

SOMERSET LOCAL AUTHORITY

CO-ORDINATED PRIMARY ADMISSION SCHEME

FIRST ADMISSION TO A PRIMARY, INFANT OR FIRST SCHOOL AND TRANSFER TO A JUNIOR OR MIDDLE SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER 2016

1. This scheme applies to:

All Somerset County Council maintained Primary, Infant, First, Junior and Middle schools including Voluntary Controlled (VC), Community (C), Voluntary Aided (VA), Foundation (F), Academy (A) and Free Schools (FS), except for Special Schools.

2. This scheme explains:

Important information concerning the process for admission to the reception year of a Primary, First or Infant school, year 3 of a Junior school and year 5 of a Middle school in September 2016. This scheme should be read in conjunction with the school admission arrangements published by Admission Authorities.

Please refer to the glossary for a description of all technical terms used throughout this document.

3. Useful Contacts:

The 'Somerset Admissions and Entitlement Team'
Telephone Somerset Direct on 0845 4564038
schooladmissions@somerset.gov.uk

Local Authority School Appeals Coordinator
01823 358298
appealcoordinator@somerset.gov.uk

Somerset Direct Roads & Transport Team
0845 3459155

Roads&Transport@somerset.gov.uk

Somerset Choice Advice Service

01823 356903

HLeach@somerset.gov.uk

4. Useful links:

Office of the Schools Adjudicator;

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schoolsadjudicator/>

Department for Education;

<http://www.education.gov.uk/>

School Admissions Code;

Education Funding Agency: Public communications unit

Telephone: 0370 000 2288

Fax: 01928 794 248

Website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus>

5. Co-ordination Procedure

The Local Authority (LA) is the Admission Authority for all Voluntary Controlled (VC) and Community (C) Schools. The Governing Body is the Admissions Authority for a Foundation (F) or Voluntary Aided (VA) School. The Trust is the Admissions Authority for Free Schools (FS) and Academies (A).

All LAs are required to operate a scheme of co-ordination. This involves LAs exchanging applications with other Admission Authorities and with other LAs where the school applied for is not in the home authority area. It is the home LAs responsibility to notify the applicant of the outcome.

From September 2015, Somerset LA will make available a Composite Prospectus booklet 'A Guide For Parents'. This sets out the primary admission application process and a range of information about all schools and academies in Somerset.

The Composite Prospectus is available on the Somerset County Council website at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions or a limited number in paper format from the LA Admissions and Entitlements Team (contact details at the beginning of this document). Parents are responsible for ensuring they access this information in appropriate time to make a school place application by the published deadline.

For children resident in Somerset, details of the on-line application process are available on the website. By using the on-line application process, the applicant will receive an email acknowledgment and outcome. Applications must be made to Somerset regardless of the location of the preferred school. The CAF (common application form) is also available on the SCC website. Where an applicant chooses to post a CAF, it is advisable to obtain proof of posting.

Applicants can express up to three preferences for schools, regardless of location and may provide reasons for these preferences. Any additional information to support a section of the application form must be provided only on a formal Supplementary Information Form (SIF) and must be received by the deadline. These are made available by each Admission Authority and can be obtained from the SCC website or relevant school office.

Somerset LA must exchange application information with other admission authorities and LAs where the preferred school is not a Somerset school. This exchange of information will take place on the dates indicated in the 2016 primary admissions timetable – see section 6.

Admission Authorities are responsible for applying their published admission arrangements to every application received for their school(s) and allocating places up to the Published Admission Number. If there are more applications received than places available at a particular school, the Admission Authority must apply oversubscription criteria to decide which children can be allocated a place within the Published Admission Number. Where the Admission Authority is not the LA, school governors must provide the LA with a ranked list of proposed allocations.

Where applicants have expressed a preference for more than one school, the LA must consider the admission authority allocations for each preferred school and then offer a place on behalf of the Admission Authority at the highest preference school, at which a place is available. A national process known as 'Equal Preference with Ranking' must be used to determine this.

