Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for secondary schools in the area of Sunderland Local Authority

Introduction

1. This scheme is made by Sunderland City Council under the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (Secondary) (England) Regulations 2002 and applies to all Secondary Schools in Sunderland.

The proposed Co-ordinated Admission scheme for Sunderland LA is set out below and complies with the changes introduced in the new School Admissions Code, which reflects new legislation laid out in the Education and Inspections Bill 2006.

A separate scheme exists in relation to primary schools

Interpretation

2. **In this Scheme** -

"the LA" means Sunderland City Council acting in their capacity as local authority;

"the LA area" means the area in respect of which the LA is the local authority;

"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 a community or voluntary school (but not a special school) which is maintained by the LA;

"voluntary controlled schools" means such of the schools as are voluntary controlled schools, where the LA sets the admissions criteria and offers places;

"VA schools" means such of the schools as are voluntary-aided schools;

"academy" means such of the schools as have academy status;

"admission authority" in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the LA and, in relation to a VA or Free school or academy means the governing body of that school;

"the specified year" means the school year beginning at or about the beginning of September 2015;

"admission arrangements" means the arrangements for a particular school or schools which govern the procedures and decision making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school;

"parent/carer" means any person who holds parental responsibility as defined under the 1989 Children Act and with whom the child normally resides;

"casual admission" means any application for a place in the first year of secondary education that is received after 7 April 2015 including those received during the academic year commencing in September 2015 and applications for a place in any other year group received at any time from the commencement of the Scheme; and

"eligible for a place" means that a child has been placed on a school's ranked list at such a point, which falls within the school's published admission number.

Commencement and extent

This scheme applies in relation to the admission arrangements for the schools for admission year 2015/2016 (the specified year).

The LA will include in its admission arrangements for the specified year the provisions set out in Schedule 1 to this scheme, or provisions having the same effect.

The governing body of each of the VA schools and academies will include in its admission arrangements for the specified year the provisions set out in the Schedule, so far as relevant to that school, or provisions having the same effect.

The Scheme

1. The 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.

2. The Scheme shall apply to every secondary school in the LA area as identified in Appendix 1 (except special schools) and shall take effect from 16 April 2014.

3. The Scheme will also include applications from parents seeking admission to Sunderland schools who live within other LAs.

4. We will also co-ordinate our admission process with any other Admission Authorities where relevant.

SCHEDULE 1

PART 1 - THE SCHEME

1. There will be a standard form known as the Application form (AF).

2. The AF will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of secondary education in the specified year, and for any applications made for a "casual admission" into any year group in the admissions round leading up to, and during, the academic year 2015/2016.

3. The AF must be used as a means of expressing up to 3 preferences for the purposes of section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, by parents resident in the LA area wishing to express a preference for their child-

a. to be admitted to a school within the LA area (including VA and free schools and academies);

b. to be admitted to a school located in another LA's area (including VA and free schools and academies).

4. The AF will •

a. allow the parent to express up to 3 preferences by completing the form, including, where relevant, any schools outside the LA's area, in rank order of preference,

b. invite parents to give their reasons for each preference,

c. specify the closing date and where the application form must be returned, in accordance with paragraph 10.

5. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:

a. that the AF is available on request from the LA and on-line at **www.sunderland.gov.uk** and

b. that the AF is accompanied by a written explanation of the co-ordinated admissions scheme.

6. The LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

a. every parent resident in the LA area who has a child in their last year of primary education receives a written explanation of how to apply; and

b. every parent whose application falls within the category of a casual admission receives a copy of the AF (and written explanation), on request, and understands the process.

Parents will be advised that they will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:

(i) a place will be offered at the highest ranking nominated school for which they are eligible for a place under the admission criteria; and

(ii) explain that, if more than one school is nominated and no order of ranking is stated, the parent will be regarded as having ranked the schools in the order appearing on the form (the first-mentioned being ranked the highest); and

(iii) if a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, a place will be offered at an alternative school.

7. All preferences expressed on the AF are valid applications. The governing body of a VA or Free school or Trust Board/Governing Body of an Academy can require parents who wish to nominate, or have nominated, their school on the AF, to provide additional information on a supplementary form only where the additional information is required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria to the application. Where a supplementary form is required, it will be sent to parents by the governing body for completion and returned to the school.

8. Where a school receives a supplementary form from a Sunderland resident it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed an AF and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary forms are received directly by VA schools or academy, the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a AF has been received from the parent and, if not, the LA will contact the parent and ask them to complete a AF. Under the requirements of the scheme, parents will not be under any obligation to complete an individual school's supplementary form where this is not strictly required for the VA or Free school or Academy governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria.

