



In Year Admissions Protocol 2023

Introduction

This protocol refers to all applications made during the academic year to age groups other than the normal years of entry, i.e., not at primary Reception or secondary Year 7 allocation or transfer into year 3 (junior schools) and year 10 (Studio Schools University Technical Colleges (UTC's)).

As the admissions authority for all community schools, the local authority (LA) will continue to co-ordinate in-year applications for these schools only (i.e., receive applications and make offers). Own Admission Authorities need to continue to have their own arrangements for processing applications directly, however the local authority will also need to be notified and have oversight of the outcome of all in-year applications made to Hillingdon schools.

The local authority retains overall responsibility for ensuring the provision of education for all children in the area. Ongoing communication with all schools is required to ensure we continue to meet our duty of care. This document outlines London Borough of Hillingdon's process for the local co-ordination of in-year admission arrangements from 1 September 2023.

This document refers to 'Non-Community Schools' which are Academies, Foundation Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools, Free Schools, University Technical Colleges, and Studio Schools for whom the local authority is not the admissions authority.

The School Admissions Code (September 2021) states that:

2.23 There is no requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year applications, but they must provide information in the composite prospectus on how in-year applications can be made and will be dealt with. Local authorities must, on request, provide information to a parent about the places still available in all schools within its area, and a suitable form for parents to complete when applying for a place for their child at any school for which they are not the admission authority. Any parent can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school outside the normal admissions round. They can do this by applying directly to admission authorities, except where other arrangements are in place locally (e.g., the local authority coordinates all in-year admissions).

2.25 Local authorities must provide a suitable application form (and a supplementary information form where necessary) for parents to complete when applying for a place for their child at a school for which they co-ordinate in-year admissions. Where a local authority receives an in-year application for a school which manages its own in-year admissions, it must promptly forward the application to the relevant admission authority, which must process it in accordance with its own in-year admission arrangements.

Applying for an in-year school place

Applications for community schools are made to the local authority. For non-community school applications can be made to the local authority and to the school directly. Non-community schools **must** have an in-year common application form (IYCAF) available on their website. (See Appendix 1 – Information required on IYCAF)

The Hillingdon School Placement and Admissions Team have an application available online which parents can list up to 4 schools in order of their preference(s). Preferences named for non-community schools on the local authority's application form will not be recorded in preference order. They can only list schools in the Hillingdon borough, if parents (applicants) wish to apply to an out of borough school they must contact the local authority where the school is situated or can contact the school direct if the school administers their own places.

All applications that the local authority receive are inputted onto our education system on a weekly basis. Therefore, applications received from Friday-Thursday are processed by Thursday, so that the details are on the system and can be sent across to non-community schools via a secure document exchange website each Friday morning.

If non-community schools receive an application directly to their school they must advise the local authority of this application, including the outcome. Schools can send a scanned copy via document exchange, post or provide the details in a Microsoft document if they prefer. This will ensure that the local authority is made aware of pupils that may be without a school place and have only applied to one school. This will ensure the local authority can support any child who is missing education.

Process for applying

Parents applying to Hillingdon Community Schools

All parents wishing to apply for a place at a Hillingdon community school must apply directly to the London Borough of Hillingdon via www.hillingdon.gov.uk/in-year-admission-form. Parents wishing to apply for a place at a Hillingdon non-community school must either apply to Hillingdon or directly to the school. This also applies to parents who do not live in Hillingdon. Parents living outside the borough will not be able to apply through their own local authority for an in-year place at a Hillingdon school.

Parents applying to Hillingdon Non-Community Schools

Non-community schools **must** also accept a completed IYCAF as a sufficient form of application and should not delay a child's application by making them complete their own form as well. Schools can ask applicants to complete their own application, however, this cannot delay the processing of the borough's application form.

Applications submitted directly to Non-Community Schools

Upon receipt of an application, non-community schools **must** notify the local authority that an application has been received. This information should be communicated to the local authority without delay via the methods stated above.

Parents applying to schools outside of Hillingdon

Parents wishing to apply for schools not in Hillingdon must apply to the school directly or the authority in which the school is located to ensure they apply in accordance with those authorities in year procedures.

