

Draft Co-ordinated Admission Scheme for In Year Admissions to Schools in Torbay from September 2010

1. Introduction

This scheme has been formulated by Torbay Council acting under the provisions of the School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008 and the DCSF School Admissions Code 2009.

There has been extensive consultation with admitting authorities and the Local Admission Forum and the scheme has the agreement of all admission authorities in Torbay, i.e. the Local Authority and the Governing Body of Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools.

The scheme will be implemented for admissions from September 2010 onwards and will be reviewed annually.

The Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme and the Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme cover the admission of children to school at the normal admission round (in the reception year in primary schools and year 7 in secondary schools). However a number of children will require admission to school at other times and these admissions, known as 'in year', 'mid phase' or casual admissions will be dealt with by this scheme.

Applications for some children may require additional consideration and these children will be admitted to school under the Fair Access Protocol, a copy of which is attached to this scheme.

2. The Scheme

2.1 There is a requirement that every application for a school place must be made to the home local authority. Therefore there will be a Common Application Form.

2.2 The Common Application Form will be made available to Torbay parents who wish to express a preference for a place after the normal admission round in:

- A mainstream primary or secondary school in Torbay (including VA and Foundation)
- A mainstream primary or secondary school in another local authority area

2.3 Parents resident in Torbay will not be able to make an application direct to another LA and nor will parents not resident in Torbay be able to make application direct to Torbay. However if a family have moved to Torbay from

another LA area and have evidence of their new address e.g. a rental agreement or exchange of contracts they will be treated as Torbay residents.

Parents will be able to express up to three different preferences on the common application form including schools outside Torbay. These preferences must be ranked in order by the parents and pupils will be eligible for consideration for a place at all three schools.

2.4 On the form parents will be able to give reasons for their preferences including religious and philosophical convictions.

2.5 Parents will be informed that they will receive the offer of one school place only and that will be either:

- A place at the highest ranked school for which they are eligible and for which a preference was expressed
- Where none of the three preferences can be met, an alternative school place in Torbay will be offered by the LA.

2.6 The Common Application Form will be available for parents from Torbay LA and all primary and secondary schools within the area. It will be accompanied by a written explanation of the scheme as well as other details required to be included in the composite prospectus called TIPS 4.

2.7 The LA will seek to operate an online admissions system for parents.

2.8 Parents are entitled to ask for a change of school at any time during the year but the change of school will not normally take place until the beginning of a new term unless:

- The child is moving to Torbay from another local authority area
- The child is moving within Torbay to a new address served by a different primary or secondary school
- A place is being sought in a selective school and the admissions authority of that school deems that the admission should take place immediately
- The child is in years 10 or 11 and for academic reasons the transfer should take place immediately
- there are significant medical reasons or social reasons supported by a medical practitioner or other professional why an immediate transfer is required
- where a child is taken into care or accommodated and the change is supported by a letter from a Social Worker

All requests for a change of school will usually be dealt with within 20 school days. In the case of applications for selective schools it may be necessary for pupils to take a series of tests or information on academic ability to be received before the offer of a place can be made. If more than one selective school is named on the common application form the tests will be held at the

selective school ranked highest by the parent and information on the result will be shared with the other schools.

2.9 Where an admitting authority for a school operates an oversubscription criterion which requires the applicant to demonstrate commitment to a particular faith or denomination, the scheme allows the school to ask applicants to submit a supplementary information form (SIF) and for this to be returned directly to the school. This form cannot replace the Common Application Form. Schools using a SIF will exchange information with the LA in order to ensure that parents comply with these requirements.

2.10 Where a school receives a direct application for a school place, this must be forwarded to the LA to ensure the parent has had the opportunity of expressing three preferences using a Common application Form. Any Common Application Forms received by schools must be forwarded to the LA to ensure that all schools have received details of the applications and to forward any relevant information.

2.11 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 or Switzerland and proof of residence in the area.

2.12 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 in the European Economic Area 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.

Where a child whose nationality is of a country other than those in the European Economic Area or Switzerland, an application will be accepted on production of his or her passport. This will establish that the child has been admitted to the United Kingdom and make any visa restrictions available for inspection. Proof of residence in the area will be required.

