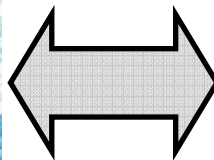


East Sussex County Council

Co-ordinated admissions scheme
for **Primary** schools
in 2006/07



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Introduction

The Education Act 2002 requires Local Education Authorities each year to draw up a scheme for co-ordinating admissions to primary schools. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that all parents receive a single offer of a school place on the same day.

This scheme has been adopted by the County Council following consultation with all schools in the county (including aided schools which are their own admissions authorities) and neighbouring Local Education Authorities (Kent, Surrey, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove). The scheme has also been considered by the School Admissions Forum. The scheme covers admissions to all schools in East Sussex and cross border applications.

The scheme is based on the principles about admissions which have been agreed by both the School Admissions Forum and the County Council. These are that the County Council:

- Believes in the principle of one first preference for each child
- Will provide as much information to parents as possible of the likely success of their preference
- Will ensure that the preference is considered with care, and equally with other applications
- Aims to meet as many first preferences as possible
- Will give priority to first preferences
- Will apply the admissions criteria appropriately to all stated preferences
- Will ensure parents are informed of their rights if their preference(s) cannot be met

Key Dates

Distribution of admissions booklets	Early January
Closing date for applications	3 February 2006
Final deadline for applications	27 February 2006
Exchange of preferences/preferences for each school declared	3 March 2006
Completion of round 1	24 March 2006
Completion of round 2	21 April 2006
Finalise allocations	28 April 2006
Letters released to primary schools	2 May 2006
Letters posted first class by primary schools	5 May 2006
Closing date for appeals	19 May 2006
Appeal heard	June 2006

A Applications made in the main round

1. The co-ordinated scheme is based on prioritising first preferences but it will be for individual admission authorities to determine the outcome of all preferences expressed for that school. The only valid preferences are those stated on the LEA application form. Other admission authorities should note that they should not use any other application form and that a separate, additional form need only be provided where additional information is required to determine admission within their criteria. This form will be obtainable from and returnable to that admissions authority (aided schools).
2. The process will begin with the distribution of admissions booklets and preference forms early in January 2006. In the Autumn Term 2005 children being admitted to primary school in September 2006 will be identified, posters will be provided and schools asked for details of known children.
3. The form enables parents to give up to three preferences given in order of priority for the school they would like their child to attend. This might be for a school for which East Sussex LEA is the admissions authority, or where the governing body of an aided school is the admissions authority. If the school is outside the county (foundation, aided or community/voluntary controlled) application should be made direct to that LEA but any out county school should be stated on the home form. That LEA is expected to notify East Sussex of the existence of the application. The form should be completed and returned to the address given on the form. The closing date for applications will be 3 February 2006.
4. By 3 March 2006 the LEA will have determined the level of first preferences for each school. Where a community or voluntary controlled school has fewer first preferences than the published admission number all those preferences will be offered places. Aided schools will be advised of the preferences received and where a school is undersubscribed the intention of the LEA to issue a letter at the appropriate time advising parents that their first preference will be met.
5. By 3 March 2006 the LEA will advise aided schools of details of applicants for their schools and, where there is oversubscription, send the forms of any expressed preference to the schools to enable them to apply their admissions criteria.
6. By 24 March 2006 aided schools will advise the LEA of their decisions. Each school will clearly identify any children not being offered places. For all children the school will advise the LEA of the status of each application against its admissions criteria. Each school will provide a detailed statement explaining how places have been allocated and (where appropriate) the reasons why all first preferences have not been met. This statement will be sent to parents with the allocation letter released on 5 May 2006 – the allocation date chosen by the LEA.
7. By 24 March 2006 the LEA will have decided on first preferences for East Sussex community and voluntary controlled schools. This will complete round 1 of the allocation process.
8. By 31 March 2006 the LEA will recirculate forms to other admissions authorities where the first preference cannot be met and the second preference is for a school where the LEA is not the admissions authority.
9. By 21 April 2006 the LEA will be advised by other admissions authorities to whom forms were sent of the outcome of the second round of preferences.

10. By 28 April 2006 the LEA will finalise allocations to be made. During the period 21 to 28 April 2006 discussions will take place, where necessary, with other admissions authorities over any outstanding applications (the third round).
11. In the period 24 April to 28 April letters will be prepared.
12. In the period 10 April to 21 April decisions will be made on applications covered by section B of the Co-ordinated Scheme.
13. In the week commencing 1 May (NB Monday 1 May is a bank holiday) letters and lists of children being allocated places will be released to primary schools (where appropriate) for the schools to post on the allocation date.
14. 5 May 2006 – allocation letters released. Where a preference is not being met a detailed statement will be enclosed with the letter explaining how places have been allocated. The letter will also advise parents of the right of appeal – where this is for a school for which the LEA is not responsible for admissions parents will be advised to contact that admissions authority direct to arrange an appeal if they wish to do so.

