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BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

Scheme for co-ordinated admissions to secondary schools – Admissions Year 2005/06 (Admissions in September 2005)

Introduction

The main purpose of the co-ordinated scheme is to ensure that every parent of a child living in Brighton & Hove who has completed a school preference form receives one offer of a secondary school place at the conclusion of the normal admission round for pupils transferring from primary to secondary school. The scheme is designed to foster clear communications on school admissions between the City Council in its role as LEA, community schools, Cardinal Newman School, which as a voluntary aided secondary school acts as its own admission authority, and neighbouring LEAs and admission authorities.

The scheme does not affect the rights of the different admission authorities mentioned to set their own admission priorities, and consider applications on the basis of those priorities. It is intended to set out a process and time scale for the exchange of pupil information between the parties to the scheme, resulting in the offer of a single school place. This should represent the highest preference listed by the parent /carer that it is possible to meet following the application of the admission priorities by the LEA or by other admission authorities. Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the preferred schools for a child living in Brighton & Hove, a place will be offered at the nearest school to their home address within the city boundaries with a place available. This will not preclude parents from seeking an alternative place elsewhere if they are unhappy with the offer, nor will it prevent them from lodging an appeal with the admission authority for their preferred school.

The time scales set out in the scheme reflects the model provided in the draft School Admissions Code of Practice, and will be broadly in line with the time scales used by neighbouring LEAs.

Process and time scale

1. The school admissions booklet published by the City Council will be distributed to parents at the beginning of September 2004. This LEA will have identified those pupils entering Year 6 in city schools (the transfer cohort) from primary school records. Neighbouring LEAs will be asked to provide records of Brighton & Hove children attending schools in their areas so that admission booklets and forms can be sent to their parents/carers. Brighton & Hove will in return provide information to other LEAs about their residents attending Brighton & Hove schools.
2. Parents/carers will be invited to list 3 preferences for a school place in order of priority. These may be at a City Community School or Voluntary Aided Secondary School (Cardinal Newman), or any maintained school outside the City of Brighton & Hove. Those resident in the City must use the Brighton & Hove school admission preference form to indicate their

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preferred schools. No other form will be valid, in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 2002. They should list the schools in order of priority (e.g. 1, 2, 3). This is vital for the consideration of applications for schools within the city and beyond. The form should be completed and returned to the child's primary or junior school in the City, or to the Admissions Team at King's House **by 3.00 on Friday 22nd October 2004**. Preference forms giving Cardinal Newman School as first preference should normally be returned direct to the school by the same date with supporting information as required by the governors. The LEA will forward any such forms and/or supporting information it receives to the school. This closing date has been set in order to conform to the admission timetables of neighbouring LEAs.

3. Where as part of its admission priorities a Voluntary Aided School requires additional supporting information, such as a Governors' form, or proof of denominational commitment, that form or proof should be completed and returned by the same closing date. This is to ensure that target dates for the exchange of pupil information between authorities and the notification date for parents/carers can be met. Provided the LEA preference form has been completed and returned, that additional information may be given direct to the school, or handed in with the preference form. Parents/carers will be advised through the admissions booklet of Brighton & Hove or neighbouring LEAs, or through school published parent information, of any such additional information requirements for voluntary aided schools.
4. **No later than 22nd November 2004.**
 - ❖ LEA will make an indicative allocation of places to all first preferences at community schools in the city which are not oversubscribed. The published oversubscription criteria will be applied those schools with more applicants than places.
 - ❖ Cardinal Newman School will be provided with parental preference forms giving the school as a preference (first, second or third). It will apply its oversubscription criteria if necessary. If the school is not oversubscribed, the LEA will inform the school of its intention to offer all first preference applicants a place on behalf of the governors, and will discuss the application of oversubscription criteria to second and third preference applications if that becomes necessary. Where pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and must be offered a place as first priority this will be indicated. (Statemented pupils must be given priority for school of preference in accordance with the SEN and Admissions Codes of Practice.)
 - ❖ West and East Sussex and other LEA's as necessary will be forwarded the preference forms completed for their schools by Brighton & Hove parents/carers (first, second and third). Where the pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs this will be indicated.
 - ❖ West and East Sussex will be asked to provide a list of pupils giving a first preference for a Brighton & Hove school, indicating those who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

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No later than 20th December 2004

