

**Draft proposal for Co-ordinated In-Year Admissions for
primary and secondary schools throughout the academic year
for years R to 11
(to take effect from 1 September 2024)**

Background

In 2022 the white paper proposals included several related changes to the role of local authorities: One of the proposed changes would that the LA will be responsible for co-ordinating in-year applications, as well as retaining responsibility for co-ordinating main admissions rounds. The DfE have also consulted on changes to the School Admissions Code to include this proposal, whilst there have currently been no changes in the school admissions code, we anticipate this change will happen.

The proposed co-ordination represents a significant change from the existing position where the responsibility for in-year applications is delegated to all Shropshire schools. Schools must notify Admissions of application and outcome.

The overarching aim of the changes we are proposing to make is to provide a simpler and clearer application route for parents and ensure greater oversight of pupil movement in-year, to ensure children, especially the most vulnerable, are better safeguarded. It will also ensure compliance to the Admissions Code across all schools in Shropshire, something that we know is not currently the case.

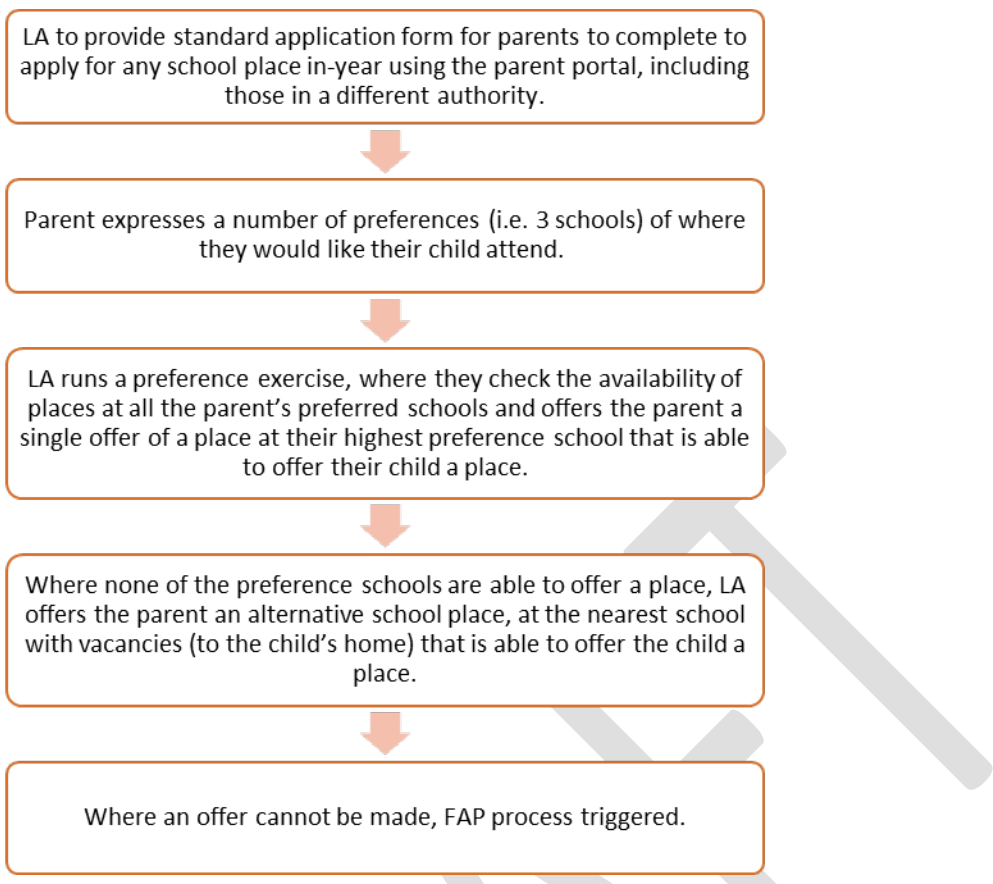
There is no visibility of children failing to secure a place in-year, which can result in increased risks of children missing education. OSA Annual Report (2016) reports safeguarding concerns are increased when in-year admissions are not co-ordinated by the local authority, leaving children out of education for too long.

Coordination of the in-year process will increase transparency and in turn help parents receive timely decisions and ensure appeals processes are provided and therefore ensuring equity and fairness.

The School Admissions Team have not processed in-year applications since 2012. Although in neighbouring authorities this role sits within the admission team, due to capacity and lack of staffing within our team, the Admissions Manager at the time took the decision to devolve this role to schools.

How it will work – proposed model

Basic model below, please see appendix A which outlines the complete in-year process proposal in greater detail.



Where the applicant so requests, the pupil will be placed on a waiting list for any school(s) where it is not possible to meet the stated preference(s).

