INFORMATION FOR PARENTS BOOKLET-PRIMARY

MAKING AN IN-YEAR APPLICATION

1. IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS

1.1 In-year admission applications are those requesting a transfer from one school to another outside of the normal admissions round, for example when a family moves house part way through a school year. This booklet sets out the in-year application process and is also intended to give information and advice to parents/carers who wish to explore the possibility of transferring their child from one school to another part way through a school year.

1.2 Generally a child will be admitted to another school if there is a place available with the exception of those children whose circumstances meet the requirements of the Fair Access Protocol. For more information about the Fair Access Protocol, please refer to section 5.

1.3 If your request for an in-year transfer **is not** because of an address change or relocation from overseas, you are strongly advised to think very carefully before you apply. Problems that your child may be experiencing may not go away simply as a result of a change of school.

1.4 Before you consider changing your child's school, it is important to discuss it with your child and find out how he/she really feels about the possibility of a school move. You need to be clear about the real reason why he/she wants to move to a different school. For example, it could be because he/she is worried about certain subjects. If this is the case then you will need to discuss this with your child's current school to allow them the opportunity to address any concerns that you or your child may have. If you think your child needs extra help or has needs that are not being recognised, you would need to arrange to speak to the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) at your child's current school. If you or your child has concerns about bullying or friendship issues, speak to your child's class teacher; head of year or pastoral head. Finally, having explored these options, if you feel your concerns have not been addressed appropriately at your child's current school, you should arrange an appointment to speak with your child's Headteacher.

1.5 All schools have a complaints policy which will set out how parents/carers should raise school's awareness of any concerns and what steps will be taken to help resolve them.

2. POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MAKING YOUR APPLICATION

2.1 There are many points to consider when deciding whether or not a school transfer for your child is the right thing to do. Some of the main points to consider are set out below.

2.2 **Teaching and school organisation**

Each school teaches the national curriculum in different ways and at different times of the academic year. It may be the case that the part of the curriculum currently being studied at the 'new' school was covered by your child's current school earlier on in the year. This may impact on your child's education as he/she will be repeating work which he/she has already done. It could be that areas of the curriculum have been completed at the 'new' school but had not yet been covered at your child's current school. This means your child will completely miss out on some areas of the curriculum.

2.3 You may find it useful to visit the school's website and contact the school to arrange a visit to discuss this.

2.4 **Friendships**
Forming friendships is a very important aspect of school life. Children should feel happy and content at school and relationships with friends and teachers are a key part of any child's social development and educational progression. If relationships have broken down at your child's current school, you must discuss this with your child's school before making a decision to transfer to another school. Problems that your child may be experiencing may not go away simply as a result of a change of school.

2.5 **Uniform**
It may be necessary to buy a completely new uniform, including PE kit, for your child if you decide to transfer schools. It should be noted that the local authority is unable to provide any subsidy, even for low income families, in connection with uniform costs.

2.6 **Transport**
The local authority is required by law to provide or pay for free transport for pupils who have to travel more than the statutory distance to their nearest suitable school. For pupils of primary aged pupils, this distance is 2 miles.

2.7 It is important that you do not confuse the right to express a preference for a school with an entitlement to travel assistance. If you have expressed a preference for a school which is further away from your home and the distance to this school is more than the statutory distance, you may not be entitled to travel assistance. If this is the case, you will need to think about the costs involved with getting your child from home to school and back on time and safely as this is your responsibility. For more information regarding home to school transport assistance, please visit the Council website.

3. MAKING AN APPLICATION

3.1 If, having considered all the points listed above, you decide to apply for a school transfer; you must complete the appropriate in-year transfer form. If you would like to apply for a place at a Faith School, it may be necessary for you to complete a supplementary information form **in addition** to the in-year form. This additional information enables the admission authority to apply their oversubscription criteria correctly, if appropriate.

3.2 It is also important to note that a form must be completed for each child seeking a school transfer. For example, if you have three children you wish to transfer, two of primary age and one of secondary school age, you must complete two primary in-year forms and one secondary in-year form.

3.3 Forms are available to download on the council website at http://www.warrington.gov.uk/downloads/file/1692/in-year_admission_and_transferring_schools_application_form_pdf or alternatively you can telephone 01925 446226 and ask for a form to be posted out to you. For more information regarding individual schools please refer to the online booklet which is available to download at

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/downloads/file/7596/primary_school_admissions_booklet_2015-16_pdf

3.4 The application is made up of seven sections. Sections 1 to 6 must be completed by the parent/carer. **Section 7 needs to be completed by your child's current school. It is important that all sections are completed as incomplete forms will not be accepted.**

3.5 **Parental responsibility**
Applications must be completed by a person who has parental responsibility for the child. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, the address given on the form should be the address of the parent who is in receipt of child benefit and/or child tax credit or who has chosen not to claim child benefit due to higher earnings. Proof may be required.