The countries which constitute the European Economic Area are:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, 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.

2.13 Torbay LA will forward details of applications received to all admitting authorities each week. This will include all VA and Foundation schools within Torbay and to the relevant LA outside Torbay. Applications for places outside Torbay will be sent electronically to the relevant LA for consideration under their scheme except in the case of IT failure. That LA would be expected to forward applications to their VA and foundation schools.

2.14 Details provided to admitting authorities will not include the parental ranking.

2.15 Schools can send 'welcome' letters after the LA has notified the parent of the allocation of a school place.

2.16 Parents must accept the school place within ten school days of the date of the offer and the place will only be held for the child for one month.

2.17 Every Monday during term time primary and secondary schools will send a proforma return to the LA showing the numbers on roll in each year group.

3.1 The Co-ordinated Scheme

3.1 The purpose of the co-ordinated scheme of admission is to maximise parental preference and to ensure that a child is offered only one school place.

3.2 In accordance with the DCSF School Admissions Code the scheme is an Equal Ranking Scheme

The Equal Ranking System

4.1 The LA will forward the details of applicants to other admitting authorities, but will not reveal the ranking.

4.2 Admitting authorities will consider all preferences equally regardless of ranking. This requires all admitting authorities to apply admission arrangements and arrange all applicants in order of priority, individually first to last.

4.3 Admitting Authorities return the lists to the LA who will apply the co-ordinated scheme by allocating pupils to the highest ranked school that can offer a place.

The Allocation of Places

5.1 The LA will act as a clearing house for all admitting authorities.

The LA will:

- allocate places where it is the admitting authority for a school;
- administer the allocation according to the scheme,
- allocate a child to the nearest comprehensive school within Torbay with places available having regard to distance, time and transport costs where no other preference can be met.

5.2 Every week during the school term the LA will forward new applications to other admitting authorities for consideration under their admissions policy. Applications received during school holidays will be forwarded to schools on a regular basis and will be dealt with as soon as possible. Other admission authorities will provide the LA with weekly update on the numbers on their school roll.

5.3 Other admission authorities will consider each application and notify the

LA of its decision within one week of receiving the application. In the case of selective schools it may be necessary for the pupil to be tested or for reports to be received so this process may take longer but every application should receive a reply within 20 school days.

5.4 Parents will be notified of their child's allocation by a letter from the LA. Parents who apply online will also receive an email allocation.

5.5 The letters and emails will inform parents:

- which school their child has been allocated
- why their child has not been allocated a place at other preferred school
- details of the appeals procedure if their preference(s) cannot be met.

5.6 All schools will notify the LA each week of the numbers in each year group to assist with the allocation of school places

6. Appeals

6.1 A parent will have the right of appeal for a place at any school they have been refused.

6.2 Information about the appeals process will be available from the LA or from admission authorities

6.3 Parents may appeal for any school for which an offer cannot be made.

7. Waiting Lists

7.1 Waiting lists must be kept for at least the autumn term in year 7. After that it is for individual admitting authorities to decide whether or not to keep waiting lists.

The admitting authorities who do keep waiting lists will forward the lists to the LA when requested to do so.

New applications will be placed on the waiting list ranked according to the oversubscription criteria

The school must notify the LA if a place becomes available and the LA will write to the parents to offer the place.

8. Fair Access

8.1 Schools are also required to give special priority to certain groups of vulnerable children. This is governed by a Fair Access Protocol. The Protocol aims to ensure that the needs of pupils are fully considered before admission to school and that they are admitted to school without undue delay.