9. Any school which operates criteria for selection by ability or aptitude must ensure that its arrangements for assessing ability or aptitude, to enable decisions to be made on nominations, conform with the timing requirements of the scheme as set out in Schedule 2. (NB no School or Academy in Sunderland operates criteria for selection-based ability or aptitude).

Processing of AFs

10. Completed AFs are to be returned to the LA by **Friday 31 October 2014.** It will be the responsibility of parents to ensure that AFs are returned directly or via primary schools to the LA, in a paper format or on-line by the closing date.

Determining offers in response to the AF

11. The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the AFs. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the AF where-

(a) it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or

(b) an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or

(c) an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The LA will allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 18 of this Schedule.

12. Completed applications are to be returned to the LA by the due date.

13. Completed applications that are received after the closing date will be considered on an individual basis, but the procedure must not prevent the proper processing, under the Scheme, of applications received on time.

14. The LA will process all applications. Any completed applications must be treated as a confidential communication between the parent and the LA. All applications received by the closing date will be considered before any applications received after this closing date unless exceptional circumstances apply.

15. **By 28 November 2014** the LA will notify the admission authority for each of the schools of every nomination that has been made for that school, including all relevant details and any supplementary information received by this date which schools require in order to apply their oversubscription criteria. Where parents have nominated a school outside the LA area, the LA will also similarly notify the relevant authority/authorities by **21 November 2014.**

16. **By 16 January 2015** the admission authority for each school will consider all applications for their school and apply the school's oversubscription criteria (if appropriate) and provide the LA with a list of all potential applicants sorted (if appropriate) according to the school's oversubscription criteria.

17. **By 23 January 2015** the admission authority for neighbouring LAs schools will provide a list of potential applicants and waiting lists (if appropriate).

18. **By 13 February 2015** the LA will match these lists against the ranked lists of the other schools nominated and:

- Where the child is eligible for a place at the parents' first nominated school, that school will be allocated to the child.

- Where the child is not eligible for a place at the parental first nominated school, they will be allocated a place at the school, which is the next highest ranked nominated school where the child is eligible for a place.

- The LA will allocate a school place to those pupils who have not submitted an AF, after all other pupils who submitted an AF have been considered. The LA will allocate a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, as measured by the shortest safest walking route from the parental home residence to the main entrance(s) of the school.

Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, as measured by the shortest safest walking route from parental home residence to the main entrance(s) of the school.

19. **13 February 2015** -The LA informs its secondary schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools, and informs other LAs of places in Sunderland schools to be offered to their residents.

20. On 2 March 2015 parents will be notified that they are being offered a place at the allocated school. This letter will give the following information:

- The name of the school at which a place is offered;
- The reasons why the child is not being offered a place at any of the other higher ranked schools nominated on the AF;
- Information about their statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
- Explain that the child will be considered for any places that might become available in schools they ranked higher than the school they are offered, in the re- allocation process after 7 April 2015.
- Contact details for the schools (in the case of nominated VA & free schools and academies where they were not offered a place) and all relevant LAs, so that they can lodge an appeal.

The letter will not inform parents of places still available at other schools.

21. 20 March 2015: the deadline for parents to accept the place offered. If they do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place, however the LA will continue to pursue parents for written confirmation of acceptance for oversubscribed schools.

Re-allocation Lists (Waiting lists)

22. Children will be considered under the reallocation process for any places if they become available, after 2 March 2015 but before 7 April 2015, at any school they have ranked higher on their AF than the school they were offered. For example where a parent has originally been allocated a place at their second preference school, they may be considered for their first preference but not their third and so on. Where a parent has been offered a place at a school, which they did not nominate on their AF, they may be considered for all the schools they did nominate on their AF.

Where a parent receives a place at their highest ranked school, they will not normally be considered for re-allocation, nor will they be offered a place at any other school simply because it has places available.

Where there are more applicants than places available, than the priorities used within the school's admission criteria will be applied to all applicants according to ranking.

23. 7 April 2015: The LA re-allocates any places that may have become vacant since 2 March and in accordance with the school admission criteria, which will include the following:

- those who have not been offered any school place, for example, late applications from parents who have just moved into the area and have not been offered a school place;
- those who have subsequently expressed a preference for a new school not originally expressed on the AF, which will be ranked lower than any other previous preferences ranked on the AF.

PART 2 - LATE APPLICATIONS

24. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **31 October 2014.** As far as is reasonably practicable applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late *for* a *good reason* will be accepted provided they are received **before 15 January 2015,** the date the allocation procedures begin. Examples of what will be considered as good reason include: when a lone parent has been ill for some time, or has been dealing with the death of a close relative; a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a Sunderland property will be required in these cases). Other circumstances will be considered and each case decided on its own merits.

