

Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for First/Primary Schools in the area of Northumberland Local Education Authority- Admission September 2016

Introduction

1. This scheme is made by Northumberland County Council under the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (Primary) (England) Regulations 2002 and applies to all First/Primary Schools in Northumberland.

Separate schemes exist in relation to admissions to Middle and High/Secondary schools and for 'In term' admissions.

The Scheme

1. The scheme referred to shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out in Part I and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Part II.
2. This scheme shall apply to every First/Primary school in the Local Authority area (except special schools) and shall take effect from **2 November 2015**.
3. The scheme shall apply to every admission authority for a First/Primary school in the LA area: Those admission authorities are as follows:

Northumberland County Council

VA and Foundation Schools

Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School
Broomhaugh Church of England First School
Chollerton Church of England First School
Corbridge St Helen's Church of England First School
Ellingham Church of England First School
Embleton Vincent Edwards' Church of England First School
Harbottle Church of England First School
Holy Island Church of England First School
Holy Trinity Church of England First School
Hugh Joicey Church of England First School
Humshaugh Church of England First School
Longhorsley Church of England First School
Morpeth All Saints Church of England First School
St Aidan's Roman Catholic First School
St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic First School (Amble)
St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic First School (Berwick)
St Paul's Roman Catholic First School (Alnwick)
St Mary's Roman Catholic First School
St Michael's Church of England First School
Pax Christi Catholic Partnership, St Paul's Catholic Academy (Cramlington)
St Robert's Roman Catholic First School
Tritlington Church of England First School
Wark Church of England First School
Warkworth Church of England First School
Whalton Church of England First School
Whitley Chapel Church of England First School

Greenhead Church of England Primary School
Henshaw Church of England Primary School

Herdley Bank Church of England Primary School
Newbrough Church of England Primary School
St Bede's Roman Catholic Primary School
St Matthew's Roman Catholic Primary School
St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School
Whitfield Church of England Primary School

Trust Schools

Thropton Village First School

Ashington Learning Partnership Trust

Bothal Primary School
Central Primary School

North Pennine Learning Partnership Trust

Bellingham First School

Academies

Bede Academy – South site
Northumberland Church of England Academy
Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower School
Blyth Malvins Close Academy
Blyth Morpeth Road Academy
Blyth Croftway Academy

PART I – THE SCHEME

1. The standard application form is known as the Common Application Form.
2. The Common Application Form is used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of First/Primary school education in the specified year, and for any applications made into any other year group in the admissions round leading up to, and during, the academic year 2016/2017.
3. The Common Application Form must be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences for the purposes of section 86 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, by parents wishing to express a preference for their child to be admitted to a school within the Local Authority area (including VA, Foundation, Academies and Trust schools);
4. The Common Application Form:-
 - (a) invites the parent to express up to three preferences by completing the form, in rank order of preference.
 - (b) invites parents to give their reasons for each preference.
 - (c) explains that the parent will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that this will be decided through prioritising applications in accordance with the admissions policy(ies) of the schools for which the parent has expressed preferences. The authority will then allocate places in accordance with preferences expressed by parents, where this is possible. However where a parent's preferred school(s) are oversubscribed/filled through applications which have higher prioritisation within the school(s) admission policy(ies) a place will be offered at the nearest school with a place available to those children who are ordinarily resident in Northumberland.

- (d) specifies the closing date and where it must be returned, in accordance with paragraph 9.
- 5. The Local Authority will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:
 - (a) that the Common Application Form is available on request from the Local Authority, from all First/Primary schools in the Local Authority area and from www.northumberland.gov.uk

Parents may apply online from **2 November 2015**

https://schadm.northumberland.gov.uk/ccsenterprise_admissionsonline_live/

and

 - (b) that the Common Application Form is accompanied by a published explanation of the co-ordinated admissions scheme.
- 6. The Local Authority will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
 - (a) every parent who has a child due to enter his or her first year of First/Primary school education receives a copy of the Common Application Form (and an explanation); and
 - (b) every parent whose application falls within the category of a casual admission receives a copy of the Common Application Form (and an explanation), on request, in order to understand the process.
- 7. All preferences expressed on the Common Application Form are valid applications. The governing body of a foundation, VA, Trust school or Academy can require parents who wish to nominate, or have nominated, their school on the Common Application Form, to provide additional information on a supplementary form only where the additional information is required for the governing body to apply their over-subscription criteria to the application. Where a supplementary form is required it must be returned to the Local Authority, along with the Common Application Form, so that the relevant forms can be passed to the school(s).
- 8. Where a school receives a supplementary form it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed a Common Application Form and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary forms are received directly by foundation, VA or Trust schools the school must inform the Local Authority immediately so 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 a Common Application Form. Under the requirements of the scheme, parents will not be expected to complete an individual school's supplementary form where this is not strictly required for the governing body to apply their over-subscription criteria nor must parents or children be interviewed pending a place at a school.