- ❖ If oversubscribed, Cardinal Newman School will provide the LEA with a list showing which children will be offered places at the school, and which will not. The list will show which admission criterion was applied to each child. The school will advise the LEA where in its admission criteria it stopped offering places, and such additional information as is necessary to inform parents of the reason for its decision when allocation letters are sent on 1st March 2005.
- ❖ Other LEAs will provide Brighton & Hove LEA with a list of which Brighton & Hove pupils will be offered places in their schools. They will advise Brighton & Hove of the reason where a preference cannot be met for inclusion in the allocation letters on 1st March.
- ❖ Brighton & Hove will decide upon its first preference allocations to community schools, and where the children are resident in other LEAs, will inform that LEA.

5. No later than 31st January

- ❖ Brighton & Hove will liaise with Cardinal Newman School and other LEAs to establish whether they would be able to offer places to children whose applications to them were second or third preferences. Where the first preference was for a B&H school which can be offered, second and third preference offers will be declined so that only one offer of a place is made.
- ❖ At the same time Brighton & Hove will indicate whether it can offer second or third preference places to applicants resident in other LEAs.

6. Between 31st January and 11th February

- ❖ Final lists of school allocations will be prepared.
- ❖ Letters to parents/carers will be prepared.
- ❖ Consideration will be given to late applications received before the allocation date.
- ❖ Neighbouring LEAs will be sent final details of children living in their area offered a place at a Brighton & Hove school, and for whom they will need to send allocation letters.

7. 1st March 2005

Letters will be sent to parents/carers. These will be sent via schools, who will then be able to add their own information or messages to parents/carers to the envelope. The LEA letter to parents will contain the following.

- ❖ If they have not been allocated their school of preference, the reason why not.
- ❖ How places at the preferred school were allocated.
- ❖ Where it is a voluntary aided school, the fact that the offer is made on behalf of the governing body of the school.

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- ❖ The right of appeal to an independent panel, and how to arrange an appeal for a community school, a voluntary aided school, and in the case of schools in other LEAs, who to contact.

8. Proof of address

The LEA may require parents/carers to provide proof of address if they are offered a place at a Community School that is over subscribed with first preferences.

Appendix A – Changes of address and late applications

New arrivals in the city

Parents/carers moving into the City in the course of the admission process who are making an application on the basis of their new address must provide evidence of either a tenancy agreement of six months or more or an exchange of contracts if they are purchasing a property. The tenancy agreement or exchange of contract must have been reached by the closing date (22nd October) if the application is to be regarded as on time. Applicants should return their preference form by the closing date, but will have to provide the evidence of their move.

Late applications received before the allocation date.

- I. Forms received after the closing date will not be considered by the LEA for schools oversubscribed with applications received before the closing date. Any received for Cardinal Newman School will be forwarded to the school, which will decide whether or not to include the application in the main admission round.
- II. Any preference forms for community schools received in respect of children in public care will be included in the main admission round as valid first preferences at any time up to the allocation date on **11th February 2004**. Where such applications are received after that date, the LEA will, if attendance at that school is seen as a necessity for the welfare of the child, seek to offer places at the school of first preference, if necessary negotiating with that school to admit beyond the published admission number in order to do so. If, however, it is possible to offer a place at a second or third preference school without going over numbers, the LEA will discuss that possibility with the social worker for the child. Applications for Cardinal Newman School or schools in other LEA areas for children in public care will be considered in line with the admission arrangements for those schools.
- III. Applications received after the closing date but before the allocation date on **11th February** will be sent a letter allocating a school place on **March 1st 2005** or as soon as possible after that date if the volume of late applications is high. Applications received after the allocation date will be sent an allocation letter as soon as possible after **1st March**.
- IV. Parents/carers living in the City who change a preference as a result of a change of address, and who return the new form by the closing date will have that change considered in the main round of allocations. They will

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have to provide evidence of the address change. Those preference forms received after the closing date will be considered as late applications.