Where a pupil is a resident in Shropshire or not, we would expect transfer to the newly allocated school to take place within a six-week period, otherwise the offer of a place would be withdrawn. Shropshire will apply the same consistent approach to out of county applications. This is important because it will prevent speculative applications at the expense of those living in the county who may wish to make a similar move and whose residency is already confirmed. If a projected house move from an out county applicant does not proceed to completion, the place would become available to another subsequent applicant with a higher priority where the admission number has not been reached. It would not, however, prevent the applicant from reapplying when the house move is reconfirmed. The six-week acceptance period (as outlined in the School Admissions Code) should ensure that only those with a genuine intention of moving into or near to the catchment area of a school and who can provide the evidence we require of the intended move, make an out of county application.

Appendix A

Shropshire In-Year Admissions Protocol Proposal September 2024/25

Introduction

This document outlines the coordinated in-year school admissions arrangements in Shropshire. These arrangements have been written in accordance with the mandatory requirements in the School Admissions Code 2021.

Recent changes in school admission regulations removed the requirement for own admission authority (i.e., academies, foundation, and voluntary aided schools) schools to be part of the centrally coordinated admissions scheme overseen by the Local Authority (LA). However, following consultation with the Local Admission Forum, the LA believes that co-ordinating in-year admissions is the most effective way for ensuring that children out of school are tracked, monitored, and placed in education as quickly as possible and in accordance with the School Admissions Code. This safeguarding element has been a particular strength of in-year coordination since its introduction and there is a substantial risk that vulnerable children and young people may 'slip through the net,' if the LA continued to adopt a system whereby applications are made direct to individual schools. Own admission authority schools are therefore urged to abide with LA procedures for coordinating in-year admissions.

The proposed co-ordination represents a significant change from the existing position, where responsibility for in-year applications was delegated to all Shropshire schools. This has been the case in Shropshire since 2012, but noting the upcoming change detailed in the White Paper – which aims to return the coordination of in-year admissions to the LA as part of their statutory duties – Shropshire School Admissions Team are proposing to take back responsibility for this area of admissions from September 2024

It is Shropshire's aim therefore, to coordinate in-year admissions as a LA for all schools within its area. Full details of the scheme are below, but the key features are as follows:

- Applicants wanting to apply for schools and academies within Shropshire **must** apply using the LAs Online Application Form. Applicants can name up to three schools in order of preference.
- Shropshire residents wishing to apply for schools in other boroughs **must** apply according to that LA's admission arrangements. This will involve applying to the relevant LA.
- It is critical that the Admissions Team hold up-to-date information about school vacancies so that correct advice can be provided to parents. Schools **must** maintain accurate roll numbers using the SAM (School Admission Module) Portal. Further guidance on how to do this will be circulated in due course.
- The formal application outcome will be sent via email to parents by the School Admissions Team.

- The Shropshire Admissions Team will directly administer community and voluntary controlled school admissions, including waiting lists for community schools.
- Own admission authority schools' applications and waiting lists will also be administered and held by the Admissions Team who determine whether a place can be offered if there is a vacancy in the relevant year group. If the year group is full or oversubscribed, the team will contact the school to discuss the application.
- All schools, including own admission authority schools, are reminded that they **must** fill vacancies in any year group where the number of pupils on roll is below their published admission number (PAN) irrespective of their admissions criteria as per paragraph 2.28 of the School Admissions Code.
- Unsuccessful applicants have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. The LA has an established appeals process, which all schools can buy in to as part of their Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Published Admission Numbers (PANs)

The admission numbers of all primary and secondary schools are set out in the LAs Parents' Guide to Education in Shropshire (published on our website). This is the number of children that a school is expected to admit in each year group based on the capacity of the school.

Applications

1. This scheme applies to all applicants for maintained schools, academies, and own admission authority schools within Shropshire.
2. Applications **must** be made on the LAs In-Year Online Application Form via the Parent Portal available on the School Admissions webpage. The School Admissions Team and staff based in schools, libraries and customer services will support parents who have difficulty applying online. In **exceptional** circumstances, a paper application form will be made available by the School Admissions Team.
3. Applicants can express a preference for up to three maintained schools, academies, and own admission authority schools within Shropshire.
4. Any preferences made for own admission authority schools in Shropshire will be available for schools to view using the SAM Portal. If any school receives an enquiry/application directly, they **must** advise the applicant to complete the LAs In-Year Online Application Form.
5. The order of preference given on the LAs In-Year Online Application Form will not be revealed to individual schools.
6. The In-Year Online Application Form provides opportunity for applicants to submit supplementary information to support their application, which will be considered as part of the schools' oversubscription criteria, in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021.

7. Shropshire Council will confirm the status of any resident child for whom it receives an In-Year Online Application Form stating s/he is a child looked after, became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order, and will notify all own admission authority schools listed on the application of this.

