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Consultation on the Changes to the Admissions Framework

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 19 August 2011
Your comments must reach us by that date.

Department for
Education

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk/consultations

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name Scott Bagshaw
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ME14 1XQ

Contact Details

If your enquiry is related to the content of the consultation, you can contact the PCU telephone help line on: 0370 000 2288.

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Consultation Unit by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288.

Please tick the box below that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Governor
<input type="checkbox"/> Governor	<input type="checkbox"/> National Representative Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Representative Group
<input type="checkbox"/> Headteacher/teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Faith Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> School
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		

Please Specify:

We have sought to remove all duplication and sections of the Codes that were open to misinterpretation, so it is clearer what admission authorities must and must not do within the new Codes as well as making them easier to read and understand.

One of the aims of reviewing the Codes was to reduce the burdens and bureaucracy that schools face by removing unnecessary prescription and elements that drove cost into the process.

The revised Codes should ensure that all school places can continue to be offered in a fair and lawful way, and that school admission appeals can be administered in a more effective way and at lower cost.

Q1) Do you agree that the new Codes achieve these aims?

<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
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Comments: The new Codes are oversimplified, lack definitions and in consequence will be more open to misinterpretation. They were previously working documents for all concerned; the proposed Codes appear to be summary documents open to different interpretations by different people or bodies.

They regularly refer to 'reasonable' when there are very different measures in regard to what one person might consider to be reasonable.

Several sections of the previous code provided clarity and the ambiguous nature of the proposed code leaves several questions unanswered. The list below is not exhaustive but will hopefully provide a flavour of where greater clarity or indeed some clear definitions are required to prevent considerable and costly debates resulting in endless adjudications. The LA has also highlighted some further considerations the Department for Education may wish to consider for inclusion as it may provide further opportunities for efficiency gains.

2.2 - Says CAFs "must allow parents to supply their address (including documentary evidence in support)". KCC currently defers this responsibility to schools. Does this mean it will need to be an LA function? It says we must allow the inclusion of evidence, but this significantly complicates a parent's ability to apply on line – presumably they would need to scan evidence – by allowing schools to check this post offer (The benefit is they only need check the applications of those offered a place and not the hundreds that apply) It's far more bureaucratic if we have provide an opportunity to present evidence at the point of application.

2.5 - Limits proof of address to things that don't include "financial status" or info about marital status. This makes it difficult for parents to evidence where they live – and the reason it is prohibited is that it might influence the school in their ranking – if they don't have to prove residency until post offer – as in Kent, it can't influence the ranking decision anyway.

2.6 - States parents can use the CAF to apply for 6th forms. Is this because of the change in legal age and will LA's need to start coordinating a 6th form round for schools? If this is the case it requires further consideration of colleges and other education providers which are not governed by the code. It would be more sensible to include these providers or remove 6th form arrangements from the Admissions Code – the 14 -19 work goes far beyond simply sixth forms.

Government should acknowledge that the way in which pupils apply to 6th form has moved on – in Kent at least we have the **choices4you** website where children/young adults log on, identify courses they are interested in and are directed to all the providers both 6th form and colleges etc. The code should provide some allowances for where LA's are more joined up in there education offers to students. A conscious effort has been made to make the course the focus of the application for 14-19 rather than the

institution.

2.11 – States LA's only need to allocate if places are available? Is the revised code intentionally saying that LA's do not need to allocate a place at a school for its resident children if it has failed to provide sufficient places in its area – this would seem to be a backward step – far better for parents to have a place to fall back on even if it is not a school they want whilst seeking something closer to home or more suited to their requirements.

2.16 The code suggests that admission authorities must provide full or part time places for four year olds in their area.....it does not go on to clarify who has the final say. It is KCC's understanding that the existing code makes it the parent who can demand full time education from the Sept after the child's 4th birthday – the proposed wording leaves it unclear whether the school has the final say about whether it chooses to provide FT/PT education – this may come as a blow to some working parents who find that a school can decide that they will only admit children part time for the first term – if this is an intentional change?

2.19 The admissions codes present and proposed require parents to apply to their 'home' LAs for a school place. When families are resident abroad they do not have a home LA which creates a problem.

It is clear that for crown servants and military personnel we can accept an applications whilst out of the country and LA's use a UK base location for identifying the home LA and administering the applications but there is no such facility for someone who is working abroad of their own choice, and want to apply for a school place because of an intention to return to the UK – this need clarification – either an LA should be allowed to refuse applications until they are UK residents or can identify a permanent UK address and show evidence of such or the requirement to apply to the home LA must be lifted for international applicants. Existing on-line systems have been developed to only allow application from people resident in the LA area.

3.16 This sets out the requirement on LAs to consult with schools etc before directions can be made for schools to admit challenging pupils. - One of the biggest factors delaying admission is school failing to respond to LA letters – with no response either way LA's have to send follow up letters and then allow further time for these to be received. It would be very helpful for the code to include some requirement on schools to respond within a given time period of receipt of an email or letter and failure to do so constituting acceptance of the pupil.

More general observations not necessarily covered but worthy of consideration.

National offer day for Primary Admissions

There is an opportunity to set a National Offer Day for primary schools in the same way as is currently in place for Secondary. Following the previous

consultation (because there was such conflicting timescales between different LA's) the DfE were not minded to set a National offer day for the primary stage. This is a mistake and a missed opportunity. LAs are still expected to coordinate admissions for entry to primary school in the same way as with the secondary round. An LA with several neighbours can set dates in its scheme to aim for an offer day that fits with the majority of its neighbouring LA's only to find that one might choose to set their process a month later which prevents accurate pupil data being sent to schools results in the potential for duel offers and disadvantage.

Although Kent is proactive and engages with neighbours in preparing its primary admissions scheme, this is additional work that would be removed if there was a single National offer date, all LAs could work back from it in their schemes. It would make sense if this was at the beginning of April so it happens a month after Secondary settles down.

Primary and Secondary prospectuses

Existing arrangements require composite prospectuses to be published by the 12 September for both primary and secondary. This (existing practice) can be confusing for parents – because the two schemes run at different times it would be helpful if secondary dates for publication remaining around September but LA's had the option to delay primary information booklets until November (In Kent they are not used until November for choosing primary schools anyway).