Received after the allocation date

- I. Where an application is received after the allocation date, from a parent/carer living in the City, they must use a Brighton & Hove preference form. If the preference(s) is for a community school, the LEA will allocate a place if the school remains under subscribed. If the school(s) is fully subscribed, a place will be allocated at the nearest school to the home address that has a vacancy. Brighton & Hove will seek to make a decision as soon as possible after receiving the form. Where a preference is given for Cardinal Newman School, or a school in a neighbouring LEA, the form will be passed to that admission authority for a decision. They will be asked to reach a decision within fourteen days of receiving the form. Brighton & Hove will endeavour to send a decision to the parent /carer either as soon as possible once it has reached a decision, or has been informed of a decision by the other admission authority.
- II. All applications received after the beginning of the autumn term will be regarded as outside the co-ordinated scheme. Nonetheless, Brighton & Hove will act as the point of contact for all preferences for parents/carers living in the City, and will liaise with Cardinal Newman School and other LEAs over applications for admission to schools other than Brighton & Hove Community Schools. The LEA preference form should be used in all cases by City residents and returned to the Brighton & Hove Admissions Team, or for Cardinal Newman School directly to the school. The same arrangements will apply to applications for admission to schools for year groups other than the normal admission group in Year 7. Where the LEA, Cardinal Newman School or another admission authority is not able to offer a place in accordance with parental preference, the LEA will offer a lower preference. If that is not possible, a place will be offered at the nearest school to the home address of the applicant with a vacancy in the appropriate year group. Admissions to Years 12 and 13 in those schools that make such provision will be regarded as transfer admissions rather than admission at a normal point of entry. (The majority of such pupils will have attended the school from Year 7, or transferred to the school in Key Stage 3 or 4.)

Waiting List

- I. Brighton & Hove will operate a waiting list system for its Community Schools. (It is a matter for Voluntary Aided schools such as Cardinal Newman to decide whether or not to operate a waiting list system.) The waiting list ranking will be based on the LEA admission criteria. Rankings within each priority will be determined by distance from school as the crow flies. Places will be offered to children from the waiting list as soon as a place becomes available at an over subscribed school. All children refused a place at their school of first preference

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will be placed on the waiting list as soon as their school allocation is notified in March. This LEA will notify other LEAs as appropriate if it offers a place from the waiting list at a Brighton & Hove school to a pupil living outside the City. The waiting list will operate until the end of the Autumn Term. A waiting list will be maintained for first preferences only.

- II. Parents/carers who want to keep their child's name on a waiting list after that time must inform the LEA. They must renew the waiting list place each term thereafter. Applicants outside of the main admission exercise will be placed on waiting lists for one term and must also ask for the child's name to remain on the list each term thereafter.
- III. Other admission authorities may or may not elect to operate a waiting list system. If they are able to place a child resident in Brighton & Hove they are asked to notify this LEA at the earliest opportunity.

School Admission Appeals

- I. Parents/carers wishing to appeal against the LEA's or a Voluntary Aided School's decision not to offer a place at a preferred school should do so within two weeks (fourteen days) of their receiving the allocation letter at the beginning of March.
- II. The LEA will not arrange an appeal, or ask a Voluntary Aided School to arrange an appeal for a school that was not included on the original preference form. It will only arrange an appeal for a school which was listed as a preference, as it will not have given a decision to the parent/carer for schools not included on the form. If a parent/carer wishes to receive a decision for a school not included in their original preference, and thus acquire a right of appeal, they must complete a further preference form.
- III. Parents/carers will receive 14 days notice of the date of the appeal hearing, and will receive copies of any documentation relating to the appeal 7 days in advance of the hearing.
- IV. Whilst the City Council, other LEAs and the Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools will make every effort to hear appeals within 6 weeks of the allocation letter being sent out, as suggested in the Code of Practice, they cannot guarantee this time scale. The volume of appeals to be heard and the availability of the appeal panel members, who are volunteers, will have a direct affect on the timing of the appeal hearings.
- V. Appeals for late applications and school transfers outside the normal admission round will be arranged as soon as practicable after the decision to refuse a preference has been conveyed to the parent/carer or if appropriate to the student.
- VI. Appeals will be heard for refusals to places in Years 12 and 13 on the basis that they are school transfers.

School transfers

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Where parents/carers are seeking a school transfer without having changed address, a place will not normally be offered by the LEA or the receiving school until the beginning of the following term. Exceptions will be allowed where:

- The pupil has been permanently excluded from a school.
- An earlier move is strongly recommended by a doctor, educational psychologist, education welfare officer or social worker.
- There are other exceptional circumstances which lead the Director, Children, Families and Schools to conclude that an earlier move is advisable.