

PRIMARY ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE 2021 - NOTES OF GUIDANCE

The following procedures are recommended in relation to the processing of applications for admission. You should also refer to the School Portal User Guide and FAQs on Digital Admissions available on the [Digital Admissions Online Resource Hub](#) for instructions on using the School Portal and the new School Document Hub for access to document upload.

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1 APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO YEAR 1 (SEPTEMBER 2021)

The closing date for receipt of punctual applications is **12.00 noon on 29 January 2021** at which time the Citizen Portal will close and **no further applications or changes can be made online**. Due to the current Covid-19 Pandemic, paper applications will only be made available to parents on request from the EA Primary Admissions Office. The paper application must be returned to the EA Primary Admissions office also by this date and time to be treated as a punctual application. Schools should not accept paper applications from parents, if any applications are received by a school, it is requested that you forward these by email to the EA Primary Admissions Office for processing primaryadmissions@eani.org.uk

Parents will be able to upload their child's birth certificate, along with any other verifying documents requested in the admissions criteria of schools using the 'EA Document Upload' to the first preference school by **12.00 noon on 5 February 2021**. Documents will then be available for the school to access from the 'School Document Hub'. Guidance on the new Document Upload and School Document Hub will be made available to schools on the [Digital Admissions Online Resource Hub](#)

All late applications must be made on paper – the application form will be available from the Primary Admissions Office – email primaryadmissions@eani.org.uk or by contacting the Admissions Helpdesk (028) 9598 5595.

If late applications are received by a school these must be forwarded to the EA Admissions Office for processing – email primaryadmissions@eani.org.uk. Throughout the admissions procedure, punctual applications are considered in priority over late applications.

Children *currently in your* reception class/group (if applicable) for 2020/21 **do not** apply for admission to Y1 in your school and **do not count** as part of your admissions number for September 2021. If the Admissions Office receive a paper application for a child in your reception class, the parent will be contacted and advised that the application will not be processed as their child is already enrolled in the school. The EA will also remove any such digital applications from the School Portal in due course.

If you are oversubscribed and responsibility for applying criteria has not been delegated to the Principal you should arrange a Board of Governors meeting.

2 UNDERSUBSCRIBED SCHOOLS

- Schools must admit **all** pupils eligible to enter Y1 whose parents indicate that this is their preference unless the school's admissions number is exceeded (this includes any late applications).
- Please complete the allocation of places on the School Portal. Guidance on how to allocate and refuse applications is available in the School Portal User Guide on the [Digital Hub](#). You are requested to have completed the allocation of places by **Friday, 12 February 2021**.
- For any paper and late applications received by the EA Admissions Office, the child's details will be added to the School Portal by Admissions staff and the application form and any attachments will be uploaded to the school via the School Document Hub. If there are places available you should 'Allocate' the applicants on the School Portal.
- For any amendments to a child's information (e.g.) home address etc. you should complete the 'Applicant & Pupil Details Correction Form' which is available on the [Digital Hub](#) or you may use an alternative format to provide this information. Returns can be forwarded via email to primaryadmissions@eani.org.uk or by AnyComms+. For any documents sent via email please ensure that these are password protected for data security (guidance is available on how to do this on the Digital Admissions Online Resource Hub). Please refer to C2k guidance for instructions on how to make a return via AnyComms+. You can contact the C2k Service Desk on 0870 601 1666 if you need assistance.
- Further preferences, if any, will become visible and actionable on the School Portal once the first preference school has refused the application. The birth certificate and any other documentation for further preferences will automatically transfer via the School Document Hub to the school for consideration. For any late paper applications, the child's details will be added to the School Portal by Admissions staff and the application form and any attachments will be uploaded to the school via the School Document Hub. If there are places available you should 'Allocate' the applicants on the School Portal.

- If you subsequently become oversubscribed due to receiving further preferences any 'late' applications are the first to be displaced. Apply your admissions criteria as published to **all** applicants, and use the School Portal to 'Allocate' or 'Refuse' applicants.

NB Before refusing a child it is recommended that you download the birth certificate and any other documents received from the School Document Hub as you may need to recall an applicant or in the event of an appeal.

3 OVERSUBSCRIBED SCHOOLS

- Provisionally accept pupils up to the admissions number by applying the published admissions criteria. You may use the permitted variation (maximum admissions number) provided by doing so you do not exceed the school's approved enrolment number.
- Please complete the allocation of places on the School Portal. Guidance on how to allocate and refuse applications is available in the School Portal User Guide on the [Digital Hub](#). You are requested to have completed the allocation of places by **Friday, 12 February 2021**.

NB Before refusing a child It is recommended that you download the Application form, birth certificate and any other documents received as you may need to recall an applicant or in the event of an appeal.

- For any paper applications (including late applications) received by the EA Admissions Office, the child's details will be added to the School Portal by Admissions staff and the application form, and any other attachments will be uploaded to the school via the School Document Hub. You should 'Allocate' or 'Refuse' the applicants on the School Portal.
- It is useful to keep a record of applicants **in criterion order** as this will help when further preferences are received to know the 'cut-off' point i.e. the criterion an applicant has to meet if they are to be provisionally accepted. This list, in rank order, will also highlight the applicant(s) at risk of being displaced by further preference applicants.
- Further preferences, if any, will become visible and actionable on the School Portal once the first preference school has refused the application. The birth certificate and any other documentation for further preferences will be received via the School Document Hub for consideration. This also applies to any further preference paper applications. You should allocate or refuse further preference applicants on the School Portal for both online and any paper applications.