Where it is not possible to offer a place at one or more of the applicant's preferred schools, the LA will provide a refusal letter with details of a process by which applicants can appeal

against the Admission Authority decision. Appeals are heard by an Independent Appeals Panel whose decision is binding.

Applications for primary phase admission cannot be made directly to a school. Applications received by Somerset LA in error from parents living outside of Somerset will not be processed and if possible the parent informed so they can apply to their home authority.

Applications must be received by 23.59 hours on 15 January 2016 in order to be considered as an 'on-time' application. Applications received after this deadline will be treated as 'late applications' and cannot be administered until all 'on time' applications have been dealt with, by which time places at the preferred school(s) may no longer be available. It will not be for the LA to prove that the form was received on-time, the burden of proof will fall to the parent.

There is an exemption period closing date of 9 February 2016 for proof of a change of address to be received by the Local Authority. Supplementary Information Forms for Somerset VC and Community schools will also be accepted until this date.

Decisions in connection with applications received by the deadline will be notified to applicants on 16 April 2016. On line applicants will receive an email on that date, and applicants who chose to apply using the paper CAF will be sent a 2nd class letter posted on that date.

Decisions for late applications received by 23:59 hours on 6 May 2016 will be notified to applicants during the week 6 – 10 June 2016. Applicants will be sent a 2nd class letter posted during the week 6 – 10 June 2016. All applications received after 6 May 201 will be processed in strict date order of receipt.

Any change of preference submitted online or by paper application on or before the published deadline date will over-ride any previous applications.

After the outcome date, if a change of preference is received and can be met, the previously offered place will be automatically withdrawn.

6. Coordination Timetable for Primary Admission applications

Starting at a Primary, Infant, First school, or transferring to a Junior or Middle School in September 2016

Date	Action	Action By
September 2015	Primary Admissions booklets and application forms made available. On-line application process made available. Letter and flier sent to parents/carers of all children on the Local Authority data base	Local Authority (LA)
26 October – 30 October 2015	Half Term	
21 December 2015 – 01 January 2016	Christmas holiday	
15 January 2016	Closing date for primary phase applications.	Parents/carers
By 30 January 2016	Details of applications from residents in other LA areas and/or for schools in other LAs to be sent to those LAs for information.	Local Authority (LA)
9 February 2016	Exemption Period Closing Date	
15 February – 19 February 2016	Half Term	
11 March 2016	School/Academy to provide LA with fully ranked list.	Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Free school, Academy Trust/Governing Bodies
18 March 2016	School/Academy purchasing the LA admission service to have confirmed sign off of fully ranked list	Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Free school, Academy Trust/Governing Bodies
25 March - 8 April 2016	Easter Holiday	
By 25 March 2016	Initial exchange of information with other LAs, confirming offers and refusals to be made.	Local Authority (LA)
By 8 April 2016	Somerset to send final outcomes for other Local Authority residents applying for Somerset schools.	Local Authority (LA)
15 April 2016	The LA will notify Somerset schools which children have been offered places at their schools.	Local Authority (LA)

16 April 2016	Outcome date – outcomes sent out by email and by 2nd class post on 18 April.	Local Authority (LA)
16 May 2016	Closing date for receipt of appeal applications. We cannot guarantee that appeals received after this date will be heard in the first round of appeals.	Parents/carers
Within 40 days of the deadline for lodging appeals	Appeal hearings in connection with 'on time' applications will be completed	LAs/Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools, Free schools, Academies
1 September 2016	Date on or after which requests for school places will be considered under the In Year Admissions Policy	