Coordinating Boarding school admissions – why??

Boarding schools (with the agreement of the home LA) should be allowed to withdraw from coordination in relation to allocating their boarding places. – These are often from international placements (military – foreign office personnel seeking places – they need to do separate assessments regarding suitability for boarding and only seek to confuse the normal admissions coordination process) the Only way these can be coordinated by the LA now is to ask the boarding school which pupils it has made arrangements to admit in advance of the offer day so that the LA can send out the letter on behalf of the school. It is a work around to fit the current code and wholly boarding schools should be outside of the coordination process to allow those families abroad seeking places the opportunity to plan what can be a traumatic transition for the child well in advance.

Q2) Do you agree with the proposals to allow all popular and successful schools to increase their Published Admission Number?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments: KCC considers that this is an area where greater freedom could be introduced and it will be appropriate at times for schools to have the flexibility to increase but there needs to be clear safeguarding measures in place to prevent this sort of expansion happening on a whim unmonitored or unchecked by a body that can ensure fairness and proper process in its application. Failure to allow such a mechanism may result in schools simply expanding one day for the right middle class child able to compliment their league table results whilst then deciding when a less able child comes along that they are full. It will prove impossible for the LA or any other agency to monitor this effectively.

Further issues relating to PAN flexibility:

Increase in PANs – impact on coordination

The code needs to clarify the timescales/process that would need to be followed if a school intends to increase its PAN. The LA cannot coordinate admissions fairly if places are allocated on offer day and then a few weeks later the school decides to admit an additional form of entry (unless it is clear that the additional offers must go to the next pupils on the ranked list as at offer day.

Increase in PANs – impact on fair access protocols/placing of pupils outside of the round

The proposed code implies that any school should be allowed to expand and should only really be challenged if it reaches a maximum capacity on health and safety grounds. If this is progressed there is a risk that schools may fill to capacity with capable children and be able to refuse entry to LAC children moving into the area, statemented children where the statement names the school and indeed they will be able to renege on their Fair Access Protocol responsibility because they would not be in a position to admit pupils without causing a real danger to other pupils due to fire safety levels and other legislative restrictions that may be in place and identifying a maximum school capacity.

Increase in PANs – impact on other schools and transport – EIA

The flexibility and freedom to increase PANs may prevent other schools from being able to offer a quality curriculum if numbers fall as a result of unplanned expansion. These sorts of changes have the potential to significantly disadvantage children in those schools and I suspect an EIA will single out more detriment to some protected groups which may well be

disproportionately high in those schools already struggling and facing a downward spiral – there doesn't appear to have been any mention of EIAs and I suspect this is something that could create a spanner in the works.

The future closure of schools as a result will have a direct and real impact on the cost of transport as pupils migrate to alternative school provision. This responsibility sits with the LA but it will have no resource to fund it.

Expansion of grammar school

The code should be clear about grammar schools and their ability to expand. If they are to be given the same freedoms as any other schools as has been suggested, there needs to be a recognition that this will be very detrimental to neighbouring non selective schools as the grammars will inevitably draw in less able pupils. This will inevitably lead to widening the gap and creating a continuous spiral of educational performance decline in the those school left with the less able children

Q3) Do you agree that Academies and Free Schools should be able to give priority to children attracting the Pupil Premium in their admission arrangements?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

KCC considers it unfair to single out a particular type of school for these children. It is not clear why Academies and Free schools should be provided this facility when there are excellent schools in existence that have worked tirelessly with children that would fall into this category potentially having some of their traditional intake draw away from them into establishments that will secure the funding and not necessarily have the experience or calibre of individuals to deliver the sorts of learning environments that will best suit these children.

All schools should be able to prioritise children attracting the pupil premium if they wish to within their arrangements.

Q4) Do you support the proposal to remove the requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in year applications?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments: KCC has long challenged the need for this and suffered considerably as a result of its introduction. Whilst it has created a significant administrative burden it is appropriate to point out that it has also had some significant benefits in regard to both safeguarding and monitoring fairness as it was designed to do.

The process has certainly resulted in improved outcomes for children who might otherwise have been out of education for significant periods without the knowledge of the LA. One head teacher commented "Where have all these children come from...we have never known so many children coming forward needing school places during the school year". There was a suggestion these were new pupils but KCC considers many of these are pupils that previously would have been turned away time and time again from schools with no offers being made. It is essential that a mechanism is therefore maintained whereby when a pupil is turned away from a school the LA can step in and make a representation on behalf of the child to schools it understands to have vacancies in the localities.

In addition we have seen a significant rise in the number of appeals because clearly some schools were failing to advise parents of their right of appeal when turning children away. This has proved a further burden but an appropriate one.

2.21 Removes the duty to coordinate in year admissions – if this is going to be the case – the code needs to include a requirement for schools to inform their home LA of accurate and up to date pupil roll data. LAs will have no way of championing parents or knowing if schools are acting fairly or in accordance with their admission procedures without this information. Parents need to be assured that if they are turned away from schools they can seek support from the LA.

There will need to be clear sanctions available LA's or policing bodies to ensure where schools fail to provide the necessary information to allow for an LA to support a child's application it becomes liable for the cost of any education which the LA is required to provide as an interim measure.

Q5) Do you support the proposed change to the use of random allocation?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

This is not widely used and is arguably the fairest of mechanisms to use for allocating school places provided it is applied to an oversubscribed catchment area that is in relatively close proximity to a school.

It is probably not appropriate for wider use across larger areas and wherever it is used, it is very stressful for parents because they have no way of estimating the likelihood of securing a school place which makes it difficult for families to plan ahead.

To our knowledge it has only been used as a deciding factor in one Kent school and has never been a consideration for the LA.

Q6) Do you support proposals to add twins (and multiple births) and children of service personnel to the list of excepted pupils?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments: This is an entirely sensible approach which should have been adopted in the previous code and will reduce a considerable amount of unnecessary anguish for families that has been present in the past.