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1 The fully completed form must be returned to the local authority's school admissions team. Completed forms may be scanned by the parent/carer and emailed to schooladmissions@warrington.gov.uk

4.2 It is also acceptable to hand deliver or post the completed form to:

School Admissions Team
2nd Floor New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA1 2NH

4.3 When your application is received by the school admissions team you will receive an acknowledgement and you will be notified of the date you can expect a decision. If you have submitted the form by email, an email acknowledgement will automatically be generated to the sender's email address upon safe delivery to the school admissions mailbox. If an acknowledgement is not received by the sender, there is no guarantee that it has been received by the admissions team.

4.4 The school admissions team aim to reply to all in-year transfer applications within 10 school days of receiving a complete application. **It is not possible to take school holiday periods into account as school staff are not in school and therefore are unable to confirm and arrange any admissions.** In certain cases it may be necessary to consider an application in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol which may result in the process taking longer than 10 school days. If this is the case, you will be notified in writing and informed of the expected decision date. This again, may cause a delay and the application process will take longer than 10 school days.

4.5 Please be aware, it will take more than 10 school days to process a form which is only part completed or if you do not send all the required paperwork. Applications may also be delayed if the school admissions team is unable to confirm with individual schools whether or not a place can be offered.

4.6 All decision letters are sent second class and parents/carers should allow time for postage. Alternatively, you can request to receive your letter by email.

5. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

5.1 Each local authority must have a Fair Access Protocol, agreed with schools in its area including Academies Faith and Free Schools, to ensure that, unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible.

5.2 The school admissions team assess all applications to identify those which meet the requirements of the Fair Access Protocol. The criteria for primary aged children are as follows:

a) Children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) who need to be reintegrated into mainstream school;
b) Children who have been out of the UK education system for 2 months or more;
c) Children of gypsies, Roma, travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
d) Children who are homeless;
e) Children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought;
f) Children who are carers;
g) Children with SEN, disabilities or medical conditions (but without a statement);
h) Key stage one children whose attendance is less than 85%;
i) Key stage two children whose attendance is less than 90%;
j) Children who have accessed support from New Horizons;
k) Children who have required behaviour support;
l) Children who have a period of exclusion during the last 12 months to date;
m) Children who have been permanently excluded;
n) Children who have required support from outside agencies
o) Number of school moves during the last academic year

5.3 Once applications meeting the Fair Access criteria have been identified, an admissions officer will assess each application taking the following factors into account:

- The preferences expressed by the applicant
- The home to school walking distances from the applicant's home to the preferred schools
- The total number of Fair Access admissions already placed/to be considered for each of the preferred schools
- All other schools within a reasonable distance to the applicants' home address where reasonable distance is defined as a home to school walking distance of 2 miles.
- The total number of Fair Access admissions for each of the schools within a reasonable distance.

5.5 The outcome of this assessment will determine how the local authority will share out these applications between all suitable schools. The local authority

must ensure that no school, including those with places available, is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been permanently excluded from other schools or who have challenging behaviour compared to other schools in the area.

5.6 There is no requirement to comply with parental preference when placing children in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol however; if an applicant is refused any of their preferred schools, they must be informed of their statutory right of appeal against the decision(s) not to offer a place at the school(s) of their preference.

5.7 For more information about Warrington's Fair Access Protocol and to access a copy of it, please visit the Council website at www.warrington.gov.uk or telephone 01925 446226 and request a copy.

6. ALLOCATING PLACES - FOR APPLICATIONS WHICH DO NOT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

6.1 Applicants are invited to express preferences for up to three schools. Each of the schools listed on the form is treated as a separate application. The admissions team will look to see whether there are places at any of the preferred schools. If a faith school or an academy has been listed as a preference, the admissions team will check if there is a place available in the required year group and contact the school to find out whether a place can be offered.

6.2 Places are offered for in-year applications on a first come first served basis. If there is one place available at a school and more than one child has applied on the same day, the school's oversubscription criteria will be applied to determine which child has the highest priority and should be offered the place.

6.3 If only one of the preferred schools has a place to offer in the required year group, then that place will be offered to the applicant for their child. If more than one of the preferred schools could offer a place, a place would be offered at whichever of those schools is the highest preference.

6.4 If all of the preferred schools are full and the applicant does not currently have a school place due to relocating to the area, the local authority will offer a place at the nearest school which is within a reasonable distance* to the home address that has a place available. This may not be the closest school to the applicants' home as many Warrington schools are already full in many year groups and admission authorities are unable to hold places in reserve for children who may move into an area after the usual point of entry.