Processing of Common Application Forms

- 9. Completed Common Application Forms are to be returned to the Local Authority by **15 January 2016**.

Children who are resident in Northumberland should return their Common Application Form via their first or primary schools, so that the Local Authority can keep track of parents that do not complete a Common Application Form.

A record is kept by the local authority of those parents who make online applications.

The parents of children who are not resident in Northumberland must complete the Common Application Form of the Local Authority area in which they live (known as the 'home Local Authority'). However, they may return their Common Application Form via a first or primary school. This form will be returned to their home Local Authority to be processed under the Scheme of the home Local Authority. Before forwarding the form, Northumberland Local Authority will note any applications for Northumberland schools, so that such children already within the Northumberland school system are not disadvantaged by having their application processed under a different scheme. Northumberland Local Authority will, in agreement with neighbouring Local Authorities, seek to secure Common Application Form from other Local Authorities to be distributed to children in Northumberland nursery classes or pre-schools who are resident in other Local Authorities, in an effort to avoid any perception of individual children within a class being treated differently to their peers.

Determining offers in response to the Common Application Form

10. The Local Authority will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the Common Application Forms. The Local Authority will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place 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 Local Authority will allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 13 of this scheme.

11. **By 2 February 2016** the Local Authority 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 over-subscription criteria. Where parents have nominated a school outside the Local Authority area, the Local Authority will also notify the relevant authority/authorities by **2 February 2016**.

At the same time, there is a duty on Governing Bodies who are the admission authority for a school to notify the Local Authority of any application made directly to them, whether or not the parent lives in Northumberland. Applications made on a Common Application Form direct to any school, including those schools where the Governing Body is the admission authority, must be forwarded to the Local Authority immediately. Where only the supplementary form is received the school must inform the Local Authority immediately so 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 a Common Application Form.

12. **By 2 March 2016** the admission authority for each school will consider all applications for their school, apply the school's over-subscription criteria (if appropriate) and provide the Local Authority with a list of those applicants ranked according to the school's over-subscription 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 much as it agrees with the Local Authority to be necessary, allowing for the fact that some of those who could be offered a place might be offered a place at another school.

13. By **25 March 2016** the Local Authority will check and allocate all First/Primary preference applications for which schools have a place, in accordance with school's oversubscription criteria:

The statutory ' **Equal Preference System**' is used to allocate school places. This means that:

- All preferences stated are initially looked at individually regardless of the order in which they have been ranked.
- The order that preferences have been ranked becomes important when it is possible to allocate a place for a child at more than one preferred school.
- In this instance a place will be offered at the available school you have ranked the highest.
- It is possible that applicant (A) who ranked a school as a lower preference, could be allocated a place ahead of other applicants who ranked the same school as a preference, if s/he (A) meets one of the higher oversubscription criteria
- Where the child is not allocated a place at any of their preferred schools and is resident within another Local Authority, Northumberland Local Authority has no duty to allocate a place in another Northumberland school.

14. Where the Local Authority is unable to offer a place at any school named on the Common Application Form, a place will be offered at the nearest appropriate school defined as:

- (a) A Community or Voluntary Controlled school for which the Local Authority is the Admission Authority.
- (b) Such a school that is nearest to the home address and where a place is available. As far as possible the school will be:
 - (i) within a reasonable distance and;
 - (ii) as far as possible has regard to keeping daily travelling within reasonable limits and the accessibility of schools or public transport networks, if such transport is necessary under the County Council's School Transport Policy.

15. On **25 March 2016** – The Local Authority informs its First/Primary Schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools.

16. On **15 April 2016** parents will be notified of the school at which they are being offered a place. In addition:

If parents have been unsuccessful in obtaining a place at their first preference school, they will be given:

- the reasons their child is not being offered a place at their first preference school
- information about their statutory right of appeal against this decision

If the parents have been unsuccessful in obtaining a place at their first and second preference applications, they will be given:

- the reasons their child is not being offered a place at each of these schools
- information about their statutory right of appeal against these decisions

If the parents have been unsuccessful in obtaining places at their first, second and third preference schools they will be given:

- the reasons their child is not being offered a place at each of these schools
- information about their statutory right of appeal against these decisions
- the offer of a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, subject to them being resident in Northumberland.

