

Qualifying Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for primary schools in the area of Southwark Local Authority

Introduction

- 1. The Education Act 2002 introduced a coordinated admissions scheme that has to be agreed between all admissions authorities in a LA's area to which it is intended to apply. Failing such agreement it could be imposed – after due process – by the Secretary of State.**

Interpretation

1. In this scheme –

- “the LA” means the London Borough of Southwark acting in its capacity as local education authority;
- “the LA area” means the area in respect of which the LA is the local authority;
- “primary education” has the same meaning as in section 2(1) of the Education Act 1996;
- “primary school” has the same meaning as in section 5(1) of the Education Act 1996;
- “school” means a community, foundation or voluntary aided school (but not a special school) which is maintained by the LA;
- “foundation schools” means such of the schools as are foundation schools;
- “VA schools” means such of the schools as are voluntary aided schools;
- “admission authority” in relation to a community school means the LA and, in relation to a foundation or voluntary aided.
- school means the governing body of that school;
- “the specified year” means the school year beginning at or about the beginning of September **2007**;
- “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;

- “mid year admission” means any application for a place in the first year of primary education that is received on or after 1 July **2007** for admission to Year R in **2007/2008** and
- “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.

The scheme

2. The scheme shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
3. Subject to paragraph 6, the scheme shall apply to every primary school in the LA area (except special schools) and shall take effect for admissions for September **2007** and onwards.

SCHEDULE 1

PART I - THE SCHEME

1. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF).
2. The CAF will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of primary education at schools in the LA’s area in the specified year.
3. The CAF must be used as a means of expressing up to four preferences for the purposes of section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, by parents/carers wishing to express a preference for their child to be admitted to a school within the LA area (including VA and foundation schools);
4. The CAF will –
 - a. invite the parent/carer to express up to four preferences for a school maintained by the LA and invite the parent to rank those preferences.
 - b. invite parents/carers to give their reasons for each preference, **detailing any social or medical needs and information on siblings attending the school;**

c. explain that the parent/carers will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:

(i) if a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, a place will be offered at an alternative school;

(ii) if a child is eligible for more than one school for which an application has been made on the CAF, a place will be offered at the highest ranking nominated school for which they are eligible for a place.

d. specify the closing date and where it must be returned, in accordance with paragraph 10. This will be mid-January.

5. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:

a. that the CAF is available on request from the LA and from all primary schools **and pre-school providers** in the LA area;

b. that the CAF is accompanied by a written explanation of the co-ordinated admissions scheme; and

c. that parents/carers are clearly informed of how to apply for schools outside the LA area.

6. The LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

a. every parent/carers who is resident in the LA area who will be applying for a place in a reception class of a primary school for their child receives a copy of the CAF (and a written explanation).

b. every parent/carers whose application falls within the category of a mid year admission receives a copy of the CAF (and written explanation), on request, and understands the process.

7. All preferences expressed on the CAF are valid applications. The governing body of a foundation or VA school can require parents who wish to nominate, or have nominated, their school on the CAF, to provide additional information on a supplementary form only where the additional information is required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria to the application. Where a supplementary form is required it must be returned directly to the school.

8. Where a school receives a supplementary form it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent/carers has also completed a CAF and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary forms are received directly by foundation or VA schools the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a CAF has been received from the parent/carers and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete a

CAF. Under the requirements of the scheme, parents/carers will not be under any obligation to complete an individual school's supplementary form where this is not strictly required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria.

9. Schools which receive direct application forms in error must inform their LA and send the forms to them.

Processing of CAFs

10. The closing date for applications is the Friday **12.01.07**

Completed CAFs are to be returned to the LA.

Determining offers in response to the CAF

11. The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the CAFs. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the CAF 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 LA will allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 14 of this Schedule.

12. By **9.02.07** the LA will notify the admission authority for each of the schools of every nomination that has been made for that school, including all relevant details and any supplementary form received by this date which schools require in order to apply their oversubscription criteria.

13. By **16.03.07** the admission authority for each school will consider all applications for their schools, apply the school's oversubscription criteria (if appropriate) and provide the LA with a list of those applicants ranked according to the school's oversubscription criteria. Where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available at the school by a significant amount, the admission authority need rank only as many as it agrees with the LA to be necessary, allowing for the fact that some of those who could be offered a place might accept a place at another school.

14. The LA will 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 will be allocated to the child.
- where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated

schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranking nominated school for which they are eligible for a place.

- Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school to the child's home with a place available [as defined in Schedule 3].

15. On **20.04.07** the LA will inform its schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools.

16. On **27.04.07** parents/carers will be notified that they are being offered a place at the allocated school. This letter will give the following information:

- the name of the school at which a place is offered;
- the reasons why the child is not being offered a place at any of the other schools which may have been nominated on the CAF;
- information about their statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
- contact details for the school and LA (and those nominated foundation and VA schools where they were not offered a place, so that they can lodge an appeal with the governing body);
- If the child has been refused a place at a nominated school, an invitation for the child's name to be placed on a waiting list for reallocation if places become free after offer date. The LA will operate the reallocation process until October half term for September entrants and February half term for January entrants.

