

Proposed admission arrangements for Lancashire community and voluntary controlled primary schools for 2022/2023

All districts

The purpose of the admission arrangements is to ensure that all school places for maintained schools are allocated and offered in an open and fair way. Lancashire County Council (LCC) must comply with the School Admissions Code, published by the Department for Education [DfE], which has 'a force of law'. When a school is oversubscribed, ie, it has more applicants than places available, a policy is required to allocate and offer places in an open and fair way, in line with the School Admissions Code. Listed below is the policy and associated procedures used by LCC when allocating places for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. The supplementary notes and Geographical Priority Areas [GPAs] which form part of the admission arrangements make it clear to parents how and why places are allocated in a fair, clear and objective way:

Proposed admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled primary schools - 2022/2023

The determined policy for admission to community and voluntary controlled primary schools for 2022/2023 is listed below:-

An admission number will be published showing the maximum number of pupils that the school will admit in the Autumn Term 2022. Parents are given the opportunity to express three preferences for a primary school. Published criteria are used to decide which children should be offered the available places. In primary schools, an equal preference scheme is operated to comply with the Schools Admission Code, whereby three parental preferences are given equal status and are considered equally against the admissions criteria. If a school is oversubscribed, the following criteria will be applied in priority order:

Primary Schools

When a school is oversubscribed on parental preferences, then the following priorities apply in order:

1. Looked after children and those who have been previously looked after, [including those legally adopted from overseas] (see note x below), then
2. Children for whom the Local Authority accepts that there are exceptional medical social or welfare reasons which are directly relevant to the school concerned (see note (i) below, then
3. Children with older brothers and sisters attending the school when the younger child will start, (see note (iii) below), then
4. Remaining places are allocated according to where a child lives. Those living nearest to the preferred school by a straight line (radial) measure will have priority, (see note (v) below.

When a primary school with a GPA is oversubscribed the following priorities will be applied in order:

1. Looked after children and those who have been previously looked after, including those from overseas (see note (x) below), then
2. Children for whom the Local Authority accepts that there are exceptional medical, social or welfare reasons which are directly relevant to the school concerned. (See note (i) below) then
3. Children living within the school's geographical priority area with older brothers or sisters attending the school when the younger child will start, (see note iii below).
4. Children living within the school's geographical priority area, then
5. Children living outside the school's geographical priority area with older brothers or sisters still attending the school when the younger child will start (See note (iii) below) then
6. Children living outside the school's Geographical Priority Area (see note (iv) below).

GPA's relate to:

Mayfield Primary School, Lytham
Moss Side Primary School
Eidsford Community Primary School
Crawshawbooth Primary School
Waterfoot Primary School

Notes

- (i) The medical, social and welfare criterion will consider issues relevant to the child and/or the family. This category may include children without an EHC Plan/Statement who have special needs.
- (ii) As required by law, all children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs/Education, Health and Care Plan naming a school will be admitted before the application of the over-subscription criteria. Children who have a Statement for Special Needs/EHC Plan will have their applications considered separately.
- (iii) Brothers and sisters includes full brothers and sisters, step children, half brothers and sisters, fostered and adopted children living with the same family at the same address; and full brothers and sisters living at different addresses.
- (iv) The distance criterion will be used as the tie breaker if there is oversubscription within any of the admission criteria; it is a straight line (radial) measure.

If the Local Authority is unable to distinguish between applicants using the published criteria (eg. Siblings, those living the same distance from home to school, or families residing in the same block of flats) places will be offered via a random draw.

The distance measure is a straight line measurement (radial) between the applicant's home address points and the address point of the school (co-ordinates provided by ordnance survey data).

(v) A child's permanent address is the one where he/she normally lives and sleeps and goes to school from. Proof of residency may be requested at any time throughout the admissions process, (including after a child has accessed a school place).

(vi) The Local Authority will keep waiting lists for all Lancashire primary schools until 31 August 2022. These are kept in priority order using the school's published admission criteria. From 1 September 2022, waiting lists will be transferred to and retained by individual admission authorities (the Local authority for community and voluntary controlled schools and own admission authority schools will each retain their own list). To comply with the School Admissions Code the waiting lists must be retained until at least 31 December 2022.

(vii) Children will not normally be able to start school other than at the beginning of the term unless they have moved into the area or there are exceptional circumstances.

(viii) Applications for school places which are received late will not necessarily be dealt with at the same time as those received by the set deadline. The reasons for a late application may be requested and where these are not exceptional the relevant admission criteria will be initially applied to all others received on time. The late application will be dealt with after this process.

Application forms received after the published closing date, will only be considered at that time if the following conditions apply:

(a) if the number of preferences received for the school is below the published admission number or;

(b) there are extenuating circumstances justifying a late application.

These may include:

(a) parents moving into the County after the closing date;

(b) parent/carer illness which required hospitalisation for the major part of the period between the publication of the composite prospectus and the closing date for applications.

(ix) Where a child lives with one parent for part of the week and another for the rest of the week only one address will be accepted for a school admission application. This will normally be the one where the child wakes up for the majority of school days (Monday to Friday).

