

TOWER HAMLETS

EDUCATION, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING

COMPOSITE GUIDANCE ON SCHOOL ADMISSIONS



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is issued by Tower Hamlets Education, Social Care and Wellbeing and provides composite guidance on school admission covering the following:
- Nursery
 - Primary Reception
 - Year 7 (Secondary Transfer)
 - In-Year Admission (including guidance on the Fair Access Protocol; and the admissions of children with complex needs to mainstream schools).
 - Post 16 Admission
- 1.2 The guidance is based on the regulations set out in the School Admission and School Admissions Appeals Code of Practices (2012) as well as the principles of ensuring fair access to school. This guidance supplements the statutory guidance where necessary and provides detailed instruction on the procedures to be followed for admission to Tower Hamlets schools. It applies to all schools and governing bodies and should not be departed from without good reason, and certainly not before prior consultation with either the Pupil Services Manager or the Head of Pupil Services.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The general principles apply to all school admissions and are incorporated within the statutory regulation as follows:
- In cases where a vacancy exists or where the school is not oversubscribed the application **must** result in a place being offered for the child. Failure to do so would result in legitimate legal challenge.
 - In all cases where there are more applications than places available, applications **must** be considered and places allocated strictly in accordance with the Local Authority's admission arrangements and the school's admissions policy. These arrangements are set out in the sections that follow.
 - In cases where a place cannot be offered this **must** be confirmed to the applicant(s) in writing and they must be advised of their right of appeal.
 - Other than in the case of school transfer a pupil's admission to school **must** not be delayed inordinately. School transfers must take place in line with the Local Authority's timetable.
 - Children who are considered to have challenging behaviour or a history of poor attendance **must** not be denied entry to school for these reasons.
 - Children who have not yet reached statutory school leaving age **must** be allowed to access a school at any point in the year, including the summer term.
 - Children must not be denied or delayed entry to school in circumstances where the school is in the process of SATs, GCSEs or any other type of national test or public exam.

- All applications for admission to school **must** be dealt with within the timescales set out in the Local Authority's admission arrangements. This includes the timetables specific to entry to nursery, the reception year and those transferring to year 7 of secondary school. Please see the individual sections on each of these categories.

- There are specific arrangements and procedures that **must** be followed for the admission of pupils who have previously been permanently excluded from school or are considered to need a 'managed move' due to them being at risk of permanent exclusion. These are set out in the related Local Authority Guidance on Pupil Exclusion and the Fair Access Protocol for the school admission of children outside the normal points of entry.

3. GENERAL ADMISSIONS GUIDANCE

- 3.1 This general guidance applies to all admissions at all points of entry to schools in Tower Hamlets.

Application Arrangements

- 3.2 Applications for admission to nursery schools (under-fives) and to 6th Forms must be made direct to the schools or 6th Forms concerned. Guidance on nursery admissions and 6th Form admissions are set out in the relevant section below.
- 3.3 **All other school admission applications must be processed by Pupil Services.** These include applications for the Reception Year, Year 7 (secondary transfer) and In-Year applications. In all such cases parents are required to complete the relevant Common Application Form (Reception, Year 7 or In-year, as appropriate). Own Admission Authority Schools **must notify** Pupil Services of all applications and ensure that all applicants complete the Common Application Form.
- 3.4 Tower Hamlets residents **must** apply on the Tower Hamlets Common Application Form, even if the school is outside of Tower Hamlets. Parents of children resident in other areas must apply through their 'home' local authority, even if they want to apply to Tower Hamlets schools. However, in the case of in-year admission, where the 'home' local authority no longer coordinates applications, Tower Hamlets Pupil Services will accept a direct application from the parent.
- 3.5 Parents can name up to six preferences when applying for admission to Reception or Year 7 (secondary transfer). Up to three preferences when applying for In-year admission/ transfer. Parents are advised to use all the preferences available to them.

Processing Applications

- 3.6 Applications **must** be processed in strict accordance with the timescales set out in the Authority's published arrangements. These are explained in the relevant sections below.
- 3.7 Where schools receive applications directly from parents the forms **must** be forwarded immediately to Pupil Services for processing. Failure to do so could result in an unnecessary delay to a child's school admission.
- 3.8 When considering applications for own admission authority schools parents will be advised that they must also complete the school's supplementary information form (SIF), if any. Failure to do so will result in the application being given a lesser priority.
- 3.9 If a parent has completed a supplementary information form (SIF) and not a Common Application Form (CAF); it is the responsibility of the own admission authority school to contact the parent in writing to ensure the parents complete the CAF at the earliest opportunity and certainly before the deadline. Model letters for schools are enclosed with this guidance as appendices.

- 3.10 When own admission authority schools receive applications for decision they cannot be told where parents have ranked their school on the application form and must consider the application without regard to whether or not the school is the most preferred (this is a requirement of the statutory School Admissions Code).