Requesting proof of address

Community Schools:

The local authority is responsible for requesting and checking the proof of address for community schools upon receipt of the application. However, once a child has been offered a school place, the school can request further documentation from the family but **must not** ask for a 'long' birth certificate or other documents which would include information about the child's parents such as their financial status or maiden names. In some cases, schools will need to ask parents for further information such as contact details for their records.

Non-Community Schools:

It is the responsibility of non-community schools to ask for proof of address where it is unclear whether a child meets the published oversubscription criteria (Admissions Code 2.5). Once a place has been offered, admission authorities may ask for proof of birth date, but **must not** ask for a 'long' birth certificate or other documents which would include information about the child's parents such as their financial status, or maiden names. In some cases, schools will need to ask parents for further information such as contact details for their records.

In the case of previously looked after children, admission authorities may request a copy of the adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order and a letter from the local authority that last looked after the child, confirming that they were looked after immediately prior to that order being made, or such evidence that demonstrates a child was in state care outside of England prior to being adopted.

If an admission authority is in any doubt about whether evidence provided by a parent is acceptable, we recommend they request advice from Hillingdon's Virtual School Head (VSH) and the School Placement and Admissions team.

Please note: Proof of address should only be requested if the admissions authority need to determine priority based on their oversubscription criteria. This means that undersubscribed schools do not need to request proof of address.

Parental responsibility and disputes

The local authority has seen a significant increase in the numbers of disputes between parents relating to where their children should go to school.

The following guidance has been published to help parents understand the London Borough of Hillingdon's protocol for dealing with situations in which parents disagree. This is general guidance intended to help parents understand their rights and responsibilities in line with the law.

[**Protocol and guidance regarding parental responsibility \(PDF\) \[141KB\]**](#)

Timeframes when processing in year applications

Once the local authority or a non-community school has received the application, both parties should aim to notify the parents of the outcome of their application in writing within 10 school days, but they **must** be notified in writing within **15 school days**. If a place can be offered the school **must** send a letter to the applicant and a reasonable timescale given to when the applicant must respond.

The local authority has provided a template spreadsheet for those schools that wish to use it for the transfer of information. (See Appendix 2 – For template spreadsheet).

Outcomes of an In Year Application

Notifying the local authority

Non-community schools must notify the local authority the outcome of the application which should either be:

- a. 'Offered and accepted' (where an offer has been accepted by a parent),
- b. 'Offered and declined' (where an offer has been made but the parent has declined it),
- c. 'Offered and no response' (where an offer has been made but the parent has yet to respond to the school to accept or decline),
- d. 'Rejected' (where an offer cannot be made)

Non-Community schools must notify the local authority of any changes to the outcome i.e., following an offer from the waiting list, including whether the child has started and has been placed on school's role. Instructions on how to do this are added within the notes section in the PAN London Document Exchange website on receipt of your applications that are uploaded on a Friday.

Following an offer

Paragraph 2.7 of the School Admissions Code states that admission authorities must allocate places on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only. A decision to offer or refuse admission must not be made by one individual in an admission authority. Where the school is its own admission authority the whole governing body, or an admissions committee established by the governing body,

must make such decisions. The admission authority must keep a clear record of any decisions on applications.

Where an applicant is offered a school place following an in-year application, and the offer is accepted, arrangements should be made for the child to start school as soon as possible, particularly where the child is out of school.

(See Appendix 3 – Template Offer Letter)

As applicants are given the option to apply to multiple schools when an offer is made all the applications for lower preference schools are withdrawn in accordance with the in-year co-ordinated admission arrangements. A 'change file' is sent every Friday through the PAN London Document Exchange website and schools can then remove the pupil from their waiting list (if applicable).

The local authority will notify community schools where an offer has been made by sending pupil details through the Pan London Document Exchange site on a weekly basis (if applicable).

Notifying the parent of the outcome & right of appeal

If a place cannot be offered, the school **must** send a letter to the applicant stating the reasons as to why an offer cannot be made, and their right to appeal

When an admission authority informs a parent of a decision to refuse their child a place at a school for which they have applied, the letter **must** include the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents **must** be informed that, if they wish to appeal, they **must** set out their grounds for appeal in writing. Admission authorities **must not** limit the grounds on which appeals can be made.

