

Appendix A

THE COORDINATED SCHEME FOR PRIMARY ADMISSIONS IN THE AREA OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Introduction

- 1. The Buckinghamshire Coordinated Scheme for primary school admissions will be an Equal Preference Scheme with applied ranking at the stage of determining which shall be the actual offer when there is the potential of multiple offers.**

Interpretation

2. In this scheme:

“the LEA” means Buckinghamshire County Council acting in its capacity as the local education authority.

“the LEA area” means the area in respect of which the LEA is the local education authority.

“home LEA” means the LEA in which the applicant is resident.

“primary education” has the same meaning as in Section 2(1) of the Education Act 1996.

“secondary education” has the same meaning as in Section 2(2) of the Education Act 1996.

“primary school” has the same meaning as in Section 5(1) of the Education Act 1996.

“secondary school” has the same meaning as in Section 5(2) of the Education Act 1996.

“school” means any maintained school.

“foundation school” means those of the schools which are designated foundation schools.

“voluntary aided (VA) school” means those of the schools which are designated voluntary aided schools.

“admission authority” in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the LEA and, in relation to a foundation or voluntary aided school means the Governing Body of that school.

“the specified year” means the school year beginning at or about the beginning of September. The first year of application being 2005.

“admission arrangements” mean the arrangements for a particular school or schools which govern the procedures and decision making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school.

“casual admission” means any application for a school place in primary education that is received after 1 September of the normal admission year or subsequent years.

“eligible for a place” means that a child has been placed on the school’s ranked list at a position which falls within the school’s published admission number.

3. This scheme is pursuant to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002), and is for coordinating the arrangements for the admission of pupils to primary schools in the LEA area.
4. This scheme shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
5. The scheme shall apply to every primary school in the LEA with the exception of special schools and shall take effect from September 2005.

SCHEDULE 1

PART 1: THE SCHEME

Making an Application for a primary school place at the normal time of entry

1. All parents who live in Buckinghamshire, seeking entry for their child to a Buckinghamshire primary school, will be advised to obtain the Buckinghamshire Primary School Admission Application Form (BPAF). This will be available in the Guide for Parents on Admissions (the guide). There will also be the opportunity to complete an application on-line. The application form will collect basic data such as name, address and date of birth of the child. The BPAF must be used as the means of expressing a preference for a Buckinghamshire primary school for the purposes of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 by parents seeking admission of their child to a maintained primary school in Buckinghamshire.

2. The County Council will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the guide and application form are available on request from the LEA and primary schools in Buckinghamshire.
3. All preferences expressed on BPAF will be valid applications. Some foundation and voluntary aided schools may require additional information to be provided on a supplementary form. Only parents applying to those schools will need to complete the supplementary forms, which will be supplied by the schools concerned.
4. Parents who wish to apply to a school in the area of a different LEA must complete a separate form and return it to that LEA.
5. The BPAF will:
 - a. Invite the parent to express up to 3 preferences for Buckinghamshire maintained primary schools by completing the form. The preferences must be in ranked order;
 - b. Invite parents to give reasons for each preference;
 - c. Explain that parents will receive no more than one offer of a Buckinghamshire place, which will be:
 - i. The highest ranking school at which their child is eligible for a place;
 - ii. If a place cannot be offered at any of the preferred schools, a place will be offered at the nearest Buckinghamshire maintained school with vacancies; and
 - d. Specify the closing date for applications to be timely and where it should be returned.
6. Where a school receives a supplementary form from a Buckinghamshire resident it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also sent to the LEA a completed a BPAF and nominated the school on it.
7. All completed BPAF and supplementary data forms should be returned to the **Admissions Team at County Hall, by 28 November of the relevant year**. Any forms sent direct to a school must be forwarded to the County Council.

Processing the applications

8. Where a foundation school or voluntary aided school is listed on the application form, the Admissions Team will forward appropriate details to the Governing Body, including the relevant supplementary material.
9. At this stage the admission authority will not be made aware of the position of that school on the parents ranked list, unless ranking is one of the oversubscription criteria for that authority.

10. Each admission authority will then apply its own oversubscription criteria to the list of applicants for the school. Buckinghamshire County Council will be doing this for its community and voluntary controlled schools, the Governing Bodies for the foundation and voluntary aided schools.
11. Each authority will then return its ranked list to the Admission Team at County Hall, based on admission criteria for the school, of children who could potentially be offered a place at the school. Each school would also send a waiting list ranked on admission criteria. The length of the waiting list to be used in the iterative process will be agreed with the schools.
12. The date for return of the school lists will be established by agreement each year, in accordance with schedule 2.
13. The County Council will then scrutinise the lists and where a child could potentially be offered more than one school, the potential offer will be the school placed higher on the parental preference list.
14. This process would be repeated continually, until all multiple offers are resolved, as an iterative process as outlined in paragraphs 15 – 20 below.