Q7) Do you agree with the proposal that admission authorities who are making no change to their arrangements year on year should only be required to consult once every seven years, rather than once every three years?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments: This is a good idea, it is however essential that schools and academies are required to send the arrangements each year into the LA for publication regardless of whether they have changed so that it publishes the arrangements with reference to the appropriate year and provides a mechanism for the LAS to check that no minor changes have been slipped in without following the necessary consultation.

Q8) Do you agree with the proposal to allow schools to give priority to applications for children of staff in their over-subscription criteria?

Agree



Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

This is wholly unfair – the La does appreciate the difficulties some schools face in attracting employees by why should they have this advantage of any other business or service provider?

It may make it easier for teachers, but why is their profession or that of the cleaner in the school; any different to the person who works in a shop or library next door?

If this is retained there really needs to be greater clarity around what constitutes school staff. If someone takes a P/T admin job in the office for 3 months, gets their child into the school then resigns – would the school regard that place as having been secured fairly (I don't think parents will see it like that) – someone taking a short term let to try to gain access would have the place withdrawn up until the end of the first term, this would be no different would the same sanctions apply?

Q9) Do you agree that anyone should be able to raise an objection about the admission arrangements they consider unfair or unlawful, of any school?

Agree

Disagree



Not sure

Comments:

There should clearly be a mechanism for parents or relevant parties to raise concerns but very often this can lead to very time consuming involvement by several parties because there is a basic misunderstanding in regard to how the legislation is applied. This is an area of business that is likely to increase significantly for the Adjudicators office as the definitions have been cut from the code and they will have to define what they consider to be reasonable in any response and that might not be what the parent or indeed the school consider to be reasonable!

Q10) Do you agree that the deadline for objections to the Schools Adjudicator should be moved to 30 June from 31 July?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

It is essential if an LA is to continue to produce the admissions prospectus that decisions on any challenges to admissions arrangements must be taken by the end of July or there is simply not enough time to go to print with final determined arrangements.

It will focus the attention of people with genuine concerns to taking decisive action. Clear concise timelines are welcome.

Q11) Do you agree with the less prescriptive requirements around the operation, governance and training of appeals panels?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

The revised Code is so lacking in detail that panels will operate in different ways. Whereas the current Code can be used as a working document for LA's and panels the new Code has generalised statements but lacks detail. It will lead to different interpretations being made by different admission authorities.

Statements and terms such as 'factual information' and 'reasonable time' in the section relating to production of evidence and 'the decision to refuse admission was not one a **reasonable** admission authority would have made' are wide open to interpretation. Currently there seems to be little regard to the very damaging financial implications some panels decisions can result in and this is going to make things far worse and result in placing a number of schools and academies into financial difficulties.

4.2 infant class size appeals need definition or they will clearly be interpreted differently by different people.

Infant class size appeals

The terminology in this section changes from appeal to review at different times, it should stick to one. It is either an appeal or a review.

Paragraph 4.2 The word 'either' has been omitted after 'satisfied that' in the first sentence this would clarify that any of the three conditions under which an appeal can be upheld have to be met. The term 'reasonable' has also not been defined, this was a really helpful statement in the previous Code and without it more appeals will be upheld as each panel makes its own decision on what reasonableness means.

The roles are not defined for panel chair, members, clerk, or presenting officer neither is the order of proceedings, panels will therefore work in many different ways.

Panel membership should be an uneven number an even number puts too much emphasis on the views of the chair.

There is emphasis on the role of the clerk, but no requirement for clerks to be trained.

The removal of the need for panels to meet at a neutral venue could compromise the independence of the panel, especially in the eyes of parents

Paragraph (2.15) on guiding principles for panels would be better placed under the panel constitution section.

Q12)

Do you agree that the proposed appeals timetable will give more certainty to parents and reduce the number of appeals overall?

Agree



Disagree

Not sure

The thinking behind this introduction is significantly flawed and should seriously be reconsidered. Whilst 20% of appeals may not be heard this is not because they are indifferent and appeal on a whim, it is because parents lodge multiple appeals concurrently and withdraw from some when one of their other appeals is upheld.

The fact that appellants must have 30 days from offer date to lodge an appeal (previously was 10) will not reduce appeal numbers. The majority of parents lodge appeals within a few days of receiving the offer of a school place. All this, together with the 15 days notice of the details and arrangements for the hearing will do, is mean that parents will have to wait longer for their appeal to be heard as no hearings can be convened until 9 weeks after the offer day.

Q13 Do you agree that the proposed new timetable for lodging and hearing appeals will reduce costs and bureaucracy for admission authorities?

Agree



Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Whilst the ability to use schools as venues for appeals will reduce costs it is at the expense of panels credibility and independence in the eyes of parents

Appeals must be heard within 40 days of closure date for appeals but admission authorities must no later the 15 days before the hearing notify the appellant of the details and arrangements for the hearing. In effect this means that all appeals must be heard within a five-week period after the 15 day notice. This is a considerably shorter period of time than now and will put enormous pressure on Kent which, this year had to organise in excess of 2300 appeals.

Q14 Do you agree that the new three stage process will provide a more effective process for appeals panels to consider multiple and individual appeals?

Agree

Disagree



Not sure

Individual appeals

Split into three stages, first stage establishes facts that admission arrangements comply with mandatory requirements and they were correctly applied in the appellant's case. Second considers if the prejudice applies and third balances the degree of prejudice.

Multiple appeals

Whilst the decision making process is divided into three stages they are not the same as for individual appeals.

First stage establishes that admission arrangements comply with mandatory requirements but then goes on to say that panels must consider how many children could be admitted – the prejudice case?

The second stage then goes back to consider if the admission arrangements were correctly applied in the appellant's case.

The third stage considers who can be admitted, having made the decision in stage one how many can be admitted the panel admits this number (presumably having ranked them?). It then goes on to consider other cases to see if any outweigh the prejudice to the school and decides which to uphold if any.

This is confusing the decision making process must be undertaken in the same order as for individual appeals – perhaps it was an oversight in the proposal?