Refusal of a school place based on a schools Published Admissions Number (PAN)

The PAN only applies to the relevant age group. This means that admission authorities may not refuse admission to other age groups on the grounds that they have already reached their PAN. They may, however, refuse admission where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

(See Appendix 4 – Template Rejection Letter)

Adding children to a waiting list

Where schools are oversubscribed, they must not refuse to add a child to their waiting list. Where a parent requests for their child to be added to a waiting list they must be placed in priority order in accordance with the school's admissions criteria. Non-community schools are responsible for maintaining their own waiting

lists whilst the local authority is responsible for maintaining waiting lists for community schools.

Non-community schools **must** notify the local authority if/once they have made an offer of a school place from a waiting list and the outcome of the offer i.e., accepted or refused by applicant.

Each admission authority must maintain a clear, fair, and objective waiting list until at least 31 December of each school year of admission, stating in their arrangements that each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. Priority must not be given to children based on the date their application was received, or their name was added to the list

At the end of the summer term each year the local authority will write to all the pupils that are on community schools waiting lists (where their application was made prior to 1st June) and advise that they will need to re-submit an application if they still want to be considered in the following academic year. If the local authority does not receive a response by the allocated deadline the applicants' details are removed from the waiting list.

Non-community schools may also apply this approach.

Withdrawing offers

An admission authority **must not** withdraw an offer unless it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time, or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. Where the parent has not responded to the offer, the admission authority **must** give the parent a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application **must be** considered afresh, and a right of appeal offered if an offer is refused.

Paragraph 2.4 of the School Admission Code states that a school must not withdraw a place once a child has started at the school, except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In deciding whether to withdraw the place, the length of time that the child has been at the school must be taken into account. For example, it might be considered appropriate to withdraw the place if the child has been at the school for less than one term.

If an offer is withdrawn for a non-community school, then the local authority must be made aware of this.

Vacancy information

To ensure that the local authority can provide accurate information to all applicants, the local authority need to have accurate vacancy data. It will also help the local authority to determine whether additional school preferences are required to be added to an application.

All non-community schools **must** provide the local authority with details of the number of places available at their schools, no later than **2 school days** following receipt of a request from the local authority.

In addition, all Secondary Schools have been asked to provide the School Placement and Admissions team with their school's vacancy information including numbers of Looked After Children, children receiving SEN support and/or have an EHCP prior to every Fair Access Panel meeting. A spreadsheet template has been circulated to each secondary school including the dates prior to each meeting. This needs to be completed and returned to us by the Friday before the next Fair Access Panel Meeting. Failure to provide this prior to each meeting, might result in us allocating children that exceed over 2% of your Published Admission Number (PAN).

In Year Appeals

For non-community schools it is the responsibility of the Academy Trust or Governing Body to make arrangements for appeals against the refusal of a school place. The local authority is responsible for arranging an admissions appeal for community schools.

Admission authorities must set a timetable for organising and hearing appeals that:

- a) includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeal;
- b) ensures that appellants receive at least 10 school days' notice of their appeal hearing;
- c) includes reasonable deadlines for appellants to submit additional evidence, for admission authorities to submit their evidence, and for the clerk to send appeal papers to the panel and parties;
- d) ensures that decision letters are sent within five school days of the hearing wherever possible.

For further information on school appeals please review the School Admissions Appeals Code via www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code

Requests for admissions to school outside a child's age group

Applications to non-community schools for a child outside the normal age range for the year group should be decided by the admissions authority. Applications to community schools for a child outside the normal age range for the year group should be agreed by the school and the local authority.

For further information on deferred admissions please refer to the Guidance for Schools on Admission of children outside their chronological age group which is available via www.hillingdon.gov.uk/primary.

