

## SECTION 3.0: THE ALLOCATION OF PLACES IN HIGH SCHOOLS

**3.1 All admission authorities are required to review their arrangements every year. Therefore, the information given in Sections 2 and 3 applies only to admissions in the school year 2008 – 2009 and may change in future years.**

**3.2** The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 gives parents the right to express a preference for their children to be admitted to any school maintained from public funds and generally the County Council has to comply with that preference. However, there are exceptions to this the main ones being:

- i) where agreeing to the preference would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources – the most important example of this would be if the school is oversubscribed based on the Published Admission Number;
- ii) where agreeing to the preference in the case of infant classes which have a limit of 30 pupils to each qualified teacher, would cause class size prejudice;
- iii) where the preference conflicts with admission arrangements for schools based on selection by reference to ability or aptitude;
- iv) where information provided by the parents in support of their preference is found to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading. Please see [Part E – Appendix](#).

**3.3 What happens if the school is oversubscribed (except in the sixth form)?**

When there are more applications than places, in a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, children are admitted in the following order of priority:

- i) Relevant\* 'Looked after' children.
- ii) Pupils living within the **catchment** area of the school. In the event of a school catchment area change being approved, pupils who would still have a **sibling connection** (as defined in our policy) at the time of admission and who are identified as living at the same address in the previous catchment area for a school, (but not within the revised catchment area), at the time the change was approved, are included in this category.
- iii) Pupils who would still have a **sibling connection** (as defined in our policy) at school at the time of admission. In order to qualify for a place on the grounds of a sibling attending the school, the sibling must already be attending the school at the time of application and still be attending at the time of admission;
- iv) Pupils who have a **significant reason** for admission, such reasons, the validity of which will be determined by the Directorate of Children's Services, will include medical, social or compassionate grounds. To be considered under this category it has to be shown that only this school can meet the medical, social or compassionate needs.

Parents/carers are required to produce a medical certificate or other appropriate information from an independent source. **(Significant reasons will not be considered unless independent supporting information is attached to your application form when submitted);**

- v) Pupils who were attending a **feeder** school at the time of application;
- vi) Pupils who live **nearest** to the school by the shortest available walking route. The measurement will be taken from the front entrance of the pupil's home to the nearest school entrance, which is the access point to the school site, along a road or made up footpath.

In accordance with legislation, a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs will be offered a place at the school named in the Statement.

\*Relevant is all those in the care of a Local Authority or provided with accommodation by a LA under the terms of the Children Act 1989, 'looked after' at the time of the application for admission and who will still be 'looked after' at the time of admission.

Where there are too many applications from within the catchment area, priority will be decided in the order indicated above to all catchment area applicants, i.e. brothers/sisters (siblings) second, significant reasons third, attendance at feeder school fourth, then according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

If there are insufficient places for all siblings, priority will be decided first by reference to significant reasons, second by attendance at a feeder school and thirdly according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

The sibling connection, as well as brother and sister will include half-siblings (that is children who share one birth parent) and legally adopted children. They must also be living at the same home address.

If no place is available for your child to attend the catchment area school for his/her home address and that was the school you gave as one of your preferences, the County Council will try to comply with any second/third preference you have expressed (see also [Section 8.5](#)). If no place is available at your second or third preference schools as well, or if you have not expressed a second/third preference, the County Council will name an alternative school with places available. This will normally be the nearest school to where you live with available places.

It is important to remember that the system described above to deal with oversubscription only applies to parents who have expressed a preference of some sort. **CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS DO NOT EXPRESS A PREFERENCE WILL RECEIVE LOWEST PRIORITY FOR A PLACE AT THEIR CATCHMENT AREA SCHOOL IF IT IS OVERSUBSCRIBED. IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT YOU COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FORM BY THE CLOSING DATE.** If no place is available the County Council will name an alternative school as in the previous paragraph.

### **Additional 'In year' criteria for Key Stage 2, (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6) Key Stage 3, (Years 7, 8 & 9) and Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11).**

All community or voluntary controlled schools with Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 classes can be required to exceed the published admission number by up to 2 places in each year to admit pupils:

- a. Who have been or are at high risk of being permanently excluded from school
- b. Who are Relevant\* 'Looked after' Children.