B Applications after the closing date but before the allocation date

1. It is recognised that applications will be received after the closing date, parents might not complete forms by the closing date (or not at all) or parents will wish to change their preference. Such applications still need a response and this section of the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme deals with applications received in these circumstances.
2. **First applications for an East Sussex school** – These applications relate to new families to the area where it can reasonably be assumed that an application could not have been made by the closing date. If a family proposes to move to East Sussex it will only be determined through the Co-ordinated Scheme where the applicant can provide proof of ownership or tenancy on an East Sussex property (such as exchange of contracts or signed tenancy agreement of one year). If an applicant cannot provide that detail they will have to wait for a decision until such time as satisfactory evidence is received.
3. If the application form is received by 28 February 2006 it will be passed on to the relevant admissions authority (if East Sussex is the admissions authority it will be taken into account in the main round of applications).
4. If the form is received after 28 February it will still be passed to the relevant admissions authority with a note that it has been received after that date. It will be for the admissions authority to decide how it wishes to respond to the application. It is expected that any application received after 28 February will be allocated a place at an undersubscribed school unless that is an unreasonable distance from the home. Unreasonable distance is defined as the statutory walking distance for school transport or a situation where the LEA would incur additional transport costs which prejudice the efficient use of resources. In this situation the LEA reserves the right to displace a first preference with an application received after the closing date. This will continue up until 21 April 2006.
5. Any late applicant will receive a letter on 5 May 2006 provided the application has been received by 21 April 2006. The LEA will ensure that any late application received between 28 February 2006 and 21 April 2006 is allocated a place but this is likely to be at the nearest school to the home with places available (unless unreasonable distance applies). For applications received after 21 April 2006 but before 5 May 2006 allocation letters will be released as soon as possible after 5 May.

6. **Late applications** – These relate to applications from parents where it could reasonably be assumed that an application could have been made by the closing date. These applications will be processed in the same way as new applications received after the closing date as described in paragraphs 2 to 5 above.
7. **No application form received** – No places will be allocated unless a completed application form has been received.
8. **Changes of preference**– Some parents may wish to change preference after the closing date due to a change of circumstances. It is discretionary as to whether to accept such a change of preference. The LEA will judge each case on its merits but the general principle will be to only accept a change of preference where there has been a significant change of circumstances (such as a house move) thus making the original preference no longer practical. Any change of preference received by 21 April 2006 will have a decision conveyed on 5 May and such applications will be advised that they do have the right of appeal against the revised preference not being met. If the revised preference is for an undersubscribed school every attempt will be made to allocate a place at that school on 5 May.

C Application Forms received after 5 May 2006

1. Applications will continue to be received after the allocation date. Only those preferences expressed on the LEA application form will be valid. Where the preference is for a community or voluntary controlled school the LEA will determine the preference but if all places are allocated a place will be allocated at the nearest school with a place available (if that is an aided school the LEA will ask the school whether a place can be allocated). Any refused preference will be advised of the right of appeal. If the preference is for an aided school the LEA will pass the form to the aided school for a decision. The school must then advise the LEA within fourteen days as to whether a place can be allocated so the LEA can formally advise the parent of the decision.
2. Where applications are received after the beginning of the school year it will be for the admissions authority to handle the application and to inform the parent of the decision. The Co-ordination Scheme will end on the first day of the school year.

D Appeals

1. Appeals must be lodged within fourteen days of the allocation letter being sent on 5 May 2006. The appeal must be against any refused preference, thus if a parent puts on the appeal form a school which did not feature as a preference on the original application form an appeal will not be arranged. Parents will be required to complete another admissions form to reflect their new preference(s).
2. Parents requesting an appeal will be entitled to fourteen days notice of the date of the appeal. Papers relevant to the appeal will be sent seven days before the hearing. The Code of Practice on appeals suggests that appeals should be heard within six weeks of the allocation letter being released. The County Council will take all practicable and reasonable steps to ensure that the guidance is met, but cannot guarantee this, as it is dependent on the volume of appeals to be heard.
3. The LEA must be advised of the outcome of all appeals.

E Waiting lists

1. Each admissions authority will operate waiting lists so that it is clear as to which child will be offered any place which becomes vacant. Such waiting lists will be constructed on the closing date for appeals to be lodged (19 May 2006). The waiting list will reflect the admissions criteria. The LEA must be notified by admissions authorities of any places which are subsequently allocated from the waiting list. It remains for the LEA to offer places to parents when places become available and are allocated from the waiting list whether the admissions authority is the LEA, an aided school in East Sussex or a school in a neighbouring authority.
2. Waiting lists will operate until the end of the 2006/07 school year in respect of reception admissions.

F Casual admissions

1. These are applications received after the first day of term and outside of the co-ordinated scheme.
2. Applications during the year should continue to be made on the LEA application form. These should then be returned to the authority responsible for the admission arrangements. Any authority refusing an application should advise the LEA of the decision so the LEA can consider allocating an alternative school. The admissions authority should, at the same time, notify the parent of the decision, provide details of the appeals procedure and advise the parent that the form has been passed to the LEA so a school place can be allocated.