8.2 Children who may be considered under this Protocol include:

- a. Children in Care (CIC) who have complex needs.
- b. Children attending PRU's who need to be reintegrated back into mainstream education

- c. Children who have been out of education for more than a term,
- d. Children whose parents have been unable to find them a place after moving to the area, because of a shortage of places
- e. Children withdrawn from schools by their family, following fixed term exclusions seeking to return
- f. Children of Refugees, asylum seekers, travellers
- g. Homeless children
- h. Children with unsupportive family backgrounds where a place has not been sought
- i. Children moving to the area who have significant difficulties of behaviour or attendance as evidenced by truancy, fixed term exclusions or who are known to the police or other agencies
- j. Children who are carers
- k. Children with special educational needs but without a statement
- l. Children with disabilities or medical conditions
- m. Children returning from the criminal justice system
- n. Children returning to school following a period of unsuccessful elective home education
- o. Children who have been permanently excluded from school
- p. Children who have been educated for some time outside the UK. in a system where language, culture or curriculum makes swift integration difficult
- q. Children of UK service personnel and other Crown Servants
- r. Other vulnerable young people such as young mothers, young carers or children with medical needs

8.3 Parental preference will initially determine where the request for admission is made.

8.4 In the case of Fair Access Pupils transferring between schools in Torbay, and in accordance with normal transfer procedures, schools will provide the LA's Admissions Team with full information on the pupil, within 5 school days to enable admission to be arranged.

Where Fair Access Pupils move into Torbay from schools outside the LA area, the LA's Admission Team will gather information from previous schools/LA as above.

Prior to the admission of any Fair Access pupil, an identification of need will be carried out by the LA to determine the appropriate educational placement, taking account of parental preference, and determine the support and intervention strategies that can be offered to the pupil in order to maximise the chances of successful admission. The Head of Learning Access (HoLA), or her nominee, will discuss arrangements for admission with the pupil and the parent/carer within 10 school days from the date that it becomes known a Fair Access pupil is in need of a school place.

In identifying needs, the LA will draw upon expertise from services located in or aligned to the Cluster teams.

Where the identification of need concludes that a Fair Access pupil should be admitted to school, the LA will draw up an integration plan with the receiving school describing the support that will be available to the pupil before, during and after admission to school. The plan will describe support that is to be offered by the school and by the LA and identify an appropriate curriculum offer. The plan will also determine the duration of any support programme which will not normally exceed one half term.

In **Secondary schools** this will be enabled through the Behaviour & Attendance Partnership arrangement (in conjunction with the Head of Learning Access). In **Primary schools** arrangements will be made through the Admissions & Student Services Manager.

8.5 Availability of Places

In deciding whether places are available for Fair Access Pupils, all Admission Authorities must follow their admissions arrangements and the Admissions Code in deciding whether a place is available. If a parent is refused a place at their preferred school they will be informed of the right of appeal.

Fair Access Pupils are expected to meet the selective or denominational requirements for admission where these are required.

Provided there is space in the relevant year group and integration plan is in place, schools will admit Fair Access Pupils. If the PAN has been reached, admitting authorities will also admit Fair Access pupils above the PAN (or above any informal "admission limit") unless:

- a. the class is a **Key Stage One class** and the admission of an additional pupil would create an unlawful large class of more than 30 pupils (though Children in Care who are Fair Access can be admitted) or
- b. the relevant year group is more than 5% above the PAN/admission limit or
- c. in the case of a **Primary school**, either it has already admitted to the school two Fair Access pupils during the current term and these pupils are still on roll or it has already admitted a Fair Access pupil to the relevant class during the current term and this pupil is still on roll.
- d. in the case of a **Secondary school**, it has already admitted two Fair Access pupils during the current term into the relevant year group and these pupils are still on roll.

Where the above process cannot secure a place at the preferred school, the child will be admitted to the nearest school to the pupil's home which can offer a place.

Where the process above cannot secure a place at any Torbay school, the LA will, after consideration of the circumstances of the case, identify a school placement. If necessary, the LA will then proceed to secure the admission of the pupil using provisions to direct admission within the School Admissions Code. The LA will only direct the admission of a Fair Access Pupil if it has

first drawn up an integration plan for the child.

9. Special Educational Needs

Children with a statement of SEN are not covered by the Fair Access Protocol, as their needs must be considered separately and admissions arranged by the LA's SEN Team using the SEN Code.

In brief this process is that parents are invited to express a preference for a school. This places a duty on the LA to consult with the preferred school with the presumption that the school will be named on the Statement and the pupil admitted unless the school cannot meet the child's needs, or the admission is incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

Where pupils with statements of SEN meet one of the Fair Access definitions, they will be counted as a Fair Access admission for the purposes of monitoring.