7. Glossary of Terms

Academy	<p>Academies are publicly-funded independent schools. Academies don't have to follow the national curriculum and can set their own term times. They still have to follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as other state schools.</p> <p>Academies get money direct from the government, not the local council. They're run by an academy trust which employs the staff.</p> <p>Some academies have sponsors such as businesses, universities, other schools, faith or voluntary groups. Sponsors are responsible for improving the performance of their schools.</p>
Admission Arrangements	The overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places including any means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered.
Admission Authority	The body responsible for setting and applying a school's admission arrangements. For community or voluntary controlled schools, the LA is the admission authority; for foundation and voluntary aided schools the governing body of the school is the admission authority. For free schools or Academies the Trust is the admissions authority
Catchment area	A geographical area, from which children may be afforded priority for admission to a school. A catchment area is part of a school's admission arrangements and must therefore be consulted upon, determined and published in the same way as other admission arrangements. Catchments can be viewed using this link http://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-learning-and-schools/choosing-a-school/check-catchment-school1/
Child Looked After	This means a 'looked after' child or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989).
Choice Advice Service	Somerset Choice Advice Service is a free impartial service which supports families with advice and practical support through the school admissions and appeal processes..
Common Application Form (CAF)	The form parents complete and submit to local authorities listing their preferred choices of schools when applying for a school place for their child as part of the local co-ordination scheme during the normal admissions round. Parents must be allowed to express a preference for a minimum of three schools on the relevant common application form as determined by their local authority.
Co-ordinated Scheme	All local authorities are required to coordinate primary and secondary admissions for all schools in their area. Outcomes are sent out by the local authority on 1 March (or next working day) for secondary pupils and 16 April (or next working day) for primary pupils.
DfE	Department for Education
Equal Preference with Ranking	The equal preference with ranking allocation system requires the admission authority to consider all preferences received for a particular school (first, second, third, fourth and fifth) equally and,

	where the school is oversubscribed, apply the oversubscription criteria. Where more than one preference can be met the local authority will offer the highest ranking preference.
Governing Bodies	School governing bodies are bodies corporate responsible for conducting schools with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Governing bodies have three key roles: setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluation.
Home Local Authority	A child's home local authority is the local authority in whose area they live.
Infant Class Size Exceptions	Infant Class Size Regulations permit children to be admitted as exceptions to the infant class size limit. These are set out in paragraph 2.15 of the School Admissions Code 2012.
Infant Class Size Limit	Section 1 of the SSFA 1998 limits the size of an infant class (i.e. a class in which the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6, and 7 during the school year) to 30 pupils per qualified school teacher.
In Year Application	An application is an 'in-year' application if it is for the admission of a child to a relevant age group and it is submitted on or after the first day of the first school term of the admission year, or it is for the admission of a child to an age group other than a relevant age group.
LA	In this policy, this means Somerset County Council acting in their capacity as Local Authority
Late Application	Applications for the relevant age group received outside the normal round of admissions (eg received after the national closing date of 15 January for primary phase applications and 31 October for secondary phase applications) but before 1 September when they become in year admissions.
Normal Admissions Round	Is the phrase used to describe the annual process administered to allocate all first admissions to school and transfers between phases of education. National closing date of 15 January for primary phase applications and 31 October for secondary phase applications.
Oversubscription Criteria	The list of criteria an admission authority must adopt for its school(s) which are used when the school is oversubscribed to determine which children will be offered a place.
Oversubscription	Where a school has a higher number of applicants than the school's Published Admission Number.
Published Admission Number	The number of school places that the admission authority must offer in the year of entry of a school for which it is admission authority.
Preferred school	In this policy, this means a school for which a parent has made an application, otherwise called expressing a preference for a school.
Relevant Age Group	The age group to which children are normally admitted. Each relevant age group must have admission arrangements, including an admission number attached. Some schools (for example schools with sixth forms which admit children into the sixth form) have more than one relevant age group.
School	In this policy, this means a LA maintained school providing education to children of statutory school age, other than a special school
Transport Area	This is defined as the school catchment areas as at September 2012. Children attending the designated transport area or nearest school to the home address and living over the statutory walking distance from this school will be entitled to free school transport.