(x) the highest priority must be given to looked after children and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order, child arrangement orders or special guardianship order). Further references to previously looked after children in the Code means children who were adopted (or subject to residence orders, child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after. This includes children who are legally adopted from overseas. Relevant, legal documents must be provided to evidence the adoption.

Shared Care Arrangements

When a child lives with one parent for part of the week and another for the rest of the week only one address will be accepted for a school admission application. This will normally be the one where the child wakes up for the majority of school days (Monday to Friday). Proof of residence may be requested at any time throughout the admissions process.

In the cases where a child lives with parents who have shared responsibility and the child's time is split equally between two homes, the address of the parent who receives child benefit will normally be used. The Local Authority reserves the right to request further proof, in order to establish the home address, as fit the individual circumstances.

Where agreement cannot be reached:

Where shared care arrangements are in place, and parents/carers of the child submit two separate applications for different schools, the Local Authority requires parents to resolve matters between themselves, taking legal advice if necessary, and inform the Local Authority which application should be processed. The Local Authority will not become involved in private disputes.

The Local Authority has an obligation to process an application that has been submitted and signed by a parent with parental responsibility. We will consider the living arrangements and apply the shared care arrangement rules.

If there are any challenges to which address is to be used as a child's residency, individual admission authorities will be consulted. In cases where parents are separated and both have retained joint responsibility, the application will be accepted from the parent who is in receipt of the child benefit and with whom the child primarily resides.

Where shared care arrangements are in place it may be necessary to establish the permanent home address for the child. In certain circumstances parent/carers will be asked to write to the Local Authority stating the number of days each week the child spends with them. The Local Authority may ask for evidence of which parent/carer was in receipt of child benefit at the point of application. If the parent/carer is not in receipt of child benefit, the Local Authority will ask for proof of benefit award notices; Tax Credit Award Notices and child's registered address with the GP at the point of application. If the child's home address cannot be verified the Local Authority reserves the right to request further documentary evidence to support any claim of permanent home address.

The Local Authority cannot release information or intervene where disputes or disagreements arise between parents in relation to any DETERMINED or submitted application for a school place.

We can only process applications from one address. If your child lives at another address from you or with another parent/carer from Monday to Friday, please provide the Parental Responsibility Order or Residence/Child Arrangements Order for the person the child lives with.

Further evidence can include:

- a copy of a court order;
- a letter from a solicitor setting out the arrangements;
- a joint statutory declaration (prepared by a Commissioner for Oath);
- a tax credit award notice (TC602) for current year.

Moving House

If you are about to move house, please contact the Area Education Office with your new address so that letters which are sent to you do not go astray. If you have already exchanged contracts on a house or have evidence of a confirmed offer of tenancy, you can ask for your child's application to be considered from the new address. It is required that a family does not just own a property, in a particular location, but that they are actually resident in the property. Evidence of your/the child's residency in the new property will be required.

We can't accept a temporary address if you still possess a property that was previously used as a home address.

If you make a permanent house move **after** applying, but **before** allocation procedures have been undertaken, you must contact the Area Education Office. You may be able to change your preferences if you are changing address to a more distant property and the allocation will be based on the new address. We normally require two forms of evidence to confirm a house move. It may on occasions be necessary to request additional documentation, depending upon individual circumstances.

Documents accepted to evidence a house move:~

Proof of purchase or tenancy agreement

Evidence of disposal of previous property

Council Tax document, evidencing the end of residency in previous home.

Council Tax document, evidencing the residency within your new home.

Other forms of evidence may also be accepted at the discretion of the County Council to cover individual circumstances.

If you move temporarily during the admissions process you must also discuss the matter with the Area Education Office. Temporary addresses are rarely accepted for admission purposes.

If you are moving to another area of Lancashire, details of schools in the area can be obtained from any Area Education Office. Admission Authorities will check address details and may randomly sample applications.

You must contact the Area Education Office if there are any changes in your child's living arrangements during the application and allocation of places period.

Places offered for Lancashire schools may be subsequently withdrawn where misleading or inaccurate information has been discovered.

Applications from abroad (and other areas of the UK)

It is no longer required that families must be physically resident in Lancashire (or nearby) in order to apply within the annual intake processes.

Where families relocate or return to an address in Lancashire after a statutory closing date but during the allocation period (ahead of finalisation of offers) then there will be considered as a late application. Appropriate evidence must be provided of ownership and date of relocation and residence at that address.

Please note that late entry to the annual intake processes will not be possible after the statutory closing dates unless an exception is agreed by the Local Authority and / or the admission authority.

The Authority has a duty to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all Lancashire maintained schools. The Authority will ensure that all Lancashire parents whose children will attend a reception class receive the offer of primary school place on the agreed date.

Summer born children - Deferring or delaying school entry

Background

The Department for Education has produced guidance 'Advice on the Admission of Summer Born Children (December 2014)'. The guidance is non-statutory and has been produced to help local authorities, admission authorities and parents understand the framework within which admission authorities must operate, and to dispel some of the myths that appear to have arisen around the admission of summer born children.