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 438060 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 19 August 2011

Send by post to:
Consultation Unit
Area 1C
Castle View House
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GJ

Send by e-mail to: admissions.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk

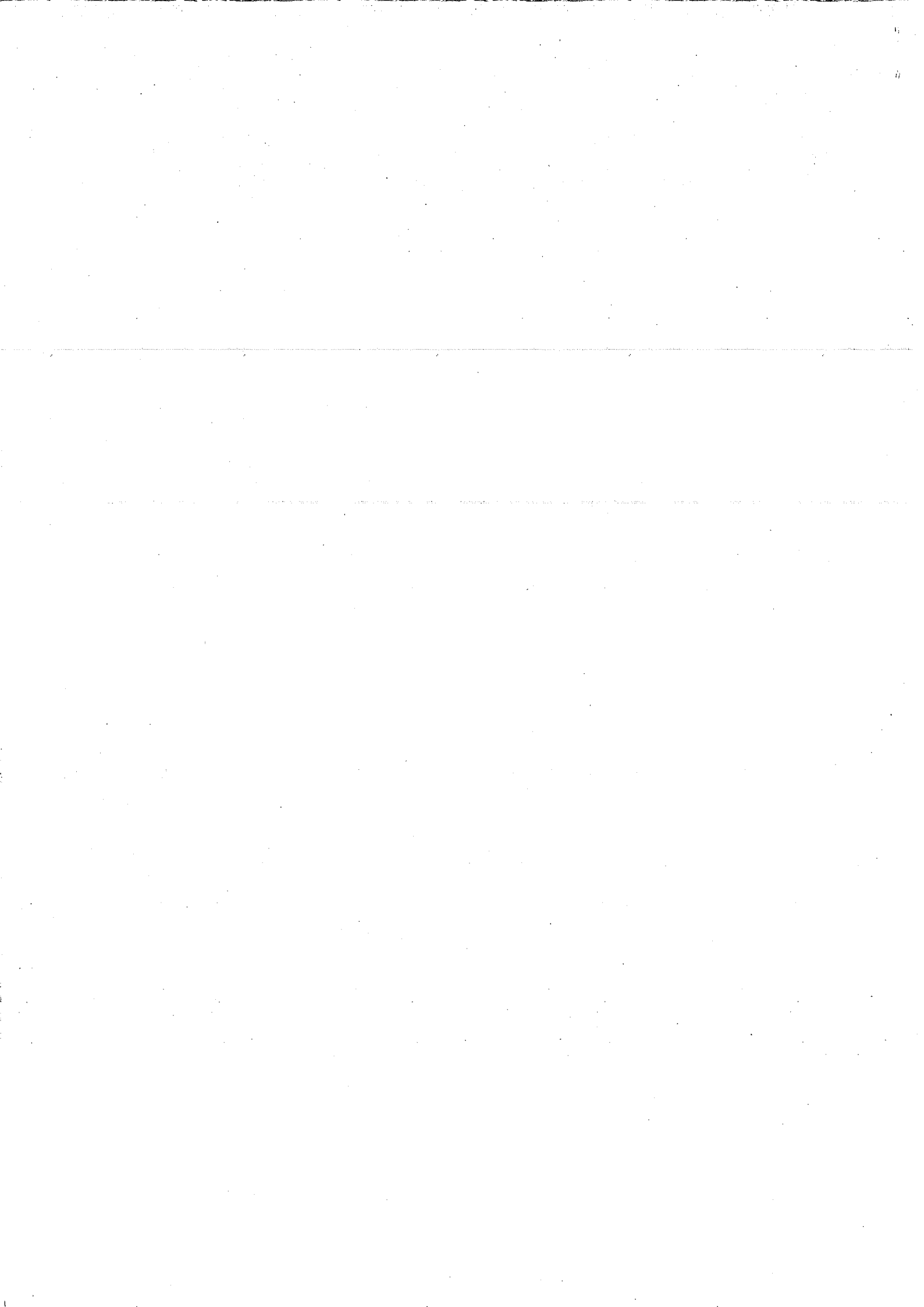


Key Action	Scheme Date
National Closing Date for Secondary Common Application Forms (SCAF).	Monday 31 Oct 2011
Final Closing Date for exceptional late applicants. After this point, any late applications received up to 19 March 2012 will be collected for processing in the LA reallocation stage.	Friday 04 Nov 2011
Applicant numbers to schools (plus info for those needing additional testing).	By Friday 09 Dec 2011
Applicant details sent to schools to apply oversubscription criteria - Ranking Lists sent.	By Tuesday 03 Jan 2012
Ranked lists returned to LA by all schools.	No later than Friday 20 January 2012
Secondary Schools sent lists of allocated pupils - primary schools informed of destination of their pupils.	By Tuesday 21 Feb 2012 (note - during half term)
National Offer Day - Emails sent after 4pm and letter sent 1st class post. Parents are informed to send acceptance/refusal information to schools. Schools will record responses from parents on a report sent by the LA which will be used to calculate places available for LA Reallocation Day. Waiting list requests are to be sent to the LA to compile and are limited to schools on original SCAF.	Thursday 01 Mar 2012
Schools send out welcome letters.	Not before Tuesday 06 Mar 2012
Deadline for Late applications and Waiting list requests to be included in the LA reallocation stage. Late applications received after this date will be processed by the LA when they arrive. After this point applicants that are not already on the school's waiting list will need to apply to the school directly, but schools will not be able to make offers until after 10 Apr 2012 (LA Reallocation Day).	Monday 19 Mar 2012
LA send complete reallocation list to schools to be ranked. Lists are sent in the order rank list were returned, with late applicants at the bottom. Schools to check list to ensure previous pupils status hasn't changed and re-rank the whole list to include late applicants.	Thursday 22 Mar 2012