**Warrington local authority defines a reasonable distance as a home to school shortest walking distance up to 2 miles for primary aged children.*

6.5 If no school within a reasonable distance has a place available, it may be necessary to admit over the published admission number at a school which is within a reasonable distance. Admitting over the published admission number will only be considered where the following exceptional circumstances apply:

a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs specifying a school;

b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
c) children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admissions authority or local authority in the original application process;
d) children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
e) children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

6.6 If all of the preferred schools are full and the child is a Warrington resident and already has a place at a school that he or she is able to attend, an alternative school place will not be offered.

6.7 When considering which school should admit exceptionally above the published admission number, the local authority may consult the Headteacher at the school to decide whether or not, on balance, the prejudice caused to the child by not admitting them to a particular school outweighs the prejudice caused to the school by admitting the child. The authority would make every effort to share such requests between schools which are local to the applicant's address, when it is reasonable to do so. Therefore, if all schools within a reasonable distance are full, the local authority may not automatically admit exceptionally to the preferred school.

6.8 If an application meets the circumstances of Exception C listed above, documentary proof of the house move will be required. Examples of acceptable proof are as follows:
- a council tax bill;
- evidence of the exchange of contracts; or
- Driving licence
- utility bill, not bank statements. For the purpose of this policy, utility bills are defined as water, gas or electric bill

6.9 Where the change of address is to a rented property, a copy of the tenancy agreement (for a minimum of 6 months) must be provided.

6.10 It should be noted that exceptional circumstances do not apply in the event of a family relocating to the area to live with other family members. In cases such as these, if no places are available at a school within a reasonable distance, the application will be refused and the right of appeal will be offered. A list of alternative schools will be provided upon request however; the home to school walking distance for these schools will be more than the reasonable distance defined by the local authority.

7. INFANT CLASS SIZE LEGISLATION

7.1 Infant classes are those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year i.e. Reception and Years 1 and 2.

7.2 Infant classes **must not** contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher however; additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances as set out above.

7.3 If a child circumstances meets any of the exceptions listed in a)-h), then the child may be admitted to an already full/oversubscribed Reception, Year 1 or 2 class as an excepted pupil. This means that the child can be added to a class of 30 in these year groups without the requirement to take qualifying measures i.e. employment of an additional teacher.

8. TAKING UP THE OFFER OF A PLACE

8.1 When an offer of a place has been made and the circumstances of the applicant **do not meet** the exceptional circumstances criteria, it is reasonable to expect the child to be admitted within 10 school days, where the 10 day period begins on the date the offer letter was sent.

8.2 If the offer is linked with a house move, the parent/carer will be notified that the child should be admitted within six school weeks as a maximum. Places offered cannot normally be held for more than six weeks.

8.3 It is not possible to apply for a school place any further in advance than six school weeks. If you wish to apply for a place from September, the earliest you can apply would be the beginning of June.

9. APPEALS PROCEDURE FOR IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

9.1 If it has been necessary to refuse any of the preferred schools, the applicant has the statutory right of appeal against the decision not to offer a place at the preferred school(s).

9.2 If an applicant decides to appeal, the request and full reasons for the appeal must be made in writing to schooladmissions@warrington.gov.uk

9.3 The request may also be posted or handed in at the following address:

School Admissions Team
2nd Floor New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA1 2NH

9.4 The sender will receive a written acknowledgement informing them that the appeal hearing will be arranged by Democratic Services and they will write to confirm the date and time of the appeal. Appeals are considered by an independent appeals panel and their decision is binding on the admission authority, the parent and the school. If an appeal is unsuccessful, the parent/carer is unable to appeal again in the same academic year for the same school unless there has been a material change of circumstances that the panel was not aware of at the hearing.

For more information about the appeals procedure, please visit the Council website

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SUMMARY OF IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The key points to remember are set out below.

- Before submitting an in-year application, make sure you speak to your child's current school about your reasons for requesting a school move

- Discuss the option of a school move with your child. If your child is asking to move school, try and find out the reasons why and discuss this with your child's current school to see if there are any issues which can be addressed by them.

- Stop and think about how a school move could impact on your child's education and social wellbeing.

- If you decide to go ahead and explore the possibility of an in-year transfer request, please ensure you visit your preferred schools before making an application.

- The school admissions team will acknowledge receipt of the application and will notify you of the date you can expect the outcome.

- If all sections of the application form have been completed, it will generally take up to 10 school days to process. Applications which are incomplete may take longer.

- Applications which are processed via the Fair Access Protocol will take longer than 10 school days. Applicants will be notified accordingly.

- If an application meets the exceptional circumstances criteria, documentary proof of the house move will be required. Examples of acceptable proof are as follows:
  - a council tax bill;
  - evidence of the exchange of contracts; or
  - Driving licence
  - utility bill, not bank statements. For the purpose of this policy, utility bills are defined as water, gas or electric bill

Where the change of address is to a rented property, a copy of the tenancy agreement (for a minimum of 6 months) must be provided.

Any queries, please contact the school admissions team by emailing schooladmissions@warrington.gov.uk or telephoning 01925 446226