



## HALTON LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHEME: CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS – 2008/9 ACADEMIC YEAR

- 1.0** This document is intended to fulfil the statutory requirements for admissions into year 7 at secondary schools.
- 2.0** The Co-ordinated Secondary scheme applies to the following schools in Halton (the number in brackets denotes the proposed Published Admission Number):

Fairfield High School (190)	Community
Halton High School (180)	Community
Saints Peter & Paul Catholic High School (300)	Voluntary Aided
St Chad's Catholic High School (170)	Voluntary Aided
The Bankfield (190)	Community
The Grange Comprehensive School (210)	Community
The Heath School (210)	Community
Wade Deacon High School (225)	Community

Halton Local Authority (LA) is the Admission Authority for the six community high schools, and the Governing Body of each school is the admission authority for the 2 voluntary aided schools.

- 3.0** Halton residents will be given the opportunity to complete a common preference form and express a preference, with reasons, for up to 3 secondary schools using this form. The LA must invite applications on the preference form and the preference form must comply with mandatory provisions and the requirements of the DfES School Admissions Code of Practice. This form is also available on-line and parents are encouraged to apply for a school place via the Halton Borough Council website at [www.halton.gov.uk](http://www.halton.gov.uk). Parents/carers should only complete one application form and preferences may include Halton schools and schools maintained by other LAs.
- 4.0** The DfES issued a revised School Admissions Code of Practice which came into force on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and admission authorities (the LA for community and voluntary controlled schools, and governing bodies for voluntary aided schools) **must** ensure that their determined

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admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. The revised Code no longer allows for a First Preference First Scheme as previously operated in Halton. Instead admission authorities must operate an Equal Preference Scheme. Within an equal preference scheme all preferences are considered against each school's published admission criteria. After all preferences have been considered, if only one school named on the preference form can offer a place, the LA will send out an offer of a place. If more than one school can offer a place, parents will be offered a place at whichever of those schools is ranked highest on the preference form. This may not be the first preference school. If a school becomes oversubscribed then places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria (see paragraph 6.0).

### **5.0 APPLYING FOR A SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACE FOR SEPTEMBER 2008**

- 5.1** Halton LA publishes an "Admission to Secondary School" booklet (a Composite Prospectus). The preference form will be contained within this booklet and the booklet will be issued to all year 6 pupils attending Halton Primary Schools and Halton resident pupils who attend schools in other LAs, and will be available at Halton Direct Link Offices, Halton Libraries, on line via the council's website, and from the Student Services Team. The booklet will be issued in **September 2007** and the on-line form will be available at the same time.
- 5.2** The preference form will seek three preferences in ranked order (regardless of which LA the school preferences are for). Halton residents whose child(ren) attend a Halton Primary School must return the form to the child's primary school no later than **19th October 2007**. Halton residents whose children attend primary schools in other authorities must return the form direct to Halton LA no later than **19<sup>th</sup> October 2007**. On-line forms must also be submitted by this date.
- 5.3** Halton resident parents may request information (a prospectus) regarding schools in neighbouring LAs but **must** complete their preferences on the Halton form. Halton LA will work with its neighbouring authorities: Cheshire, Warrington, Liverpool, Knowsley, St Helen's, together with any other admission authority where a parent has applied for a school place.
- 5.4** On-Line Admissions: As part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's E-Government Initiative, LAs are required to have a facility for parents to apply on-line for a secondary school place. This facility is in place for Halton residents via Halton Borough Council's website at [www.halton.gov.uk](http://www.halton.gov.uk) and on-line applications will be dealt with along with all other applications.
- 5.5** Halton LA will record all preferences on the admissions database and will forward, week beginning **12th November 2007**, details of all first,

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second, and third preferences for admission to aided schools or schools in other authorities to the relevant admission authority, for consideration in accordance with their published admission criteria.

**5.5** The governing bodies of all Voluntary aided schools should note that they must treat first, second, and third preferences equally against their admission criteria and must notify the Student Services Team on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007** which pupils have been offered places and which have been declined.

**5.6** When all preferences have been considered Halton LA will notify parents of their child's allocated Halton LA community or voluntary aided school place (and if parents have requested a school in another authority the maintaining authority will notify parents). These notification letters will be sent on **3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008** together with details of the appeal process if applicable.

### **6.0 OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

**6.1** If a Halton community school becomes oversubscribed places will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria:

- 1) Children in Public Care – children who are subject to a care order, or are accommodated by the Local Authority
- 2) Siblings – pupils with elder brothers or sisters including half brothers and sisters and unrelated children living together as part of the same household, already attending the school and expected to continue in the following year
- 3) Pupils living nearest to the school defined as a straight-line distance measurement from the child's permanent residence to the school.

Children who have a statement of special educational needs will be allocated a place at the school named in the statement.

If oversubscription occurs within any one of the above criteria, places will be allocated on distance grounds, i.e. living nearest to the school defined as a straight-line distance measurement from the child's permanent residence to the school. The LA uses a geographical information system to determine distance.

Where applications are received for twins, triplets etc, the LA will apply the oversubscription criteria and will oversubscribe the school if a family would otherwise be separated.

The address to be used in measuring distance for the purpose of allocating school places will be the child's permanent address. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, the LA will use the

address of the person receiving Child Benefit for allocation purposes. Parents may be required to submit evidence of Child Benefit upon request from the LA. The above criteria will apply without reference to the Halton Borough Council boundary.

