

# TOWER HAMLETS EDUCATION SOCIAL CARE and WELLBEING

## Proposed Admissions Criteria and Arrangements for Community Primary Schools

2016/17



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## 1. Foreword

- 1.1 Tower Hamlets Local Authority seeks to operate an admissions system that provides equal and fair opportunities to all applicants. This includes having due regard to children living in areas where there are limited options in applying for a local school place.
- 1.2 The Local Authority's community school admissions policy has been determined following a public consultation and approval by the Council's Cabinet of elected members. It is reviewed annually by the School Admission Forum, with representation from all key stakeholders including parents, headteachers, school governors, diocesan bodies and community organisations.

## 2. Oversubscription Criteria

- 2.1 If a community school receives more applications than places available, children with a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plan, which names the school applied to, will be placed before all other applicants.
- 2.2 The remaining places will be filled in the following priority order:
- 1) Children looked after by the local authority including adopted children who were previously looked after and children who leave care under a special guardianship or residence order;
  - 2) Children for whom it is deemed there is strong medical or social reason to attend the school applied to (**See Note 1**);
  - 3) Children living within the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school (including the school of a separate infants and junior schools) and who will continue to do so on the date of admission (**See Note 2**);
  - 4) Children who live within the catchment area of the school and for whom the school applied for is their nearest community school within the catchment area;
  - 5) Other children from within the catchment area of the school;
  - 6) Children living outside of the catchment area of the school applied to.
- 2.3 In the event of oversubscription within categories 3, 4, 5, and 6 above, priority will be given to children who live closest to the school by the shortest walking distance. A digitised ordnance survey map is used to measure the distance from the home address to the school's designated official entrance.
- 2.4 **Note 1:** This can include the parents', carers' or other family members' medical conditions and the family's social needs. Parents must complete the relevant section on the application form and attach medical and/or social reports from a suitable professional (e.g. a doctor or social worker) to support the application.
- Note 2:** Includes the sibling of a child who does not live within the school's catchment area, but who was admitted before the start of the 2014/15 school year. For this purpose "sibling" means a whole, half or step-brother or step-sister resident at the same address.

### 3. Catchment Area

- 3.1 The school catchment area is the defined area in which a school is located. It is generally bounded by major roads and/or railway/canal. The catchment area for each Tower Hamlets Community school is set by the Local Authority and is designed to ensure that each address in the borough falls into the catchment area of a local school. Details of the community schools within the catchment area for a particular address can be viewed on the Local Authority's website: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/equalchance>.

### 4. Age of Admission

- 4.1 Children born on and between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012 would normally start primary school in Reception in the school year beginning in September 2016. All Tower Hamlets infant and primary schools provide full-time education for children offered a place in the Reception Year from the September following their fourth birthday.
- 4.2 Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in the school year. A child's attendance at school does not become compulsory until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Where entry is deferred, the school will hold the place for that child and not offer it to another child. The parent would not however be able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted.
- 4.3 Where parents choose to defer entry, a school may reasonably expect that the child would start at the beginning of a new school term/half term. Where a parent of a 'summer-born' child (15 April - 31 August) wishes their child to start school in the autumn term following their fifth birthday, they will need to re-apply for a place at the correct time.

### 5. Nursery Provision

- 5.1 Some schools have a nursery class or deliver pre-school nursery education. The admission arrangements set out in this document do not apply to applications for the school's nursery. Parents of children who are admitted to a nursery provision at a school must apply in the normal way for a place at the school, if they want their child to transfer to the reception class. Attendance at the nursery or co-located children's centre will not guarantee admission to the school.

### 6. Applying for a Place

- 6.1 How to apply for a primary school place is set out in the Local Authority's school admissions booklet, 'Starting School in Tower Hamlets'. Applications are then co-ordinated for all the schools in the Tower Hamlets area in accordance with the Authority's published scheme. The scheme can be viewed on the following webpage: [http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/1-50/17\\_schools/school\\_admissions.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/1-50/17_schools/school_admissions.aspx)
- 6.2 The closing date for applications is **15 January 2016** and the date on which families are sent notification of the outcome is **16 April 2016**.

### 7. Late Applications

- 7.1 Applications received after the 15 January 2016 closing date will be treated as late applications unless there is evidence to show that the application or amendment could not reasonably have been made on time. A new preference or change in the order of preferences will not be accepted after the closing date unless the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional. Late applications will be given a lower priority and will be dealt with after all on time applications in the first round of offers on 16 April 2016. Where a school is oversubscribed late applications will be refused and placed on the waiting list in

accordance with the admission criteria.

- 7.2 Where the Local Authority has determined there are exceptional circumstances for the late submission of an application it will be treated as 'on time' and, where possible, considered alongside existing applications.

## **8. Twins and Multiple Births**

- 8.1 For applications made in the normal admission round, if the last child to be offered a place is a twin and their sibling cannot be offered initially, the Local Authority will ensure both twins are offered a place. In the case of triplets or other multiple births, if the majority of children can be offered a place initially, the Local Authority will offer places to the remaining children. For example, if two triplets can be offered a place, the remaining child will also receive an offer of a place.

## **9. Waiting List**

- 9.1 The Local Authority's Pupil Services Team will hold waiting lists for all oversubscribed community schools until the end of the autumn term and continue to allocate places from these lists if spaces become available. Applicants will be ranked on these waiting lists in priority order, according to the school's admission criteria. The Local Authority will not maintain waiting lists beyond the end of the first term, but parents will have the opportunity to register their continued interest in a place.

## **10. Infant to Junior Applications**

- 10.1 Parents of children in Year 2 of an infant school have to make an application to transfer to the partner junior school. A child is guaranteed a place at the partner junior school provided an application for that place is made by the closing date and the child is still in attendance at the school at the time applications are determined. For parents who wish their child only to transfer to the partner junior school the application simply involves completing and returning a form provided by the Local Authority. Parents who wish to apply for a Year 3 place at schools other than the partner junior school will need to complete the Local Authority's In-Year school admission application form.