Staffordshire County Council

Coordinated Scheme for Admissions to Primary and Secondary Schools
2016/2017

Staffordshire County Council’s School Admissions and Transport Service (SA&TS) will coordinate all admissions at all maintained schools in Staffordshire, including all Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust as well as Academy Schools in respect of applications for school places at the normal age of entry.

Staffordshire County Council is the relevant admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools within the County of Staffordshire.

The individual governing body is the relevant admissions authority for foundation, voluntary aided, trust and academy trust for academy schools within Staffordshire.

In accordance with regulations, admissions to Middle Schools at the normal age of entry will be coordinated in accordance with the primary school timetable.

The Scheme

1. This scheme meets the requirement for a coordinated admission scheme under The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements (England)) Regulations 2012 and applies to applications made by Staffordshire parents for all maintained schools and Academies at the normal age of entry (except special schools and nurseries).

2. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable,
   i) each parent who applies for a school place at the normal age of entry receives only one single offer of a school place under the scheme, whether that be at a school within the county or one maintained by another authority, and
   ii) a child is granted admission to whichever of the schools that is ranked highest on that application wherever possible.

3. Parents of children resident in the County of Staffordshire must make an application for the normal age of entry through Staffordshire County
Council to apply for any school within Staffordshire or in another authority.

Applying for School Places at the Normal Age of Entry

4. Staffordshire County Council’s School Admissions and Transport Service will provide a common application form to enable parents to apply for any school within the County or in another local authority. Parents will also be able to apply online or on the telephone.

5. Staffordshire parents will be able to name up to three school preferences, rank them in order of preference and have the opportunity to give reasons for their preferences. Parents must name all schools at which they wish to be considered for a place in order of preference, including any maintained foundation, trust, voluntary aided or any schools outside of Staffordshire in another local authority including academies.

6. Any Staffordshire school that receives an application directly must ensure that it is forwarded to the School Admissions and Transport Service.

Applying For School Places In-Year

7. An application form can be obtained from any of the following sources;
   - Child’s current school (if in Staffordshire) or preferred school
   - Staffordshire’s School Admissions and Transport Service (01785 278593)
   - From Staffordshire County Council’s website www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions

8. The application form will enable parents to apply for a school of their preference, and to provide their name and address and the name, address and date of birth of the child and also to include any documentary evidence in support of the application. The application form will also allow the parents to give reasons for the preference. Parents must apply directly to all schools for which they wish to be considered for a place, including any maintained foundation, voluntary aided, trust, academy or any schools outside the County of Staffordshire.

9. Any Staffordshire school that receives an application directly must ensure that the Local Authority is notified of the application and subsequent outcome.

Supplementary Application Forms

10. Where an in-year application is made for a school for which the Governing Body are the admission authority, the application must be
forwarded together with supporting information provided by the parent, to the Governing Body. The Governing Body of a foundation, voluntary aided, trust or academy school may require parents who make an application to provide supplementary information in order to apply their own admissions policy.

11. Parents are under no obligation to forward supplementary information, unless it is required to enable the Governing Body to apply their oversubscription criteria.

12. Where supplementary information is required for applications at the normal age of entry it must be returned to the School Admissions and Transport Service along with a valid application so that all information can then be passed to the relevant admissions authority.

12. For applications made for the normal age of entry, where documentary evidence in support of the application is received or a school receives supplementary information then it will not be regarded as a valid application, unless the parent has also completed an application with Staffordshire County Council.

13. Where documentary evidence in support of the application or supplementary information is received directly by a foundation, voluntary aided, trust or academy school for the normal age of entry, the school must inform the School Admissions and Transport Service immediately so that it can verify whether an application has been received and if this is not the case then, the parent can be contacted and requested to complete an application.

Closing Date for Return of Applications – Normal Age of Entry

14. All secondary school applications should be submitted by the national closing date of 31 October 2015.

15. All primary school applications should be submitted by the national closing date of 15 January 2016.

Variation for Burton & South Derbyshire UTC, JCB Academy and Rural Enterprise Academy – Normal Age of Entry

16. Admission to the JCB Academy and Rural Enterprise Academy will be dealt with as part of the secondary school transfer process in Staffordshire and will form part of the secondary school coordinated admissions system.

