

How Admission Work – Paragraph 15 of the School Admissions Code

In summary, the process operates as follows:

All schools **must** have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school. Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities.

- a) Admission authorities **must** set ('determine') admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority **must** first publically consult on those arrangements⁷. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they **must** be consulted on at least once every 7 years. For admission arrangements for entry in September 2016, consultation **must** be for a minimum of 8 weeks and **must** be completed by **1 March 2015**. For all subsequent years, consultation **must** be for a minimum of 6 weeks and **must** take place between **1 October** and **31 January** of the school year before those arrangements are to apply. For example: for arrangements which are to apply to applications in 2016 (entry in September 2017), consultation **must** be completed by 31 January 2016. This consultation period allows parents, other schools, religious authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about proposed admission arrangements.
- b) Once all arrangements have been determined, arrangements can be objected to and referred to the Schools Adjudicator. Objections to admission arrangements for entry in September 2016 **must** be referred to the Adjudicator by **30 June 2015**. For all subsequent years, objections **must** be referred to the Adjudicator by **15 May** in the determination year. Any decision of the Adjudicator **must** be acted on by the admission authority and admission arrangements amended accordingly. The local authority will collate and publish all the admission arrangements in the area in a single composite prospectus.
- c) In the normal admissions round⁸ parents apply to the local authority in which they live for places at their preferred schools. Parents are able to express a preference for at least three schools. The application can include schools outside the local authority where the child lives: a parent can apply for a place for their child at any state-funded school in any area. If a school is undersubscribed, any parent that applies **must** be offered a place. When oversubscribed, a school's admission authority **must** rank applications in order against its published oversubscription criteria and send that list back to the local authority. Published admission arrangements **must** make clear to parents that a separate application **must** be made for any transfer from nursery to primary school, and from infant to junior school.
- d) All preferences are collated and parents then receive an offer from the local authority at the highest preference school at which a place is available. For secondary schools, the offer is made on or about **1 March** (known as National Offer Day) in the year in which the child will be admitted. For primary schools, the offer is made on or about **16 April**, in the year in which the child will be admitted.

- e) Parents, and in some circumstances children, have the right to appeal against an admission authority's decision to refuse admission. The admission authority **must** set out the reasons for the decision, that there is a right of appeal and the process for hearing such appeals. The admission authority **must** establish an independent appeals panel to hear the appeal. The panel will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal. Where a panel upholds the appeal the school is required to admit the child.