Schools send their ranked reallocation list and their completed acceptance/refusal report to the LA. If schools have not recorded an acceptance or refusal from parents at this time, they should continue to chase them up.	Tuesday 27 Mar 2012
Final Deadline for schools to send back additional refusal information to be included in reallocation. This information should be sent in a single email to kentonlineadmissions@kent.gov.uk, including Pupil IDs by 5pm at the latest. Any information sent after this time will only be processed if sufficient time is available.	Friday 30 Mar 2012
Schools break up for Easter Holiday.	Friday 30 Mar 2012
LA to complete rank list import and subsequent data validation.	By Wednesday 04 Apr 2012
Offers created and letters produced in preparation for sending.	Thursday 05 Apr 2012
Easter Bank Holiday Weekend.	Friday 06 Apr 2012 to Monday 09 Apr 2012
Reallocation Day - Offer letters posted to Parents via 1st Class Post. Schools are sent lists of reallocation offers made and the residual waiting list will be sent to schools in a separate file.	Tuesday 10 Apr 2012
At this point schools will take back ownership of their waiting lists for the remainder of the reallocation process and may make formal written offers provided these are copied to the LA at the same time. When schools make offers to parents, they must inform the LA so that its records can be maintained (the process for this data transfer will be clarified closer to the time). Parents are free to apply for schools that were not their original SCAF and will do so directly with schools. If a parent cannot be offered a place, they must be informed of their right to join the school's waiting list and / or appeal. Late applications (any applicant who has not completed a Kent application before, or who have completed a Kent application, but moved to another area) must be directed to the LA for the length of the reallocation process. These applications will be handled in a similar fashion to the Primary IY process, whereby schools are contacted by telephone on a case by case basis to ascertain if spaces are available. If no preference is available, the LA will allocate these children a place. After this point, applic	After Tuesday 10 Apr 2012

Schools to finalise offers and send their waiting lists back to the LA. Schools should provide a list of all accepted offers and inform the LA of current spaces available, in preparation for the In Year process.

Friday 06 Jul 2012





Secondary Admissions 2012 Headteacher Briefings

11 - 15 July 2011

2011 Statistics (2010 in brackets)

Year 6 cohort

15,462 (15,901) *Kent pupils*

Preferences

97.33% (96.11%) *of pupils were offered a place at one of the schools named on their SCAF, as at 1 March 2010.*

82.71% (80.12%) *of pupils got their first preference named on their SCAF, as at 1 March 2010.*

2011 Reallocation

What did the change mean for the LA?

2010 45,700 applications processed

2011 67,500 applications processed
(a 47% Increase)

- 72,000 letters sent - an increase of 34% on 2010.
- Officers have also had to process 45,000 acceptances and refusals a burden that would previously have been shared between schools.

Admission to Secondary School September 2012

The schemes to co-ordinate admissions to Kent Secondary Schools including In Year admissions was determined on 15 April 2011 and all Kent schools were notified via Kent Schools e-bulletin.

Details of the scheme are available to view on Knet and have been posted on the website since that time.

The schemes had to be determined before the current scheme had run its course – we are seeking to make some minor amendments as a result.

School Admissions Code

3.6 For admissions to schools in the academic year 2011-2012 onwards, local authorities must formulate schemes for coordinating all applications to maintained schools and academies from parents in their area, whenever received, and for whichever age group, under one scheme.

It has proved impossible for the LA to do this whilst meeting other obligations defined in the code. The LA could not offer places from waiting lists as soon as they became available for 550 schools on a day to day basis and so it developed re-allocation as a pragmatic solution to the problem – unfortunately this has created its own set of issues with parents rightly stating that the code required places to be offered from waiting lists as soon as they arise. This has now been raised with the Ombudsman's office and no clear solution has been devised.

On the back of this I have tried to find a way to hand as much of the process back to schools whilst maintaining sufficient elements of coordination so as not to cause discontent with neighbouring LA's and still create a simple process for parents that continues to uphold the safeguarding values that are so important.

Changes this year

- LA will run a single reallocation on the 10th April .
- Schools will collect acceptance and refusal responses and record them on a report sent by the LA.
- Waiting list requests that are to be included in the LA reallocation will be sent to the LA.
- Once the LA reallocation is complete, schools will be sent their waiting lists and will make offers from them for the remainder of the reallocation process (until 6th July). New requests to join the waiting list will be directed to the school.
- Any late application received after the deadline for the LA reallocation will be processed by the LA. Once an applicant has received their offer, they are free to approach schools and join their waiting lists.
- The reallocation process ends 6th July and will then transition into In Year. Schools must return their waiting lists to the LA at that point.

Key Dates for Parents

01 July 2011	Closing date for Kent Test Registration
13/14 September 2011	Kent Test takes place in Kent Primary Schools (out of county pupils are tested on 17 September).
17 October 2011	Kent Test assessment decisions sent to parents (to arrive 18 October) .
31 October 2011	National Closing date for submitting secondary school applications (online and paper) Final date for accepting exceptional late applications is 4 November 2011.
01 March 2012	Offer of one school place sent to parents by their Home LA.
06 March 2012	Secondary schools to send out welcome letters to parents.
19 March 2012	By this date parents must confirm whether or not they wish to join a school's waiting list with their Local Authority.
22 March 2012	By this date parents must confirm whether or not they accept or refuse the offer with the school.
10 April 2012	Re-allocation takes place – any vacancies filled from waiting lists – parents can make extended preferences direct to schools.

Information to Schools

Primary schools will be sent:

Online Admissions posters and bookmarks

Pupil Information Sheets and samples of Secondary Common Application Forms (SCAFs)

Admission to Secondary School in Kent 2012 Booklets.

Parents should be encouraged to use the Website wherever possible.

Secondary schools will be sent:

Online Admissions Posters

Two copies of the Admissions to Secondary School in Kent 2012 booklet.

Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF)

As in previous years we are actively promoting the Online Admission Website (www.kent.gov.uk/ola) and ask primary schools to continue to encourage parents to apply online. 87% are now received in this way this is clearly the preferred way for parents to apply for a school place.

Primary schools will be sent a few blank paper SCAFs. These should only be handed out where parents are unable to access a computer at home or through your school.

Parents must fill in their home authority's SCAF or online application.

Kent parents are invited to express up to **four** preferences in priority order.
*Putting down one school only will **not** improve the chance of getting a place.*

Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF) (cont'd)

The assistance we get from primary schools in ensuring that parents apply correctly and on time is invaluable.