Parents will be invited to contact the Local Authority if they want to be considered for any places that might become available in schools they ranked higher than the school at which they have been offered a place. Parents can also ask for their child to be considered for reallocation to a school that they ranked lower than the one at which they have been offered a place when their circumstances have changed significantly, for example they have moved house. The reallocation process takes place after **9 May 2016**;

Contact details for lodging an appeal will be given, including where the admission authority is the school's governing body.

Parents will be informed of places still available in other schools if they express an interest in considering places at alternative schools.

17. **29 April 2016:** the deadline for parents to accept the place offered. *If parents have not responded by this date it will be assumed that they have not accepted the place. A letter will be written to parents confirming this to be the case and requesting confirmation by **9 May 2016** that they have obtained an alternative school place for their child.*

Re-allocation

18. **9 May 2016:** The Local Authority reallocates any places that may have become available since **15 April 2016**, in accordance with schools' admission priorities as follows:
- late applications will be treated equally with applications from those who have been offered a school place but have requested to be considered for a place at other school(s) should one become available
 - applications will be prioritised as described in paragraph 13
 - Applicants in the re-allocation process will be informed by **30 May 2015** of the school places allocated to their child. If this school place is not their first preference, parents will be advised of their right to appeal. If parents already with a school place have been successful at obtaining a place at an alternative school they requested, they will be informed accordingly. Should this not be their highest preference, they will be informed of their right to appeal
 - if parents already with a school place are not successful in obtaining a place at one of the alternative schools they requested, they will be informed accordingly and advised of their right of appeal.

Re-allocation lists for schools will be kept by the Local Authority up until **31 December 2016**. No lists will be kept for any school thereafter, either by the Local Authority or by the school itself, although individual admission authorities can maintain reserve lists as part of their admission policy.

19. Should places become available after **30 May 2016** and before **1 September 2016** at schools for which there are reserve lists, applications will be prioritised as set out in paragraph 13.

PART II – LATE APPLICATIONS

20. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **15 January 2016**. 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 **19 February 2016**, the date the allocation procedures begin. Examples of 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; a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of Northumberland property where the child is to be resident will be required in these cases). Other circumstances will be considered and each case decided on its own merits.
*It should be noted that forms will be unavailable on e-admissions from midnight **15 January 2016***

Late applications received after 19 February 2016

21. Applications received after the allocations procedure has begun on **31 January 2015**, but before **15 April 2015** will be considered after the allocation period has ended and will be offered a school place by the end of May 2016.

No Common Application Form received by 15 April 2016

22. Where no Common Application Form is submitted the child will, on **15 April 2016**, be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy. The Local Authority should have the evidence available to establish which parents this applies to as a result of Common Application Forms being returned via first and middle schools.

Applications received after 15 April 2016

23. Applications received after **15 April 2016**, and for places in year group other than the normal year of entry to First/Primary schools, will be treated as casual admissions. These applications should be made on the Common Application Form and sent to the LA, which will:
- o Determine any application for a community or controlled school for which it is the admission authority in accordance with the process described in paragraph 13; and
 - o 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 and notify the Local Authority who will in turn notify the parent on behalf of the governing body.
 - o Parents who are unsuccessful in obtaining a place at their first preference school will be offered a right of appeal.
24. If any parents approach foundation or voluntary aided schools directly about a casual admission, the governing body must ensure that the parent completes a Common Application Form (if they have not already done so). The Common Application Form should be sent to the Local Authority as soon as practically possible, along with the governing body's decision on the application. The governing body should notify the

Local Authority of its decision. In turn, the Local Authority will notify the parents on behalf of the governing body, including informing them of the right of appeal if the school is unable to allocate a place.

25. The Local Authority will keep track of any pupils who apply for casual admission and ensure that they are allocated a school place as soon as possible.

First/Primary School Intake Timetable

LA Admission round opens for online admissions.	2 November 2014
Letters issued inviting applications for first/primary schools.	2 November 2014
Closing date for applications.	15 January 2016
LA notification to other LAs of preferences expressed for schools and academies in their area.	2 February 2016
LA notification to VA/Foundation/Academies of preferences received.	2 February 2016
Final date for Governing bodies of VA/F schools and academies to consider all applications, apply the oversubscription criteria and provide LA with a list showing which category in their admissions policy each applicant falls into.	2 March 2016
Liaison period for LA and VA/F schools and academies to finalise allocations.	2 February 2016 to 2 March 2016
Other LAs notified of places in Northumberland schools to be offered to their residents.	25 March 2016
Notification to VA/F schools and academies of pupils to be offered a place.	25 March 2016
Offers Day – First/Primary	15 April 2016