Further information

Changes to a Schools Published Admissions Number (PAN)

Paragraph 1.4 of the School Admissions Code states that admission authorities must notify their local authority of their intention to increase the school's PAN and reference to the change should be made on the school's website. If, at any time following determination of the PAN, an admission authority decides that it is able to admit above its PAN, it must notify the local authority in good time to allow the local authority to deliver its co-ordination responsibilities effectively. The PAN only applies to the relevant age group. This means that admission authorities may not refuse admission to other age groups on the grounds that they have already reached their PAN. They may, however, refuse admission where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

Sharing Application Data

The local authority will exchange application and outcome information for non-Hillingdon residents with other local authorities via PAN London every Friday once the outcome of the application is known and only where:

- An offer of a place is made and accepted by the parent
- A parent of a child not in education declines an offer of a place
- A parent of a child not in education is unsuccessful with their application

Distance Criterion

Admission authorities **must** clearly set out how distance from home to the school will be measured, making clear how the 'home' address will be determined and the point in the school from which all distances are measured. The local authority will calculate distance measurements for Community Schools.

All applications that the local authority receive for a non-community school will be sent back to the school as part of the weekly file transfer with a distance measurement, therefore any applications they receive directly and have advised the local authority of, once added to the system will generate a measurement.

Timescales

Any timescales given in this document refer to school days in term-time only, although the local authority may continue to send details of applications and offers throughout the school holidays following agreement between the schools and local authority.

Children who have been permanently excluded twice or display challenging behaviour

Where a child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools there is no need for an admission authority to comply with parental preference for a period of two years from the last exclusion. The twice excluded rule does not apply to the following children:

- a) children who were below compulsory school age at the time of the permanent exclusion;
- b) children who have been reinstated following a permanent exclusion (or would have been reinstated had it been practicable to do so);
- c) children whose permanent exclusion has been considered by a review panel, and the review panel has decided to quash a decision not to reinstate them following the exclusion; and
- d) children with Education, Health and Care Plans naming the school.

Admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry, except for where the child has been permanently excluded twice.

Where an admission authority receives an in-year application for a year group that is not the normal point of entry (Reception, Year 3 at a junior schools, Year 7 and Year 10 at a UTC (University Technical Colleges) or Studio School) and it does not wish to admit the child because it has good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour, it may refuse admission and refer the child to the Fair Access Panel. An admission authority should only refer to the Fair Access Panel if it has a particularly high proportion of either children with challenging behaviour or previously permanently excluded pupils on roll compared to other local schools and it considers that admitting another child with challenging behaviour would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child thought to be potentially disruptive, or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour, on the grounds that the child is first to be assessed for special educational needs.

Refusal to admit pupils as stated above cannot be used to refuse admission to looked after children, previously looked after children; and children who have Education, Health and Care Plans naming the school in question.

Arrangements for transfer of In-Year Co-ordination to Non-Community Schools.

In June, the local authority contacts all parents with a pending application for an in-year school place at any Hillingdon community school to ask if they wish to keep the application open or if they no longer require the place.

At the same time, officers from the School Placement and Admissions Team will be contacting non-community schools to discuss arrangements for their own existing waiting lists. Where possible we would like to refine the waiting lists down to only those applicants who are still interested in a school place rather than those who remain on a waiting list only because they applied in a previous term/allocation round. The final decision over waiting lists for non-community schools' rests with the admission authority for that school.

The School Placement and Admissions Team officers will contact non-community schools from June to discuss a temporary protocol for processing applications received during the summer holidays.

In August, the local authority will send to all non-community schools details it holds of pupils with pending applications for an in-year school place across all year groups (based on the previous school year). This information will be sent through the Pan London Document Exchange website.

Non-community schools should consider these details as the only outstanding applications for in-year school places and should update any waiting lists they hold accordingly. Please be mindful the accuracy of this information is dependent on the application details non community schools share with the LA during the academic year.

3.14 Fair Access Protocols - Each local authority **must** have a Fair Access Protocol, agreed with the majority of schools in its area to ensure that - outside the normal admissions round - unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. In agreeing a protocol, the local authority **must** ensure that no school - including those with available places - is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools, or who have challenging behaviour. The protocol **must** include how the local authority will use provision to ensure that the needs of pupils who are not ready for mainstream schooling are met.

