Appendix B

Current Admission Policy For Community And Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools

Where there are more places than preferences expressed, all applicants will be offered a place as of right. Where there are more preferences expressed than places available, the following oversubscription criteria will be applied to decide which children are offered places, up to the PAN:

Category 1 - children who are looked after by a local authority;

Category 2 - children with exceptional medical/social needs;

Category 3 - children with a sibling at the school;

Category 4 – all other children

Within each category applicants, will be prioritised according to the distance between the child's permanent address and the school. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the centre point of the child's permanent home address to the centre point of the school as defined by Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), and using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority.

Notes:

Category 2 - Exceptional medical/social needs

- A panel of Local Authority officers will consider Category 2 applications on behalf of the Director of Children's Services.
- If a parent has chosen a particular school because the child has exceptional social or medical circumstances or the parent is disabled, this should be indicated with the reasons for choosing the school. Parents must also provide a letter from a doctor or social worker as supporting evidence. The LA will then send a category 2 application form allowing the parent to state in full the exceptional social/medical reasons why the child should attend this school.
- If supporting evidence is not supplied with a category 2 application the application will be refused.

Category 3 - Sibling

- A sibling is defined as a brother or sister attending the applied for school when the applicant will take up the place and living at the same address. This includes adopted siblings, stepsiblings and foster children;
- Sibling criteria, as specified above may be applied whether the sibling is older or younger than the applicant with the exception of siblings who are in a nursery class of a primary school or attending the 6th form of a secondary school or academy.

Deferred Entry

Parent/ carers can request that the date their child is admitted to the school/academy is deferred * until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year. Where entry is deferred, admission authorities must hold the place for that

child and not offer it to another child. The parent/ carer would not however be able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday.

Part Time Attendance

Parents/ carers can request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Admission to Nursery Provision

- The arrangements (policy) will not apply to children being admitted to nursery provision, including nursery provision delivered in a co-located children's centre.
- Parents/carers of children who are admitted to nursery provision must actively apply for a place at their preferred school/ Academy, as attendance at the nursery or co-located children's centre does not guarantee admission to the school/ Academy;

Appendix C

Primary Admissions Round – Process for September 13/14 Admission (Excerpt from Manchester's Admission Scheme 2013/14)

- 8.1** The closing date for applications will be 14 December 2012. Any SAFs received after the closing date will be processed as late applications. This means an offer of a school place will be made after all on time applicants have been processed. Late applications for Manchester school/academies may result in parents/carers not being offered a place at their preferred school/academy.
- 8.2** The LA will only process applications received after the deadline date as on time applications if there is a good reason for late submission. Such applications are valid late applications. A valid late application will include situations where children move into Manchester after the closing date, before offers of places are made. Late applications with reasons for late submission will only be considered up to the 06 February 2013. This is the date when application information is exchanged with other LA's.
- 8.3** Where possible late applicants will be sent an offer letter on 26 April 2013.
- 8.4** Applications received after the 26 April 2013 will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as possible.
- 8.5** SAFs for OAA schools and academies, received after the closing date will be passed to the school/academy with a note that it has been received late. It will be for that Admission Authority to decide how it wishes to process the application.

Appendix D

Main Points From The New Statutory Admissions Code Of Practice

- giving introducing a '**national offer day**' for primary places, mirroring that for secondary offers. It is proposed that the date for this will be 16 April each year, starting in 2014;
- giving greater **freedom** to schools to **increase the number of places** they are able to offer to parents;
- allowing schools to **prioritise the children of staff** employed there for two or more years, or who have been recruited to meet a school's particular skills shortage;
- allowing infant classes to exceed the statutory limit where the 31st child is a **twin** or from multiple births, or of **armed forces personnel**;
- allowing **academies to prioritise disadvantaged children** who are eligible for the Pupil Premium;
- allowing **schools to take direct applications from parents** in a new **in-year admissions process** to help reduce delays in finding a school place once term starts when a child moves to a new area.
- **banning councils from using area-wide 'lotteries'** as the principal method of allocating places across a local authority area;
- cutting bureaucracy by requiring admission authorities to **consult on arrangements only every seven years**, rather than every three years, if no changes are proposed;
- **allowing anyone to object** to admissions arrangements. Currently only a very restricted list of people can do so.
- Parents will have **at least 20 days to lodge an appeal** against primary or secondary school decisions. The current 10-day limit means parents must appeal quickly but many then drop the appeal because they later get an offer at another of their preferred schools. In the last school year for which figures are available (2008/09), more than a quarter of all appeals lodged (24,550 out of 88,270) were not taken forward, wasting time and money.
- **Guidance against hearing appeals on school premises will be overturned.** At the moment admission authorities sometimes have to make costly, taxpayer-funded bookings of hotels or conference rooms.
- **Admission authorities will no longer be required to advertise for lay appeal members every three years**, but must ensure that panel members are independent and that they retain their independence for the duration of their service.