THANK YOU !

Applications must be submitted by midnight on 31 October 2011 which is a 'National' closing date. The LA will, however, accept applications as on time for good reason up until 4 November 2011. This facility has been included again this year as some parents may not have an opportunity to discuss their child's secondary school options with their primary school once they have received their assessment decision because of the half term holiday.

Paper SCAFs must therefore be returned to primary schools by the morning of 7 November 2011 due to the lower numbers expected as a result of On-line, schools should send any SCAF's received via recorded delivery to KCC Admissions.



Online Admissions

Parents can apply online at www.kent.gov.uk/ola

For 2011 Admissions (2010 figures in brackets):

- + **13,552** (13,000) parents applied online for their child's Year 7 place.
- + This equates to **87.64%** (81.76% of the Kent cohort which exceeded the Government target of 50%).

The Online Admissions system is clearly now well established having been in operation for 5 years. Please continue to support parents with your IT suites wherever possible/necessary

The system offers greater convenience to parents able to access the internet at home, an opportunity for schools to engage and assist parents through the application process where they open their I.T. suites and is a far more cost effective system with less potential for errors.



Online Admissions

Parents will need to register with the website before submitting their application.

If a parent has previously submitted a Kent Test registration online, from September they can log on, pick up their previously submitted details and add their preferences, then re-submit the application rather than starting a new one.

They will be sent an e-mail confirmation of their registration/application if they provide a valid e-mail address. *(please note, some email providers may delay sending the messages to account holders where anti spam software is engaged - parents will need to check with their own email service suppliers in this regard. KCC has no control over email delivery times once they have left our servers).*

Parents can use their log on details to:
edit their application at any time until the closing date for applications
view their application online at any time
view their offer details after the allocation date if they have not provided an e-mail address.

Parents do not need to have an e-mail address to apply online.

Parents can print off a summary of their application and, if they have provided an e-mail address, will receive an e-mail confirmation of their application which is a complete copy of their submission.



Online Admissions

www.kent.gov.uk/ola

On 1 March 2012 parents who have applied online, and provided a valid e-mail address, will receive notification of their offer by e-mail.

Offer e-mails will be sent after 4pm on 1 March 2012.
Parents will also receive the formal letter sent to every applicant.

Only parents who apply online can receive their offer notification by e-mail, parents who apply on paper will need to wait for their formal letter.

*Parents who apply online **must not** submit a paper SCAF as well. We will only accept one application, and checking duplicates will slow processing down.*

Supplementary Information Forms

Academies/VA/Foundation Schools can require parents to provide additional information (on a supplementary form) but only where this is necessary to apply their oversubscription criteria (e.g. religious affiliation).

Those schools requiring a supplementary form are clearly identified in the booklet. The form should be obtained from and returned to the school.

Changing Preferences

Once parents have made their preferences, local authorities should not allow them to be changed without a genuine reason for doing so – for example, if the family has recently moved address

Testing

Instructions for Procedure for Entrance to Secondary Education 2012 have been sent to all Kent primary and grammar schools.

Parents wishing their children to sit the Kent grammar school test were required to register no later than 1 July 2011. Testing will take place on 13/14 September.

The LA will write to all parents advising of assessment decisions on 17 October. **Parents who registered online, and provided a valid e-mail address, will be sent their child's assessment by e-mail after 4pm on 17 October.** *(Please note, some email providers may delay sending the messages to account holders where anti spam software is engaged - parents will need to check with their own email service suppliers in this regard. KCC has no control over email delivery times once they have left our servers).*

Parents will officially have until 31 October to submit their online application or return their completed paper SCAF. However, Kent will accept these as on time up until 4 November.

There will be no parental right of appeal against the outcome of a child's assessment, but parents may make an admission appeal after 1 March 2012 to the independent appeal panel if their child is refused admission to any school they applied for.

Testing (cont'd)

Where a child is unable to sit the Kent test in September arrangements will be made in the following exceptional circumstances for testing to take place by the end of January 2012:

- Illness on one or both test dates, confirmed by a doctor's certificate;
- A move into the Kent LA area after the closing date for test registration

(NB: This can only be arranged if parents return the late SCAF before **9 December 2011**.) Primary headteachers are asked to contact Admissions as soon as possible so that an early testing date can be arranged.

Outside these specific circumstances, children whose parents have not registered but have named a grammar school on their SCAF will not be able to sit the test until after 10 April 2012 when parents can make an admissions appeal to the independent appeal panel or for Kent parents by making a late application. Non Kent parents must pursue the place through their home local authorities application process. Where a grammar school (which uses the Kent grammar school test) is named on the SCAF and the child has not taken the Kent test the preference will be treated as invalid because the child does not meet the entry criteria for the grammar school.

**A grammar school assessment does not guarantee a grammar school place.
The allocation of places rests on each school's published oversubscription
criteria.**

Neighbouring Authorities

Medway Council is also carrying out testing before it asks parents to confirm their preferred schools. Medway's test date is 24 September 2011, and applicants for Medway grammar schools will need to register with Medway Council by 8 July 2011.

Medway test results will be sent to parents on 7 October, with review decisions being sent on 26 October.

There is now a National Closing Date for all applications on 31 October – some LA's (eg London LAs) are encouraging returns by 21 October due to half term.

Allocating Places

The LA operates an "Equal Preference" scheme.

The LA tells schools who has applied for places, not whether they were named first, second, third or fourth, and the schools place their applicants in a rank order based on their oversubscription criteria.

All applicants must be ranked, even if the school is very oversubscribed or undersubscribed.

The published criteria determine which children can be offered places.

The order in which a parent named the schools on the SCAF only matters if more than one of the schools could offer a place. In that case, the LA looks back at the original order and offers a place at whichever of them the parent named highest on the form.

Secondary School Pupil Data

9 December 2011

We will let schools know how many pupils have named them as a first, second, third or fourth preference.

3 January 2012

Full pupil information will be sent to schools via S2S website for ranking against oversubscription criteria.