3.18 Eligibility for the Fair Access Protocol does not limit a parent's right to make an in-year application to any school for their child. Admission authorities **must** process these applications in accordance with their usual in-year admission procedures (as set out in paragraphs 2.23-2.31). They **must not** refuse to admit such children on the basis that they may be eligible to be placed via the Fair Access Protocol. The parent will continue to have the right of appeal for any place they have been refused, even if the child has been offered a school place via the Fair Access Protocol.

For further information regarding Fair Access please review Hillingdon's In-Year Fair Access Protocol www.hillingdon.gov.uk/in-year-admissions.

This protocol has been administered to comply with the DfE (Department for Education) School Admissions Code 2021, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Appendix 1: Information required on IYCAF

The In Year Common Application Form for Community Schools and Non-Community Schools should include, as a minimum requirement:

- Child name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Address
- Current or Previous School (with date of leaving if Previous School)
- Preference School(s)
- Preference Criteria (SEN/LAC/Medical/Sibling/Distance etc.)
- Sibling details if relevant (Name, gender and date of birth)
- Parent/Carer name
- Parent/Carer contact telephone and e-mail
- Parent/Carer address if different from child
- Name of home local authority*

In some cases, admission authorities of non-community schools will need to ask for supplementary information forms in order to process applications. If they do so, they **must** only use supplementary forms that request additional information when it has a direct bearing on decisions about oversubscription criteria or for the purpose of selection by aptitude or ability. They **must not** ask, or use supplementary forms that ask, for:

- any personal details about parents and families, such as maiden names, criminal convictions, marital, or financial status (including marriage certificates);
- the first language of parents or the child;
- details about parents' or a child's disabilities, special educational needs or medical conditions;
- parents to agree to support the ethos of the school in a practical way;
- both parents to sign the form, or for the child to complete the form.

* This information is required as part of the local authority's commitment to share details of applications and outcomes with other local authorities where an application has been received for a pupil living outside Hillingdon.

Appendix 2: Template spreadsheet (Transfer of Information that is sent to schools to complete)

Add your School Name and date here:		
Year Group	Available spaces to offer including any outstanding offers	Published Admissions Number (PAN) & any different caps on other years - not the normal admissions groups
Rec		PAN
Year 1		
Year 2		
Year 3		
Year 4		
Year 5		
Year 6		

Add your School Name and date here:		
Year Group	Available spaces to offer including any outstanding offers	Published Admission Number (PAN) & any formally agreed caps on other years - not the normal admissions groups
Year 7		PAN
Year 8		
Year 9		
Year 10		
Year 11		

Note that the Published Admissions Number (PAN) applies to the normal admissions year group for the whole academic year.

Appendix 3: Template Offer Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Offer of a School Place at SCHOOL PUPIL NAME - DOB

I am writing to let you know the outcome of your application for a school place. **NAME** has been offered a place at **School**.

Please note:

- This offer is dependent on the accuracy of the information you have provided.
- If you do not respond to this letter, your offer will be withdrawn.
- You must respond within 10 working days from the date of this letter.

You can accept or decline this offer by e-mail, post or telephone. Our contact details appear at the top/bottom of this letter.

It is strongly recommended that you accept this offer. Please be aware that children of statutory school age who are not receiving education will be referred to the Hillingdon Participation Team as a child missing education.

We look forward to welcoming your child to our school

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 4: Template Rejection Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Application for a School Place at **SCHOOL** **PUPIL NAME - DOB**

I am writing to let you know the outcome of your application for a school place. It has not been possible to offer **NAME** a place at **SCHOOL**. This is because the school has currently reached/exceeded its admission capacity in **NAME**'s year group. The admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

***NAME** has been automatically added to the waiting list. If an offer becomes available at a later date, then you will be notified / If you would like **NAME** to be added to the waiting list then please contact the school office to request this.*

You have the right of appeal under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 against the refusal of a place at any of the schools for which you have applied. If you wish to appeal, you must contact the school office directly to obtain the relevant paperwork.

If your child is currently not in school, you must contact your home local authority for further support in finding a school place. The London Borough of Hillingdon School Placement and Admissions Team can be contacted on 01895 556644 or you can visit the admissions website at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schools.

Yours sincerely,

Agreed by:

Laura Baldry, School Placements and Admissions Manager

Hayley Murphy, Senior Admissions and Allocations Officer

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