LATE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 15 JANUARY 2015

25. Applications received after 15 January 2015 (which are not deemed as exceptional) will be considered as late and will not be processed until after 2 March 2015. Parents will, nevertheless, receive an offer of a school place on 2 March 2015 in accordance with the terms of the scheme.

NO AF RECEIVED BY 2 MARCH 2015

26. Where no AF is submitted the child will, on 2 March 2015, be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy as measured by the shortest safest walking route from the parental home residence to the main entrance(s) of the school. The LA will be aware which parents this applies to as a result of liaison with junior and primary schools.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 2 MARCH 2015 BUT BEFORE 7 APRIL 2015

27. Applications made direct to any school on the AF must be forwarded to the LA immediately. Where only the supplementary form is received the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether an AF has been received from the parent and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete an AF. The LA will enter the details onto its central database and, after consultation with the relevant admission authority, offer a place at the school highest in the parent's order of preference that has a vacancy or if this is not possible, at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 7 APRIL 2015

28. Applications received after 7 April 2015, and for places in year groups other than the normal year of entry to secondary school, will be treated as casual admissions. These applications should be made on the AF and sent to the LA, which maintains the school, which will

- determine any application for a community or controlled school for which it is the admission authority; and

- if the application is for a voluntary aided or free school or academy refer the application to the governing body of the school, which will make a determination and notify both the parent and the LA. Parents who are refused admission must be offered a right of appeal.

29. If any parents approach voluntary aided or free schools or academies directly about a casual admission, the governing body must ensure that the parent completes an AF (if they have not already done so). The AF should be sent to the maintaining LA as soon as practically possible, along with the governing body's decision on the application. The

governing body will notify the LA of its decision in advance of notifying the parents and, if the parent is refused a place, the right of appeal must be offered.

30. The LA will keep track of any pupils who apply for casual admissions, and intervene as appropriate to ensure that they are placed in a school without undue delay, particularly in respect of looked after children.

WAITING LISTS FOR NORMAL YEAR OF ENTRY

31. Waiting lists will be kept until **18 December 2015** for Community Schools. Academies and Aided schools may hold their waiting list for up to one academic year but this will be confirmed within their admission criteria.

SCHEDULE 2

Timetable of co-ordinated scheme

31 October 2014:	Applications, together with any supplementary forms (as required) to be returned to the LA.
21 November 2014:	Details of applications to be sent to other LAs.
28 November 2014:	Details of applications to be sent to VA & free schools and academies.
16 January 2015:	VA & free schools and academies provide the LA with lists of potential applicants.
13 February 2015:	The LA will match the ranked lists of all the schools and allocate places in accordance with paragraph 18 of Schedule 1.
13 February 2015:	By this date the LA will notify schools, which parents have been offered places at their schools, and other LAs will be notified of places in Sunderland schools that will be offered to their residents.
2 March 2015:	Notifications sent to parents.
20 March 2015:	Last date for offers to be accepted by parents.
7 April 2015:	Any places that have become available are allocated to parents in priority order in accordance with paragraph 23 of Schedule 1.

Appendix 1

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME -SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Admission Authorities in the Area of Sunderland to which the Scheme applies

The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admission Authority for the following Academies:

Academy 360	Portsmouth Road Sunderland SR4 9BA
Biddick Sports College	Biddick Lane Washington NE38 8AL
Castle View Enterprise Academy	Cartwright Road Sunderland SR5 3DX
Farringdon Sports College	Allendale Road Sunderland SR3 3EL
Kepier Academy	Dairy Lane Houghton-le-Spring DH4 5BH
Oxclose Academy	Dilston Close Washington NE38 OLN
Red House Academy	Rutherglen Road Sunderland SR5 5LN
Southmoor Academy	Ryhope Road Sunderland SR2 7TF
St Aidan's RC School	Willow Bank Road Sunderland SR2 7HJ
St Anthony's Catholic Girls' Academy	Thornhill Terrace Sunderland SR2 7JN
The Venerable Bede CE Academy	Tunstall Bank Sunderland SR2 0SX

The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admissions Authority for the following Voluntary Aided Schools:

St Robert of Newminster RC School	Biddick Lane Washington NE38 8AF

The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admission Authority for the following Free School:

Grindon Hall Christian School	Nookside Sunderland SR4 8PG

Community Schools where the LA is the Admission Authority:

Hetton School	North Road Hetton-le-Hole DH5 9JZ
Monkwearmouth School	Torver Crescent Sunderland SR6 8LQ
Sandhill View School	Grindon Lane Sunderland SR3 4EN
Thornhill School	Thornholme Road Sunderland SR2 7NA
Washington School	Spout Lane Washington NE37 2AA