20 January 2012

All schools will provide the LA with a ranked list of all applicants

Distances

For Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, distances will be measured in a straight line using Ordnance Survey address point data.

Kent's software measures distances from a defined point within the child's home to a defined point within the school as specified by Ordnance Survey

The LA's straight line measurements are provided to all schools, but some VA/Foundation schools use different means of measurement. These will be stated in their oversubscription criteria. Where schools use an alternative means of measurement they should contact the Admissions Scheme Co-ordination Team.

If a school has not published how it will measure distance, the LA's measurements are to be used.

Ranking Applicants

Full pupil information will be sent to schools via S2S website on 3 January 2012 for ranking against oversubscription criteria. This will be in excel spreadsheet format, and include details of any reasons parents have included in the application.

Grammar schools will also be advised of the assessment decisions of their applicants. Those which use scores to rank applicants will receive these separately.

ALL applicants must be individually ranked (they must have an individual rank number).

Training is available from the Admissions Scheme Coordination team. An schools e-bulletin will be sent out during term 2 to gauge the level of interest in this – the team will also remain available to offer advice throughout.

Ranking Applicants

If your school admits a percentage of pupils as a result of selection by aptitude in a particular field (Banding), please contact the Scheme Co-ordination Team for further advice.

Some issues we have previously encountered **to be avoided** include:

- The ranking list being sorted alphabetically and then ranked.
- Pupil details being moved around the spreadsheet but not every field being moved (Pupil ID being left behind)
- Schools using a formula to calculate the rank number for applicants.
- Schools only ranking up to their PAN, not ranking all applicants.
- Schools applying banding not ranking banded pupils in the normal rank list as well.
- Schools sending back the wrong year's file. Please check that you have downloaded, ranked and sent back the correct file to Admissions and Transport.

Allocating School Places

By 16 February 2012

The LA will match ranked lists provided by schools and allocate places.

- Where a child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated.
- Where a 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 ranked preference on their SCAF.
- Where a child is not eligible for a place at any nominated school, the LA will allocate the child a place at an alternative school with a vacancy.

21 February 2012

- The LA will inform primary and secondary schools (via the S2S website) of pupils to be offered places.

Offering School Places

The LA sends Kent children offer letters on behalf of all admission authorities.

1 March 2012

After 4pm those parents who applied online and provided a valid e-mail address will be sent an e-mail advising which school their child has been offered. *(Please note, some email providers may delay sending the messages to account holders where anti spam software is engaged - parents will need to check with their own email service suppliers in this regard. KCC has no control over email delivery times once they have left our servers).* Parents can also log on to the eAdmissions site to view their offer, after 5pm.

In addition, offer letters will be posted first class to all parents by the home LA to arrive on 2 March 2012. Kent LA's letters will include an acceptance form a waiting list form and information about how to appeal.

6 March 2012

Schools send welcome letters to parents, and reiterate the need to return acceptances and refusals back to the schools. It is essential that schools reiterate that acceptance/refusals come directly to them promptly.

Offering School Places (cont'd)

19 March 2012

Final date for parents to:

1. make any appeal or
2. request to go on a waiting list (to the LA)

22 March 2012

LA will send complete reallocation lists to schools containing all late applicants and waiting list requests

22 March 2012

Deadline for parents to accept and refuse places with the school. Schools

27 March 2012

Schools send all ranked reallocation lists back and their acceptance and refusals report to the LA.

30 March 2012

Final deadline for schools to send in refusals received since report was sent

Offering School Places (cont'd)

10 April 2012

The LA will offer any vacant places to pupils on the reallocation lists, prioritised in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria. Schools are also sent a list of reallocation offers made and the remainder of their waiting lists.

After 10 April 2012

Schools will take back ownership of their waiting list for the remainder of the reallocation process and are free to make offers. The LA must be informed of every offer as it is made. A mechanism for doing this will be discussed closer to the time. Late applicants must be directed to the LA who will process any applications received on a daily basis. Once late applications have been completed, parents are free to contact schools to join waiting lists.

After 6 July 2012

New applications received will be processed in line with the In Year Admissions arrangements. Schools will send their remaining waiting lists back to the LA and inform them of the current spaces available in each year group.

Offers from waiting lists to out county pupils

Because the duty to coordinate between LA's remains, it is essential that a school wishing to make an offer from their waiting list to an out county pupil must first send this to Kent LA – Kent will inform the neighbouring LA to make the offer to their pupil as all offers must come from the home LA (whilst Kent is keen to delegate this authority to Kent schools on the understanding that KCC is informed at the same time of any offers – other LAs may not appreciate this interpretation of the requirements in the code.

The School Admissions Code

"If a parent has not responded to the offer of a place within a reasonable time, the admission authority **must** remind the parent of the need to respond, within a further seven days, and point out that the place may be withdrawn if they do not." (1.50).

Following reallocation and the process passing to schools, school will need to follow up offers and inform the LA if places are being withdrawn as a result of no acceptance being received.

Waiting Lists

From 10 April 2012 schools will hold waiting lists prioritised in accordance with their oversubscription criteria. *A grammar school can only put children on its waiting list who have been assessed suitable for grammar school through the Kent Test (and/or Dover Test for Dover grammar schools only).*

On 10 April, the waiting list will include:

- Children who named the school on their SCAF, were not offered a place on 1 March *and have asked to be included on the waiting list*
- Children who have applied between the closing date and 19 March, whose details have been sent to the school by the LA.

Waiting list continued

The LA will offer places in those schools with vacancies against their Published Admission Number on **10 April 2012**.

Between **10 April** and **6 July 2012** new applications are processed in line with the Late Application Process and must be made by the LA. Schools can make offers from their waiting lists but copies must be sent to the LA at the same time to ensure records are updated and safeguarding checks can be made.

Appeals

Parents have the right to appeal for any school which refuses them a place.

They can also ask for their child's name to go on a school's waiting list (*provided, if it is a grammar school, that they have been assessed suitable for grammar school*).

Enclosures in the 1 March 2012 decision letter will explain both options.