It should be read in conjunction with the statutory document, the Department for Education, 'School Admissions Code' which was published in December 2014.

The Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, wrote an open letter in September 2015 which referred to government plans to amend the School Admissions Code so that all summer born children can begin school after their fifth birthday and be placed into a reception class. As yet, there has not been a consultation on the legislative changes that would be needed to amend the

School Admissions Code. Lancashire County Council is therefore still adhering to the statutory requirements of the December 2014 Code.

When will my child reach statutory school age?

Children must be receiving full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday.

- For children born between 1 September and 31 December, they reach compulsory school age on 31 December and must be receiving full-time education at the start of the spring term (i.e. after the Christmas holidays, in January).
- For children born between 1 January and 31 March, they reach compulsory school age on 31 March and must be receiving full-time education by the start of the summer term (i.e. after the Easter holidays, in March or April).
- For children born between 1 April and 31 August, they reach compulsory school age on 31 August and must be receiving full-time education at the start of the new school year (i.e. after the summer holidays, in September).

Delayed admission to Reception

Parents of non-compulsory age children [four year olds] are entitled to inform the Admission Authority of their intention for their child to embark on a pattern of part-time attendance or deferment if that best suits the needs of their child.

In Lancashire, we provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents of non-compulsory school age children (four year olds) may choose a pattern of part-time attendance or deferment if that best suits the needs of their child. Parents will be offered the opportunity for their child to:

- Start Year R (Reception) in September on a full-time basis from their first day of attendance or on a part-time basis up to the point of reaching compulsory school age.
- Defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the summer term of the school year for which the offer of the school place was made.

Deferred admission to Reception

Parents who are considering deferring their child's entry to school should be aware that teachers are skilled in differentiating the curriculum to meet a diverse range of needs.

Parents are encouraged to visit the schools they are thinking of applying for, where staff will be able to explain the provision on offer to children in Reception class, how it is tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils and how the needs of each pupil will continue to be met as they move up through school.

Where a parent wishes to defer their child's admission until the following school year, parents are encouraged to make requests to defer in good time before the closing date for the normal admission round. Parents will need to provide the detailed reasons to enable

their request to be given proper consideration and are encouraged to include any supporting evidence from relevant professionals. Please complete the County Council's application form 'Application for a Lancashire school place for summer born children'.

Parents submitting a request for admission out of the normal age group are required to also make an application for a place in their child's normal age group at the same time. If the application to defer is made by the national closing date for applications the admission authority will ensure that the parent receives the response to their request before the primary school national offer day.

All summer born requests for deferred admission will be considered by the individual admissions authority of each preferred school. Where requests are made for differing admission authorities, the request must be sent to the local authority that will co-ordinate the request and the decisions made. If a joint agreement cannot be reached then the decision to defer admission will only stand for any named school that agreed the request.

When considering a request for deferred admission for a community or voluntary controlled school the following factors will be considered:

- any delayed social, emotional or physical development which may be affecting the child's readiness for school (supported by a relevant professional);
- premature birth and the fact that the child may have naturally fallen into a lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth;
- any medical incapacity, if this has prevented access to early years provision.
- any significant learning or special educational needs (supported by a relevant professional);
- the views of the head teacher of the preferred school (s)
- parental views

It will not be sufficient for the parent to provide personal views and opinions and /or to refer to national research. The request should demonstrate why it would be in a child's interest to be admitted to reception following their fifth birthday, rather than year one.

Making a decision in the child's best interests

The Local Authority will share information provided on the application form with the admission authorities and head teachers of the school(s) parents have expressed a preference for. They will not however be informed of the order of preferences. These admission authorities and head teachers will then come to a decision as to whether they support the request for deferred entry. Where necessary, reports will be requested from the child's nursery. The final decision will be for the admission authority to make.

The Local Authority will then write to parent/carers to confirm the result of these decisions.

If the request to defer admission is approved, the application for the normal age group can be withdrawn. A new application will need to be submitted the following autumn as part of the main admission round for the following year.

If the request to defer admission is refused, you will need to decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to Year 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Places are not held open for children who defer entry, so parent/carers must then reapply for a school place the following year for a place in Reception alongside children who are one school year younger.

Additional factors for consideration

Parents/carers should be aware that as the number of applications and preferences, and even the number of available places, may differ from year to year, that a deferral does not mean a place at the same school can be allocated one year later or provide any additional priority for a place.

Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the head teacher to decide how best to educate them. The head teacher may consider that it would be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to their normal age group. Any decision to move a child to a different age group would be based on educational reasons and in consultation with the parents.

For any child not being educated in the year group in which their chronological age falls there may be complications if a change of school is required or a move to another local authority. It will be for the admission authority of any receiving school to decide whether to admit the child out of their normal age group. This also applies at the time of transfer from primary to secondary school.

Any child who remains a year below their chronological age group will no longer be of compulsory school age during Year 11 of secondary school and therefore will be able to leave school before completing examinations.

There is no formal right to appeal a decision made by the admission authority. However, for schools where the LA is admission authority, a parent may request a review of the decision made.