All preferences must be considered and allocated in accordance with your admissions criteria. **REMEMBER** – a second or further preference can displace a provisionally accepted first preference if the applicant meets a higher criterion, throughout the procedure.

- This clearing house system continues until every child is accepted by a school, their preferences are exhausted or the deadline for processing applications expires. Further preferences will not be requested from parents during the procedure.
- Duty to verify – I would refer you to DE Circular 2013/24 [Guidance on a Schools Duty to Verify](#) - updated 23 October 2020. Any school requesting verifying documents when the

offer of a place is being made should use the sample letter(s) as contained in the above circular.

- It is important that each school's Board of Governors carefully records how decisions are reached to identify the children to be allocated or refused admission as this information will be required in the event of a parent lodging an appeal.

4 VERIFYING DOCUMENTS NOT RECEIVED BY SCHOOLS

Where a birth certificate has not been received for a child during the admissions procedure, if this is the only qualifying information that you require, your Board of Governors should continue to consider the application and provisionally allocate or refuse, as appropriate to your admissions criteria. If a place is being offered then the placement letter should advise that 'the place is being offered subject to receiving the child's birth certificate to verify the child's age'.

Where verifying/supporting documentation, which is a requirement of the school's admissions criteria e.g. a utility bill, is not received until after 12 noon on 5 February 2021 or within any Duty to Verify deadline set by the school, then the Board of Governors should continue to consider the application and allocate or refuse the child based on the information which has been submitted punctually.

5 ADDING DETAILS TO SIMS

Development of the new Document Upload Hub has taken priority over the integration of the application details captured in the Citizen Portal and the school SIMS system. As a result, this facility will not be offered this year and schools can, if they wish, proceed with the manual input of new entrants' data as soon as it is received.

6 REQUEST TO INCREASE ADMISSIONS/ENROLMENT NUMBER

Places can be allocated in excess of the published admissions number provided you are able to accept up to a maximum admissions number, as set by DE. Please remember this only applies where a school remains within its enrolment number. In a situation where the Board of Governors may wish to consider submitting a request to the Department of Education for an increase in the admissions and/or enrolment numbers I would refer you to the DE Circular 2019/04 Admission and Enrolment Numbers Temporary Variation Requests and Pro-forma available at [Temporary Variation Requests](#) DE will not approve any requests for an increase in order to admit Reception age children. (See the School Portal User Guidance re allocating places above the admissions number).

Remember - a Temporary Variation in the enrolment number is required where accepting children within/up to the approved admissions number will cause the school to exceed its approved enrolment number.

7 CLASS SIZE

For queries regarding the procedure for applying for a class size exception please contact School Development Service by email to ClassSizeException@eani.org.uk

8 APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO RECEPTION CLASSES

Schools which do not have an existing policy of considering the admission of reception age children are **not** permitted to introduce such a policy even if there is surplus capacity within the admission and enrolment numbers. Where the school has a policy of making provision for pre-school children within a reception class group, the admissions criteria for reception must be applied if the school is oversubscribed. **Please remember children must not be admitted to a reception class until they reach their fourth birthday.**

9 PLACEMENT NOTIFICATION

The admissions procedure closes on Tuesday 27 April 2021. Parents who applied online can log on to the Citizen Portal on Wednesday 28 April 2021 with the username and password used when making their application to find out the outcome. Schools may choose to notify parents by post, letters for receipt on 28 April 2021.

NB For any children accepted where an application was made using a paper form, the school will need to issue a letter for receipt on 28 April 2021.

Schools are not required to write to any parent whose child you were not able to accept. EA will post letters for receipt on 28 April 2021 to those parents whose children are not accepted by any school (unplaced) and this will direct these parents to the EA website to access a list of schools where places remain available. Parents whose children are unplaced will be requested to nominate further preferences from this list, which they will be required to return to the Education Authority to be forwarded for consideration by schools.

NB The method of communicating by post to parents may be subject to review in line with any Covid-19 PHA guidance.

10 AFTER THE OPEN ENROLMENT PROCEDURE CONCLUDES

Vacancies should be filled in accordance with your waiting list policy. In order to maintain accurate records and advise parents where vacancies exist it would be appreciated if you could continue to keep the Primary Admissions Office advised of any withdrawals and details of any child accepted after **27 April 2021** via email to primaryadmissions@eani.org.uk

11 APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO Y2-Y7

Form AP1 should be used eani.org.uk/publications/AP1form. If the school is undersubscribed and has a place available, the child should be offered that place. If a place is available and an applicant is not admitted you must advise the parent in writing of their right of complaint against the school's decision. If the school is fully subscribed and there is no place available, the child's name can be placed on a waiting list and the parent informed accordingly. Should a place subsequently become available, the school must apply its waiting list policy.

12 CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE PRIMARY ADMISSIONS OFFICE, EDUCATION AUTHORITY



028 9598 5595



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