Processing Applications

8. The School Admissions Team will import applications submitted online via the Parent Portal **within 2 working days**.
9. Should any additional information be required by the School Admissions Team, the applicant will be contacted. If relevant information is not received within the timeframe stated, an offer or allocation will be made based on the information previously submitted.
10. Applicants for children that are already attending a school in Shropshire will show on the Leavers Report on the SAM Portal.
11. All schools will be able to view details of children who have applied for a place at their school.
12. To determine the availability of places, all Shropshire schools and academies **must** complete the Number on Roll (NOR) form at the beginning of each term and complete a starters/leavers form and submit to the Admissions Team **within 2 school days** of a child starting or leaving school. Having up to date NOR information is a **statutory** requirement as per the School Admissions Code.
13. Oversubscribed schools, particularly own admission authorities, will be contacted prior to any further allocation.

Notification of Outcome: Children Without a School Place

14. The Admissions Team will aim to notify the outcome of an application made all schools by email **within 7 school days**. However, the processing of applications may take **up to 15 school days**. The application outcome email will advise the following:
 - a. The name of the school at which a place is offered.
 - b. If applicable, the reason the child is not being offered a place at any of the other schools they named on the application form.
 - c. The opportunity to be added to a waiting list and their right of appeal for any higher preference schools which could not be offered.
 - d. If a default offer is made and the parent wishes to decline and the child remains on roll at their current school, the parent should inform the Admissions Team.
15. All schools and academies will be notified by the School Admissions Team when an offer has been made to a child to attend their school. Further details for the child and family will be available on the SAM Portal.
16. Where it is evident that more than one school place can be offered, the Admissions Team will eliminate all but the highest ranked offer where an applicant has ranked schools in order of preference on

the LAs In-Year Online Application Form. Any lower preferences will be withdrawn at this point.

17. Parents of children living in Shropshire who cannot be offered a place at any of their preferred schools will be advised of the nearest school with a vacancy, how to apply and how to appeal.
18. The School Admissions Team will track and monitor children without a school place and where possible will aim to allocate a place at the nearest maintained school or academy with an available place **within 15 school days**.
19. In the event that there are no places available at local schools within a reasonable distance from the applicant's home address, the School Admissions Team will refer the child to be placed by the Fair Access Panel **within 15 school days**.
20. All Shropshire schools (including own admission authority schools) **must** adhere to the requirement to admit children referred by the Fair Access Panel under the provision of the locally agreed protocol, as required by the School Admissions Code 2021.

Notification of Outcome: Children who are currently in School (School transfer)

Where an offer can be made for a child currently on roll at another Shropshire school, the Admissions Team will notify the new school that an offer has been made via SAM.

21. The allocated school should contact the previous school to request the child's CTF. The current school is expected to complete and send the CTF directly to the new school **within 5 school days** of the offer notification. This enables the new school to plan the child's transition to their new school.

Post Offer

22. Schools and academies are expected to contact families and arrange for them to be admitted **within 5 school days** of the offer notification.
23. Schools will be required to complete a starters/leavers form and submit to the Admissions Team **within 2 school days** of the child starting or leaving school.
24. Where the school/academy are unable to contact the family within the relevant timeframe (6 school weeks or half a term from the date of allocation), and the child is without a school place they **must** complete a Child Missing Education (CME) referral form and return this to the Education Access Team **within 10 school days** of the offer notification. The school/academy is expected to have made several attempts to contact the family including by phone, email, and letter before making a referral.
25. In cases where an offer of a school place has been rejected and it is evident that no alternative education has been arranged for the child by the parent/carer, the School Admissions Team will advise the Education Access Team.

26. Once a school offer is made, any other applications/preferences will be withdrawn, and families will need to contact school admissions if they do not wish to be added to the waiting lists for any further schools.

Waiting Lists

27. Where a child is offered a place at one of the preferred schools listed on an application form which is not their highest preference, the child will be placed on a waiting list for the relevant year.
28. The waiting lists for all Shropshire schools will be held and administered by the Admissions Team for all year groups and will be ordered in accordance with the published admission criteria. If any school receive an enquiry/application directly, they **must** advise the applicant to complete the LAs In-Year Online Application Form.
29. Children who are subject of a direction by the LA to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

Appeals

30. Parents have the right of appeal against the refusal of a place at any of the schools for which they have applied. The School Admissions Team **must** therefore inform parents of their right of appeal, and the arrangements for doing so, where a school place cannot be offered.
31. The electronic appeal form is available from the LA's website, and details on how to appeal will be contained in the refusal letter to parents.
32. The Legal & Democratic Services Team will arrange appeals to be heard within 40 school days.

Below is a summary of what the Local Authority would require of each Shropshire school from September 2024, when the administration of in-year applications is coordinated by the LA.

- 1. The beginning of each term to submit NOR to the LA. Primary and junior schools to submit class organisation for the academic year by 1st September.**
- 2. Schools to submit a starters/leavers to the LA using the online notification form within two school days of a pupil starting or leaving the school.**
- 3. Direct any parents who wish to apply for a school place to the Local Authority Website.**
- 4. Check SAM on a regular basis, particularly post allocation.**

5. Admit pupils allocated by Shropshire Council as part of the in-year process, as soon as possible, particularly where the child is out of school (*ref paragraph 2.31 of the School Admissions Code*)

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