Admission Decisions

- 3.11 Pupil Services will make decisions on all applications for community schools for whom Tower Hamlets acts as the admission authority. Own admission authority schools will make their own decisions on applications, but must do so in accordance with the procedures and timetable advised by Pupil Services (see relevant sections below).
- 3.12 Pupil Services will co-ordinate the decisions for all applications made by Tower Hamlets residents, regardless of which school the application is for. It will then advise the school and parents of the decision.
- 3.13 When co-ordinating admission decisions Pupil Services where possible, offer a place at the highest ranked school applied for. Any lower ranked application(s) will be withdrawn (cancelled).
- 3.14 Parents of children with potential offers for two or more schools will be offered only one place. This will be at the highest ranked school that is able to offer a place, regardless of whether this school is in Tower Hamlets or not. Applications for lower preference schools will be withdrawn (cancelled).
- 3.15 Where it is not possible to offer a place at any of the parents' preferred schools, Pupil Services will allocate (reserve) a place for the child at a suitable school with a vacancy. In the case of reception and secondary transfer this would be after parents have been given opportunity to apply for schools that still have places remaining following the 1st round of offers on 'offer' day.

Notifying Parents

- 3.16 As the co-ordinating authority Pupil Services will notify Tower Hamlets parents of the outcome of their application in writing. Schools should not make contact with families until such time as the admission decision has been confirmed and they have been advised to do so by Pupil Services.
- 3.17 In cases where a place cannot be offered at the preferred school(s), Pupil Services will notify parents of their statutory right of appeal and the procedure and timescale for doing so. This will be done for both community and own admission authority schools.
- 3.18 Appeals lodged for own admission authority schools will be passed to the school for processing in accordance with the statutory arrangements and timescales (see section on School Admission Appeals below).

Arranging for a Child's Admission

- 3.19 After the admission decision has been confirmed by Pupil Services, the school will be notified of the date by which the child must be enrolled. This date should be adhered to unless there are circumstances beyond the school's control, in which case, the school must consult Pupil Services for advice.
- 3.20 Schools must immediately notify Pupil Services of any children who are offered or allocated a place but do not take it up. These children will be followed up by Pupil Services and referred to the Attendance and Welfare Service as necessary.

Validation/Verification of a Child's Date of Birth

- 3.21 Before a child can be admitted, the school must verify that the child's address and date of birth are correct for the year group applied to. This applies to all admissions. Acceptable documentation would include the child's details, such as a medical card, child benefit letter and council tax statement. Rent books which show only the tenants' details are not regarded as proof of the child's address as it can be very difficult for schools to be certain that they do not belong to members of the extended family. In cases where there is conflicting evidence, please consult the Pupil Services Manager on 020 7364 4306. Offers of places may be withdrawn if there is evidence that the place was obtained on the basis of false or deliberately misleading information.

Verification of Parent/Carers Details

- 3.22 Where a child is living away from home for more than 28 days and is not being looked after by one of the following:
- Parent;
 - Grandparent;
 - person with parental responsibility;
 - step-parent (by marriage or civil partnership);
 - aunt;
 - uncle;
 - sister (including half-sister);
 - brother, including half-brother;

This means the child is in a private fostering arrangement.

- 3.23 The Local Authority needs to be notified of private fostering arrangements. Therefore, schools should enquire as to the relationship between the child and parent/carer, and where they become aware of such an arrangement, must contact the Local Authority's Private Fostering Team on 020 7364 4945.

Admission of Pupils from Overseas

- 3.24 The Local Authority is required by law to ensure that all applications for admission to Tower Hamlets schools are considered, regardless of the applicant's immigration status. Even a person admitted to the country on the condition they have 'no recourse to public funds' is entitled to apply for school places for their children. However, there may be instances where the applicant's stay in the country is so short that it is impractical to arrange admission to school. In these cases it would be reasonable for the Authority to decide not to offer a place, even if a place was available.