### **3.4 What happens if schools with shared catchment areas are oversubscribed from within the shared area (except in the sixth form)?**

If where you live has more than one catchment area school and the number of applications for places from within the catchment area for one of those schools exceeds the number of places available, the allocation of places for the shared catchment area will be decided according to the following priorities, in the following sequence:

- i) pupils who would still have a **sibling connection** at the school at the time of admission;
- ii) pupils who have a **significant reason** for admission as assessed above;
- iii) pupils who were attending a **feeder** school at the time of application;
- iv) pupils living **nearer** to the oversubscribed school than to the alternative school.

If places still exist after consideration of i), ii), iii) and iv) above for applicants from within the shared catchment area, they will then be allocated to those pupils who live **nearest** to the oversubscribed school **by the shortest available walking route**.

All **out of area applicants** will be processed in accordance with the criteria as set down in Section 3.3, iii), iv), v) and vi).

### **3.5 What happens if schools are oversubscribed for places in the sixth form?**

The County Council has agreed the following criteria:

- i) General Entry Requirements
  - for courses at AS/A2 level – 5A\*-C grades at GCSE (or equivalent);
  - for courses at AVCE level – 4A\*-C grades at GCSE (or equivalent);
  - for courses at Intermediate GNVQ level – a pass at Foundation GNVQ (or equivalent);
  - for courses at Foundation GNVQ level – 2 A-G grades at GCSE (or equivalent).

The above are general entry requirements for a Sixth Form course. Some subjects/courses will require more specific qualifications to have been achieved in order to study that subject/course;

- ii) in the event of there being more applications from qualifying students than places available, the normal admissions criteria priorities as set out in i) above will apply.

### **3.6 Is there a waiting list for schools that have too many applicants?**

Waiting lists for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, **at the normal year of entry**, are maintained by the Pupil Admissions and Transfers Section, and parents need to apply, in order to be included.

The lists are maintained until 30th September 2008.

Parents, who have applied to be included on a waiting list will only be notified if a place becomes available.

Each waiting list is maintained strictly in order of the priorities listed in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 **and not based upon the date the application was added to the list**. Therefore, new applicants may receive a higher ranking than those who may have been on the list for some time, if they have a higher priority in the oversubscription criteria.

When the LAs waiting lists are no longer maintained, parents who still wish to pursue a place at their preferred school will need to contact the school directly to indicate their interest if a place should become available. Whether or not schools maintain a waiting list, places **must** be allocated strictly in order of priority as listed in paragraphs 3.3 (or 3.4).

**For details of waiting lists at Voluntary Aided or Foundation Schools, you should refer to the School Prospectus.**

### **3.7 Can applications be considered for pupils who do not live in Worcestershire?**

Any applications for the admission of pupils who live outside the County are always considered and for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools should be addressed to the Pupil Admissions and Transfers Section ([See Page 1 for address](#)). For Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools applications must be addressed to the Headteacher. If the preferred school(s) is/are oversubscribed, such applications will be determined in accordance with the relevant admissions criteria.

### **3.8 Can you appeal if your request is unsuccessful?**

#### **Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools (including Sixth Forms)**

If the parental preference cannot be met, you may, if you wish, appeal against the decision. Appeals by parents, setting out the grounds upon which the appeal is made, should be submitted in writing to the Pupil Admissions and Transfer Section within **two weeks of the date of notification of the refusal of a place**. Appeals are heard by an independent appeal panel and whether your appeal is successful is likely to depend of the merits of your case.

#### Second Appeal

The Code of Practice on School Admission Appeals, Para 4.83 (page 41) covers the issue of second appeals for the same school in the same school year. It states that there is no need to give a second decision or rights to a second appeal **unless** there has been a significant change in circumstances.

Further information about the appeals procedure is available from the Pupil Admissions and Transfers Section or from the Director of Corporate Services, Worcestershire County Council, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester. WR5 2NP

#### **Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools**

Separate appeals procedures and arrangements exist to consider decisions by Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools. The arrangements are published by the Governors of the schools and should be obtained from the school directly.

### **3.9 Can a child transfer at any age other than the normal transfer age?**

If parents wish to transfer their child to the same age group in another school, parents must discuss the transfer with the Headteacher of the pupil's present school in the first instance. If it is then decided to make a formal request for transfer, parents should complete an application form available either from schools or the Pupil Admissions and Transfers Section. The County Council's policy and procedures in these circumstances are essentially the same as for admissions to the same school at the normal age and time of transfer, (i.e. as in paragraphs 3.3 or 3.4). However, when determining the number of places available in the relevant age group, the Council may refer to the published admission number that was in operation when that year group was at the normal transfer age, in order to judge whether admission would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.