

Pupil mid-term transfer policy

**Guidance for schools where parents request
to change schools during the school year**

Copthorne Primary School

1. Introduction

This policy clarifies the roles of headteachers and the local authority when parents make a request to change school during the school year and sets out the process for dealing with such requests.

The aim of this policy is to enhance pupil progress by encouraging a considered approach to changes of school and provides a framework for the exchange of pupil information. The majority of pupil transfers take place for legitimate reasons, such as a change of address and the aim is not to inhibit parents' rights to express a preference for another school in appropriate circumstances.

Background

There is an expectation that pupils will remain at primary or secondary school for the usual period of time and only change schools at the end of the primary phase wherever possible. Both primary and secondary schools liaise closely to ensure smooth transition and pastoral arrangements are aimed at providing pupils with continuity between phases. However, many schools in the Bradford District experience high levels of pupil mobility during the school year which impacts on the attainment of achievement of pupils and on school staff in terms of induction, administration and tracking pupils' progress. This mobility undermines the pupil's continuity of progress and that of other pupils when school staff have to manage pupils leaving or joining classes mid-year. It can also impede school financial and staff planning.

1. Legal Framework

Under the Schools Standards and Framework Act (1998) as amended by the Education Act 2002, a parent has the right to express a preference for a place at a school at any time. Bradford Authority as the Admission Authority (or in the case of VA, Trust and Foundation schools and academies, the governing body) has a legal duty to admit pupils on to the school roll, unless to do so would 'prejudice the provision of efficient education, or efficient use of resources'. This means that, unless exceptional circumstances apply, the school must admit the pupil unless that particular year group is at or above the published admission number.

While it is essential that children who have no school place are found one quickly, section 433 of the Education Act 1996, permits deferment of admission until the start of a school term, subject to certain exceptions (see paragraph 5). This would particularly be the case where requests for school transfer has been made that do not involve a house move or where there is no need for an immediate move. In such cases, schools can arrange for a child to start at the beginning of the next term. This does not conflict with the parent's right to 'express a preference', but does allow schools to manage the movement of pupils transferring mid-year.

4. School Transfer Process

The majority of in-year admission requests (whether the child is already attending a Bradford District school or is new to the area) are co-ordinated by the Admissions Team in Children's Services. There are a few exceptions to this, ie all Catholic schools, Kings Science Academy, Shipley CE and Idle CE Primary Schools (currently). Applications for these schools must be made to the school direct. For all other schools, an '*In Year Common Application Form*' is available from the Admissions Team or can be downloaded from the Council website and must be returned to the Admissions Team.

For applications where no significant house move has taken place (or one less than two miles for under eight years, and three miles for over eight years of age), parents will be required to ask the child's current school to complete part two of the application form. This section asks for details such as attendance and reasons for the transfer request. If the form is returned without part two being completed, the form will be returned to the parent for them to forward to the child's current school.

The information provided by the current school will assist in determining whether the transfer request should be dealt with through the Fair Access Protocol.

If a place is available, the Admissions Team will inform parents that a place is offered and arrangements can then be made for the admission to take place at the start of the next school term.

5. Exceptions

Mid-term transfer of a pupil may only take place sooner than the start of the next term, if:

- the headteachers of the current and receiving schools agree that it is in the best interests of the pupil that transfer should take place sooner;
- the pupil has moved house to live more than three miles from the present school (if the pupil is aged over eight years) or over two miles (if the pupil is aged under eight years);
- the pupil has been unable to transfer at the start of the term as a result of illness or for other reasons beyond the parents' control;
- the admission is into Year 7 and Reception only, where a place becomes available from the waiting list during the autumn term;
- it has been determined that the admission of the pupil comes under the 'Fair Access Protocol' or other significant circumstances apply making the child vulnerable;
- the admission is due to a successful appeal heard by an independent appeals panel; and
- having consulted the headteachers of the current and receiving schools, the local authority, considers that the transfer should not be delayed.

When a request for transfer has been agreed and the offer of a place made, the receiving school must liaise with the current school regarding the admission date and pupil data.

For pupils with a statement of special educational needs, transfer between schools can only take place as a result of an annual review, an amendment to the statement and formal consultation with the governing body. Should parents of a pupil with a statement contact a school directly, the headteacher should contact an SEN officer for advice.

6. Information for parents

Guidance notes that accompany the 'in-year common application form' informs parents of the detrimental affects that changing schools has on their child's progress and that

such decisions should not be taken without careful consideration. Headteachers and governors may wish to add similar statements to their school booklets and websites.

7. Further information

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