The letter will not inform parents/carers of places still available at other schools.

On **20.04.07** the LA will also inform neighbouring LAs of any offers of a place at its schools made to neighbours' residents;

17. **11.05.07**: the deadline for parents/carers to accept the place offered. If they do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.

18. **07.06.07**: The LA re-allocates any places in line with the admissions criteria that may have become vacant since **27.04.07**, giving priority to parents/carers as follows;

those who have not yet been offered any school place, for example, late applicants whose preferences have not yet been considered;

then to those who have been offered a school place but not at **any of the schools** they nominated on the CAF (if the place that has become available is at a school the parent/carer nominated on the CAF **and they have requested to go on the waiting list**); and

then to those who have been offered a school place but who ranked the school at which a place has now become available higher on their CAF than the school at which they were offered a place on 27.04.07. A child who has a place at a nominated school will not be offered a place at a school which they have ranked lower than that school on their CAF.

PART II - LATE APPLICATIONS

19. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **12.01.07**. As far as is reasonably practicable applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late *for a good reason* will be accepted provided they are received **before 9.02.07**, the date the allocation procedures begin. Examples of what will be considered as good reason include: when a single parent/carer has been ill for some time, or has been dealing with the death of a close relative; a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of **residence** in a Southwark property will be required in these cases). Other circumstances will be considered and each case decided on its own merits.

LATE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 12.01.07. Applications received after **12.01.07** but before the allocations procedure has begun on **9.02.07** will be considered after the allocation period has ended but before **27.04.07**. For applications received after the allocations procedure has begun but before **27.04.07**, parents/carers will be notified on **31.05.07**.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 30.03.07 BUT BEFORE 1 JULY

21. Applications made direct to any school on the CAF must be forwarded to the LA immediately. Where only the supplementary form is received the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a CAF has been received from the parent/carer and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete a CAF. The LA will enter the details onto its central database and, after consultation with the relevant admission authority, offer a place at the **nominated/ highest ranked** school with a place available or if this is not possible, at the nearest appropriate school with a place available **[as defined in Schedule 3]**.

PART III – MID YEAR ADMISSIONS

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 1 JULY (MID YEAR ADMISSIONS)

22. Applications received after 1 July, and applications for places in a year group other than the normal year of entry to primary school, will be treated as mid year admissions. These applications should be made on the CAF and sent to the LA, which will;

- Determine any application for a community or controlled school for which it is the admission authority and inform the parent; and
- If the application is for a foundation or voluntary aided school, refer the application to the governing body of the school, which will make a determination within 15 days and notify both the parent and the LA.

In either case the admission authority must advise parents/carers who are refused admission of their right of appeal and that they may request to be placed on the waiting list, up until the date that the waiting list closes.

23. If any parents/carers approach foundation or voluntary aided schools directly about a mid year admission, the governing body must ensure that the parent completes the CAF. The CAF should be sent to the LA within 5 days

24. The LA will keep track of all applications for mid year admission, and ensure that children are placed in a school without undue delay.

SCHEDULE 2

Timetable of co-ordinated scheme

- 12.01.07:** Closing date for the Common Application forms and supplementary forms to be returned to the LA.
- 9.02.07:** Details of applications and any relevant supplementary forms to be sent to foundation and VA schools.
- 16.03.07:** Foundation and VA schools provide the LA with ranked lists of applicants.

Between **9.02.07** and **16.03.07**, the LA will match the ranked lists of all the schools and allocate places in accordance with Para 14 of Schedule 1.

- 20.04.07:** By this date the LA will inform neighbouring LAs of the outcome of applications from residents in their areas.
- 20.04.07:** On this date the LA will notify schools which parents/carers have been offered places at their schools.
- 27.04.07:** Notification of offers sent to parents/carers.
- 11.05.07:** Last date for offers to be accepted by parents/carers.
- 08.06.07:** Any places that have become available are allocated to parents/carers in priority order in accordance with paragraph 18 of Schedule 1.
NB A second round of coordination will be carried out between **11.05.07 and 31.05.07** for late applicants.

SCHEDULE 3

Nearest Appropriate School

When a preference cannot be met, the “nearest appropriate school”, as referred to in paragraph 14 of Schedule 1 must be one with places available.

“Nearest appropriate” is defined, first by distance. The LA will carry out measurements for community schools. For non-community schools there will be the option to buy into this as a traded service from the authority. The LA will send information on costs to all schools.

However, if your child is a practising member of any faith or denomination and you want a place for them at a school of that faith or denomination, as indicated by reasons on the Common Application Form, that school **may** be offered after consultation with the governing body (as admission authority for the school).