Variations for schools in the three-tier system – Normal Age of Entry

17. Children admitted to middle schools in Year 5 technically form part of the primary coordinated scheme.
18. Non Staffordshire Year 6 children attending a Staffordshire middle school will only receive information about the secondary transfer process if parents specifically request it.

19. Staffordshire Year 6 children attending primary schools out of area will receive information from Staffordshire even if they reside in an area that is served by a Staffordshire middle school.

20. Non Staffordshire Year 8 children attending a Staffordshire middle school will be provided with information through Staffordshire Local Authority but must apply for school places through their home Local Authority.

**Processing Applications – Normal Age of Entry**

21. By 16 November 2015 for Secondary applications and 1 February 2016 for Primary applications, the School Admissions and Transport Service will have forwarded and received all details of appropriate applications to and from other Local Authorities and will merge this information into the admissions database.

22. By 30 November 2015 for Secondary applications and 15 February 2016 for Primary applications the School Admissions and Transport Service will have forwarded all details of appropriate applications (and accompanying supplementary application forms where provided) to academy, trust, aided and foundation schools in Staffordshire. The School Admissions and Transport Service will then draw up preference lists for all community and voluntary controlled schools by applying the County Council’s oversubscription criteria.

23. Each school which is its own admission authority will apply their oversubscription criteria to all applications and by the 11 December 2015 (Secondary Schools) and 7 March 2016 (Primary Schools) will forward a list of all applicants to the School Admissions and Transport Service indicating the rank order in which all children meet the school’s oversubscription criteria along with an indication of which oversubscription criteria apply to each child.

24. The School Admissions and Transport Service compares the ranked lists from all schools. After applying the oversubscription criteria for each stated preference, where a child qualifies for a place at more than one school, the School Admissions and Transport Service will allocate a place at the parent's highest ranked preference. The child would then be removed from the other school’s lists and if there were other children awaiting places at that school the list would be adjusted accordingly taking the next applicant in the order of the oversubscription criteria.

25. By 15 January 2016 (Secondary Schools) and 21 March 2016 (Primary Schools) the initial results of places in Staffordshire schools will be
known. These will be shared with other Local Authorities and exchanged for details of Staffordshire pupils gaining places at Out of County schools.

26. These results are then compared to rankings and a list of provisional offers will be produced.

27. Local Authorities will then repeat the process set out in 24 to 26 and exchange final results on 12 February 2016 (Secondary Schools) and 1 April 2016 (Primary Schools).

Decisions

28. On 1 March 2016 the School Admissions and Transport Service will notify all Staffordshire parents who have applied for a Secondary School at the normal age of entry of the outcome of their preference and make a single offer of a school place.

29. All Staffordshire parents who have applied for a place in a Primary, Infant/Junior, First or Middle School at the normal age of entry will be notified on 18 April 2016.

30. Offers of school places being made to Staffordshire children for the normal age of entry on behalf of a Voluntary Aided School, a Foundation, Trust or Academy school or a school in another Authority will be sent by Staffordshire County Council on behalf of the relevant admission authority.

31. Children resident in other Local Authorities who have made preferences for schools within Staffordshire for the normal age of entry will be notified of the outcome of their request by their home Local Authority.

32. Where a Staffordshire child does not qualify for admission to any of their preferred schools and is also not on the roll of a school within a reasonable distance of the home address, an alternative school will be offered in conjunction with the relevant admission authority.

33. Where refusals are made for Staffordshire schools, parents will be given information about the appeal process.

34. Where refusals are made on behalf of other Local Authorities further information will be provided to parents to enable them to appeal, should they wish to do so.

Waiting Lists and Late Applications

35. Staffordshire County operates a waiting list for any Community or Voluntary Controlled School that is oversubscribed at the normal age of entry. Details are provided within our school admissions policy.
36. Please note that, Academies, Trust, Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools are responsible for deciding whether to operate a waiting list and how their waiting list will operate.

37. Staffordshire County Council as the admissions authority shall maintain a waiting list for the normal age of entry for at least 1 term in the academic year of admission, for every oversubscribed community or voluntary controlled school, according to the individual school's published admission arrangements.

38. The waiting lists will be clear, fair and objective and will not give priority to any child based on the date that their application was received or the date that the child's name was added to the waiting list.