Determination of the place to offer

15. Where a child is provisionally allocated a place at the school ranked first, this will become the firm offer. The pupil's name will then be removed from lists for other schools, and for each of those schools a child from the waiting list will be added to the offer list. Other children will move one place higher up the waiting list for those schools.
16. Where a child is not allocated a place at the first ranked school but is provisionally allocated a place at a school ranked second, this will be held provisionally pending further rounds in case the first preference place becomes available. Provisional allocations to the school ranked third on the parent's preference list will be withdrawn enabling other children to move up the list.
17. Where a child is provisionally allocated a place at his or her third ranked school but not at the first or second preferences, this will be held provisionally pending further rounds in case they lead to a higher preference becoming available, as in paragraph 16 above.
18. Schools will be able to have information in real time on how the applications for the school are progressing by access to a website.
19. Once the iterative process is complete, all allocations then in existence become the firm offer.

20. Children who remain on the waiting list for a school will be treated as being refused a place by the admission authority. Parents will have the right to appeal to an independent Appeal Panel if they so wish.

Children who have not been allocated a place in the iterative process

21. Buckinghamshire children will be offered a place at the nearest school with a vacancy. This will be based on the shortest designated route. Non-Buckinghamshire applicants will be referred back to their own LEA.

Parents also applying to schools outside Buckinghamshire

22. The LEA, which maintains those schools, will also be applying their scheme. If that LEA can offer a place it will send an offer to the parent. The parents will then choose which offer to accept if they have also had an offer of a Buckinghamshire school.

The offer

23. The LEA will confirm with all schools details of the children who will be offered a place at the school, before the offer letters are sent.

24. The County Council will send out all offer letters to Buckinghamshire parents who have applied for a primary school place. This will make clear where the offer is being made on behalf of the Governing Body of a foundation or voluntary aided school.

25. The offer date for primary school admission will be agreed with the local admission authorities and be **before 15 April of the relevant year**. The offer letter will give details of:

- the name of the school being offered; and
- the reasons why a place is not being offered at the other schools nominated.

An enclosed leaflet will contain details of the statutory right to appeal and the steps to take if necessary. The acceptance of offers or the submission of an appeal should be notified to the LEA by parents within 14 days.

Late applications

26. Late applications received after the **closing date of 28 November**, or in accordance with the timetable in schedule 2, will only be considered during the core processing time if they are received by a **final date**, which will be agreed each year. Applications received by this date will only be processed where there was good reason for the late application eg a house move.

27. Applications received after the final date will not be processed until after the timely applications have been allocated. They will then be processed in batches on a monthly basis.

Waiting lists

28. Children who have not been allocated a place at a preferred school may have their name placed on the waiting list for the school. The waiting list will be ranked in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.

29. The County Council will maintain waiting lists until one month after the normal admission date. After this time they will be maintained by the school and parents will be advised to contact the schools direct to remain on the waiting list.

Right to appeal

30. Parents who wish may appeal to an independent Appeal Panel for a place at different nominated school. These 'transfer appeals' will start in April.

PART II – CASUAL ADMISSIONS: LATE TRANSFER PROCEDURE AFTER NORMAL DATE OF TRANSFER

1) Composite prospectuses (parent guides) will be sent out by the receiving school or the LEA within 5 working days of receipt of the request.

Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

2) Parents will be required to complete the BPAF and return it to the LEA.

3) Where the LEA and the school agree that there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the waiting list with a higher priority, a place will be offered. If this is not possible schools nominated on the preference form will be considered in preference order.

4) Where one or more schools nominated on the preference list is foundation or voluntary aided school the LEA will liaise with the school and forward the application where appropriate.

5) If no place is available at a school on the preference list, and the child is a Buckinghamshire resident, then a place will be offered at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

6) Children who have not been allocated a place at a preferred school may have their name placed on the waiting lists for the school. The waiting list will be ranked in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.

- 7) Parents will receive an offer letter detailing the place to be offered and the reasons why a higher nominated school could not be offered (where appropriate). Parents will be told of the rights to the independent appeal process where appropriate.

Foundation or Voluntary Aided Schools

- 8) Where a foundation or voluntary aided school receives a direct application and there is a vacancy with no other child on the waiting list with a higher priority the place can be offered. The parent should be required to complete the BPAF and receive an appropriate offer letter from the school. If other maintained schools are listed on the BPAF as alternative preferences, then a copy should be forwarded to the County Council to manage admission to alternative schools if necessary.
- 9) Where the school does not have a vacancy or there are other children with a higher priority on the waiting list the parents should:
- Receive an appropriate refusal letter explaining why a place was not offered;
 - Be referred back to the LEA;
 - Be given information on the right to an Independent Appeal Panel hearing; and
 - Be offered the option of a place on the waiting list.

SCHEDULE 2

Timetable of Primary Schools Coordinated Admission Scheme 2005

The timetable will be subject to annual consultation.

28 November 2004	Closing date for Buckinghamshire Primary Application Form to be returned to County Hall Admissions Team
15 December	Details of applications forwarded to foundation and voluntary aided schools
31 December	Final date for return of Buckinghamshire Primary Application Form for agreed special cases to be considered timely Any applications or changes of preference received after this date will not be processed until after the timely applications.
15 January 2005	Foundation and voluntary aided schools send LEA a ranked list of applicants
14 February	Details of children to be offered places in their school sent to schools
21 February	Offer letters sent to parents
4 April	Start of transfer appeals