After 10 **April**, the schools will allocate vacant places to children on the waiting lists, in accordance with oversubscription criteria. Once the school reaches its Published Admission Number it can only admit children as a result of Independent Appeal Panel decisions, or through a Fair Access Protocol.

Appeals continued...

A school which is below its PAN must fill its spaces from the waiting list in priority order until it reaches the PAN. After this, children can only be admitted through the appeal process, or through a Fair Access Protocol.

Parents who gain a place on appeal will need to inform the school they were originally offered that they no longer wish to take up the place. This will ensure that resultant vacancies can be offered to someone else.

Academies

Existing Academies are all-ability schools set up by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups, working in partnership with central government. (New Academies need not be sponsored by business and may retain their existing admissions arrangements even if they were formerly grammar schools).

Effectively they are independent schools, but they provide free education.

Their costs are met by the Department for Education and the Secretary of State approves their admission arrangements, as part of their funding agreement.

Academies take part in the LA's Admissions Scheme, and, like maintained schools are subject to the School Admissions Code. They are required to follow the admissions scheme and engage in In Year Fair Access protocols in the same way as any other schools.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

**Kent Pupils to Kent
Schools**

When Parents Contact the School

If the school has more than 5 spaces in the required year, it can give the parent a “Quick Form” for return to the LA’s Admissions Team. If not, it must ask the parent to name the school on an IYCAF for return to the LA’s Admissions Team.

Contacting Schools

When it receives an IYCAF, the LA will pass basic pupil details to all schools named on it within 5 working days.

The schools will need to check current numbers for that year and – if they can offer a place – let the LA know within 5 working days.

Schools are sent a weekly activity report

Allocating a Place

- Within three working days of receiving the last response, the LA will
- Identify the highest available preference.
- Let that school know.
- Make a written offer of the place to the parent.
- If none of the schools can offer, the LA will allocate a place.

Acceptances and Refusals

- Parents will have 10 days to accept the offer.
- If no reply is received, the LA will chase, requiring a response within 7 days.
- When an acceptance is received, the LA will let the school know so that it can send out a welcome pack and confirm a start date.
- If the parent refuses the place and they have a current school the process will end. If they have no current school, the case is passed to Attendance and Behaviour Service.

In Year

Kent Pupils to Out County Schools

Applying

- Kent parents will need to fill in a Kent IYCAF listing any schools they want, including Out County schools. (*Maximum of 3 primary or 4 secondary schools.*)
- Kent will let the LA responsible for any Out County school know about the application within five working days so that they can contact their school(s) for a response.

Making an Offer

- The schools will advise their LA of possible offers. When Kent has all the necessary information it will identify the highest available preference within three days, send an offer letter to the parent.

Acceptances

- The parent will have 10 days to accept the offer by writing to the Kent Admissions Team. If no response is received, Kent will chase for a response within the next 7 days.
- Once Kent has an acceptance it will advise the home LA, which will contact the school and ask it to send a welcome letter and start date to the parent.

In Year

Out County Pupils to Kent Schools

Contact With School

- Out County parents who contact a Kent school will need to be directed to their HOME LA, to follow their own In Year Process.
- That LA will then notify Kent of the request for a Kent school place. Within 5 days of receiving the notification, Kent LA will pass basic details to the Kent school(s) named.

Allocating a Place

- The school(s) will need to check current numbers for that year and – if they can offer a place – let Kent LA know within 5 working days.
- Kent will pass the information on to the home LA, which will identify the highest available preference and make the offer to the parent. When the home LA informs Kent which school is being offered, Kent will let the school know.
- The parent will accept the offer through their home LA, who will advise Kent. Kent will then let the school know so that they can send a welcome pack confirming a start date.

Completing the Process

- When the home LA informs Kent which school is being offered, Kent will let the school know.
- The parent will accept the offer through their home LA, who will advise Kent. Kent will then let the school know so that they can send a welcome pack confirming a start date.

Home to School Transport

Home to school transport is a consideration for many parents of children that are transferring to secondary school.

The criteria to receive home to school transport are that the child must be attending the nearest appropriate school for transport purposes **AND** the distance between the home and school must be more than three miles via the shortest available walking route.

Transport Entitlement

- The list of areas and parishes previously listed under each school entry in the 'Admission to Secondary School' Booklet, have been removed and are no longer relevant from September 2012. Transport will only be provided to the nearest suitable school for transport purposes.
- The admissions and transport policies are entirely separate
- Children will not automatically receive travel assistance to any school that offers them a place.

Transport for children from low income families

- Families that receive the highest level of working tax credit **OR** are entitled to free school meals will receive transport assistance to one of their three nearest appropriate schools that are between 2 to 6 miles away.
- If the child is attending a church school on denominational grounds or their nearest grammar school having been assessed as suitable for grammar school, it must be between 2 to 15 miles of the home address.

Transport Continued..

- Proof of receipt of the relevant benefit will be required.
- Eligibility will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- Children attending grammar school on selective grounds will need to be resident within the selective area of education to qualify*1.
- Children in the Care of Kent LA will also be given the same extended transport provision as is given to children from low income families, as detailed above.

*1Note – at the time of going to print Members are considering extending this provision to children from low income families resident in non selective area also – once decided this will be published accordingly.

Choice Advice

Central government have cut all funding for the Choice Advice Service so this will not be available through the Help Line this year.

Admissions Officers will remain available to support PSAs and FLOs who may be working with vulnerable families supporting them through the application process.

Useful Contacts & Links

Secondary Transfer/PESE Team:

01622 69+ 6137 / 6662 / 6653 / 4058 / 6655

Scheme Co-ordination Team/ Online Admissions:

01622 69+ 6666 / 6652 / 6661 / 6789

kentonlineadmissions@kent.gov.uk

Home to School Transport Team:

01622 69+ 6170 / 6162 / 6651 / 6164 / 4948

homeschooltransport@kent.gov.uk

Admissions and Transport general contacts:

(T) 01622 696565

(F) 01622 696665

kent.admissions@kent.gov.uk

Useful Links:

Kent Admissions pages:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/school_education/applying_for_a_school_place.aspx

S2S Website:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datatransfers/s2s>