39. It must be noted, that children who are the subject of a direction by a local authority to admit or those that are allocated to a school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over other children on the waiting list. (Please see School Admissions Code paragraphs 3.9 to 3.15.)

Acceptance of School Place

40. Parents will have at least two weeks after the date of offer to notify the authority as to whether or not he/she wishes to accept the place offered where relevant to the individual school admission arrangements.

Change of Preference

41. During the admission process the order of school preference may be changed by parents in writing up to the closing date. After this date, any change of preferences received will be dealt with in line with the late application policy relevant to the individual school admission arrangements.

42. Parents wishing to change their preferences to include schools not previously named will need to make a late application, which will be administered in line with information provided in the individual school's admission arrangements.

43. Parents wishing to change their preferences after the notification date will need to make a late application which will then be administered in line with information provided in the individual school's admission arrangements.
Failure to Express a Preference

44. Where a Staffordshire parent does not make an application for any school and the child is known to the School Admissions and Transport Service a place will be offered at the nearest maintained school with spaces available. Transport assistance will not necessarily be provided. In the case where the nearest school with a space available is its own admissions authority the offer will be made in consultation with and on behalf of the allocated school.

Processing Applications – In-Year Admissions

45. The process for in year transfers for Staffordshire schools is not coordinated. In line with the School Admissions Code, parents are able to contact the School Admissions and Transport Service for information about places available and then make applications directly to schools.

46. Application forms for In Year places are available from the County Council along with guidance on completing them. Academies and other schools which are their own admission authority may also have their own forms which can be obtained from the school.

47. Completed application forms should be returned directly to the preferred school. The school will notify the local authority of both the application and the outcome of the application within 7 working days, including sending through a copy of the decision letter where the application has been refused.

48. All decisions on applications will be made in line with the determined admission arrangements and will be subject to scrutiny to determine whether or not they meet the criteria for consideration under the LA Fair Access Protocol. A copy of this protocol is published on the LA website.

49. When determining school place applications outside the normal admissions round, admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child thought to be potentially disruptive, or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour, on the grounds that the child is first to be assessed for special educational needs.

50. Where a child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools there is no need for an admission authority to comply with parental preference for a period of two years from the last exclusion. The twice excluded rule does not apply to children who were below compulsory school age at the time of the exclusion, children who have been re-instated following a permanent exclusion (or would have been had it been practicable to do so), and children with special educational
needs statements. There is an expectation that the PAN at the normal age of entry will apply as the year group works through the school.

51. When it is not possible to offer a place, parents **must** be advised of their right of appeal under the School Admissions Appeals Code. Schools should confirm that this has been done in their notification to the local authority by sending a copy of the formal decision to parents.

52. For applications for year groups where a waiting list is in operation, the School Admissions and Transport Team will add unsuccessful applicants to the waiting list. Schools **must not** offer places to applicants in excess of the published admission number where a waiting list is in operation without consulting with the School Admissions and Transport Team.

53. Where a refusal means that a child does not have a school place, the School Admissions Team will contact parents to discuss options for securing a place. This may involve approaching other schools in the area that have places on parents behalf to offer them an alternative school.

54. The School Admissions and Transport Service are available to both schools and parents as a source of advice on the admissions process. Parents are also able to seek advice from the School Choice Advisor who will act as an independent source of advice as well as providing support with completing applications.

**Timetable for Coordinated Admission Scheme 2016/17**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Primary and Middle</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLOSING DATE - all applications to be submitted to School Admissions and Transport Service</td>
<td>31 October 2015</td>
<td>15 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications sent to and received from other Local Authorities.</td>
<td>16 November 2015</td>
<td>1 February 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application details and supporting documentation sent to academies, aided and foundation schools.</td>
<td>30 November 2015</td>
<td>15 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies, Aided and Foundation schools forward lists of all preferences ranked in accordance with criteria to School Admissions and Transport Service.</td>
<td>11 December 2015</td>
<td>7 March 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provisional offers shared between Local Authorities.</td>
<td>15 January 2016</td>
<td>21 March 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final offers exchanged with other Local Authorities.</td>
<td>12 February 2016</td>
<td>1 April 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents notified of outcomes.</td>
<td>1 March 2016</td>
<td>18 April 2016</td>
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