Where applications are received from families of UK Service personnel and other Crown servants, school places will be allocated to children in advance of the approaching school year if accompanied by an official MOD, FCO or GCHQ letter declaring a return date with full address details and providing they would meet the criteria when they return to the UK.

If none of the parent's preferences can be met, in accordance with the DfES School Admissions Code of Practice, Halton LA will allocate a school unless there are insufficient places remaining in the authority. In Halton, a place will be allocated at the nearest school to the home address measured in a straight-line distance measurement from the child's permanent residence to the school. This does not affect the parent's rights to appeal for a place at the school(s) they have been refused.

## **7.1 EARLY AGE TRANSFER TO SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Children of exceptional ability and maturity can be considered for transfer to secondary schools one year earlier than normal. Head teachers of primary/junior schools are invited each year to put forward the names of any pupils whom they consider are physically, intellectually, and emotionally suitable to benefit from such a transfer, and who might be educationally disadvantaged by remaining in the primary sector for a further year. However, as a first step, head teachers will discuss possible candidates with parents, the school's link adviser, and the Educational Psychologist. Parents who consider that early transfer might benefit their child should discuss this with the head teacher.

## **7.2 LATE APPLICATIONS FOR HALTON SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Late applications for places at Halton LA maintained community schools will only be considered in limited circumstances. These may include when a single parent has been ill for some time, or a family have just moved into the area, or a family are returning from abroad – providing applications are received before offers of places are made. If the late application is received after places have been allocated and the school(s) are oversubscribed, the child will be placed on the waiting list, the child's position on the waiting list being determined by the admission policy. Parents have the right of appeal if admission is refused and details on the appeal process are given in paragraph 9.0.

If parents are making a late application to a voluntary aided school the school will advise how this will be dealt with.

It will be necessary for the applicant to provide the appropriate evidence to support an exceptional case for late application.

### **7.3 CHANGE OF PREFERENCE**

If parents decide to change their preference after the closing date they will need to complete another preference form. If places have already been allocated the LA may not be able to meet the change of preference.

### **7.4 CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

If a pupil moves house after the closing date of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2007 parents must notify the LA and request a new preference form. This form must be completed and returned to the LA immediately. If there is a place available at the school of first preference a place will be offered. If the year group is oversubscribed then parents will be offered the right of appeal and any other preferences will be considered.

### **7.5 WITHDRAWAL OF OFFER OF A SCHOOL PLACE**

Halton LA reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a school place in limited circumstances. These may include where a fraudulent/intentionally misleading preference form is received claiming a false sibling or false residence.

### **7.6 WAITING LISTS**

Waiting lists will be held for oversubscribed LA Maintained Community Secondary Schools. The waiting list will comprise of those pupils refused admission to the school(s) of preference. This list will be maintained from the time of initial allocation until 3 weeks into the Autumn Term, at which point the waiting list will cease. If a place becomes available at an oversubscribed school, the place will be reallocated in accordance with the published over-subscription criteria detailed above. Parents should be aware that their child's place on the waiting list might alter, either up or down, dependent upon the movement of other applicants.

### **8.0 MID YEAR ADMISSIONS**

The LA is prepared to consider requests for transfers between schools other than at normal admission times, and parents seeking transfer should ask the child's current school to issue them with a transfer form, thereby enabling parents to outline the reasons for the transfer request. This will then be forwarded to the Student Services Team for monitoring purposes, who will forward the form to the proposed admitting school. Parents are, however, advised as a first step, to discuss their child's progress with the head teacher of the child's present school, and parents should not remove their child without first securing admission to another school. Transfers are normally made at

the beginning of a term. If the year group is full, parents will be offered the right of appeal.

#### **9.0 ADMISSION APPEALS**

Parents who are not offered a place at any of their preferred LA maintained community or voluntary aided schools have a right of appeal to an independent appeals panel under section 94 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be submitted in writing but parents have the right to present their case to the panel in person. The Chairman of the appeal panel will be a lay-person having no connection with the LA. Other members of the panel will be suitably experienced persons. The decisions of independent appeals panels are binding on the LA and on the school's governing body.

Applications for admission to Aided Church schools will be referred to the Admissions Committee of the governing body of the school concerned. The LA, acting on behalf of the governors, will notify parents of the result of their application. If the application is not approved parents will be notified of their statutory right of appeal.

#### **10.0 ADMISSION OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

The DfES has issued guidance which has statutory force including the School Admissions Code of Practice (2007), Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and PRUs (2006), and Guidance on Hard to Place Pupils (2004) that requires Admission Forums to broker protocols for the admission of vulnerable children. The revised DfES School Admissions Code of Practice changes the name of the Hard to Place Protocol to the "In Year Fair Access Protocol". The LA is currently reviewing this protocol and will be communicating with schools regarding any changes.

Halton LA has, through consultation, determined that Children in Public Care will be given first priority for admission to all community and voluntary controlled schools. Voluntary Aided Schools have, through their Diocesan Authority, received confirmation that these pupils should also be given priority in their school's admissions arrangements.

Children in Public Care who require admission to a school outside the normal admissions round will normally be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school. Arrangements are already in place for a child in public care to be admitted to the nearest appropriate school regardless of whether the school is oversubscribed. The Admissions Forum will monitor the number of this type of admissions to schools.

The Halton Admissions Forum, in consultation with head teachers and governing bodies, has a protocol in place which expands upon these arrangements to include other vulnerable and hard to place pupils.