Appeals

- 3.25 **Right of appeal:** There is no right of appeal against a decision refusing admission to a nursery class. For all other decisions refusing admission to a school, **(including admission to 6th Form)**, parents have the right of appeal to an independent panel.
- 3.26 **The Independent Panel:** The panel is made up of lay people and people who have experience in education and the educational conditions of the area. This can include a parent of a registered pupil at school. The panel cannot include an existing or former member of the governing body of the school in question or anyone connected with the school or Local Authority (LA) in any other professional capacity. Appeal panel members are appointed by the LA and must be trained. Own admission authority schools are responsible for arranging their own admission appeals, but must use an independent clerk and LA panel members. Alternatively they can enter into a Service Level Agreement for the LA to organise these on the school's behalf. Please contact the Head of Pupil Services for further information.
- 3.27 **Appeal Hearings:** An appeal must be heard whenever a child is refused a place and the parent(s) make written representation against the decision. Appeal forms are available from Pupil Services. The LA will arrange appeals for all community schools and own admission authority schools who have a Service Level Agreement with Pupil Services.
- 3.28 **Appeal Panel Decisions:** Appeal panels are independent of both the school and the admission authority (which are the Local Authority for community schools and the governing body for own admission authority schools). The panel's decision is binding on all parties. This means that if an appeal is upheld (i.e. settled in favour of the parents) schools must admit the pupil without delay.
- 3.29 **Statutory Time Limits for hearing appeals:** There is a statutory time limit within which appeals must be heard:
- For admission to the reception year as part of the primary co-ordinated admission scheme: within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. For secondary transfer: within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. For in-year admissions: within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
 - For admission to 6th Form: within 40 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- 3.30 Parents can only make one appeal for each school for each academic year, unless there has been a material and significant change in the family's circumstances since the previous appeal. They do have the right to appeal again for admission in the following school year.
- 3.31 **Late Applications:** Where a late application has been received and admission refused, the appeal should, if possible, be heard at the same time as those for on-time applications. If this is not feasible, the appeal must be heard within 30 school days of being lodged.

Travel Assistance

- 3.32 Travel assistance can be provided for children of **compulsory school age** who meet the following criteria:
- Children unable to walk safely to school because of the nature of their Special Educational Needs (or Education, Health and Care Plan), disability or mobility problems (including temporary medical conditions) - [find out more about school travel for children with special education needs](#)
 - Children unable to walk in safety to school because of the nature of the route
 - Children living outside the '**statutory walking distance**' (2 miles for children under 8 years of age and 3 miles for children over 8 years of age)
 - Children entitled to Free School Meals, or whose parents are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit
 - Children attending a school where the education provided is that of the faith to which the parent adheres
 - Children whose parent/carer's disability prevents him/her from accompanying a child along a walking route which can be considered safe
- 3.33 Children will usually only be eligible for travel assistance if the council cannot offer a place at a suitable alternative school. Therefore parents must apply for at least three local schools before submitting an application for travel assistance.
- 3.34 The travel assistance application form can be downloaded here: [application form for travel assistance](#) (pdf 245kb) or alternatively parents can contact Pupil Services on 020 7364 5006.
- 3.35 If the application for travel assistance is refused, then parents will have a **right of appeal** against the decision and this is advised in the decision letter.
- 3.36 Appeals are heard by the Service Head, in the first instance. If the first stage appeal is unsuccessful then parents will have a further right of appeal to the LA's Independent Appeal Panel.

Travel Assistance for 16 – 19 Year Olds

- 3.37 Travel assistance can also be provided for students attending 6th Form or other further education provision, enabling them to access and attend the education and training of their choice.

Support can be provided for students who meet the following criteria:

- are aged 16-18 or a continuing learner who started the course before their 19th birthday
- live over three miles from the school or college to be attended.
- come from a family whose taxable income was £30,810 or less in the period April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014,
- do not receive EMA*
- receive EMA, but are taking a specialist course** and have to pay fares of £10 or more per week to attend it.

- 3.38 In line with government guidance, more favourable conditions apply to students with special educational need (SEN) (or Education, Health and Care Plan EHCP).
- 3.39 * As this policy was implemented before the demise of the EMA, the LA will take account of other forms of support, including the receipt of a 16-19 bursary, during the assessment of an application.
- 3.40 **Defined as a course which ends with a nationally recognised vocational qualification and does not include GCSE, AS, A2 or A level courses that cannot be taken locally.

Free School Meals

- 3.41 From September 2014, all primary age children will receive free school meals. Secondary aged children whose parents are on low incomes may be entitled to free school meals. Parents can obtain further information and make an application through the local One-Stop Shops, tel: 020 7364 5020. Advice on free school meals policy can be sought from Pupil Services on tel: 020 7364 5006.

Pupil Premium – families should still complete the FSM eligibility form available from the school. This will help determine the Pupil Premium funding that the individual school will receive.

Uniform Grants

- 3.42 Parents on low income may be eligible for a uniform grant when their child transfers from primary to secondary school. Information about this is available during the summer term from One Stop Shops. The closing date for application is the end of September.

4. GUIDANCE FOR NURSERY ADMISSIONS 2015/2016

- 4.1 The nursery admissions arrangements and criteria now mirror the arrangements for admission to reception. They now include catchment areas, with priority given to children for whom the school applied for is the 'nearest school' within the catchment area. There is a standard closing date for applications (15th January 2015), a single offer day (8th May 2015) and new criteria for determining full and part-time places. A new Nursery Common Application Form (CAF) has been introduced for parents to complete and return direct to schools and nurseries.
- 4.2 **Policy:** The new nursery admissions criteria for Community Nursery Classes and School are set out in **Appendix B** and apply to children starting nursery in 2015/16. Own admissions authority schools should use their own admission criteria and arrangements for nursery admissions, but must follow the LA's timetable, including the closing and offer dates.
- 4.3 **Co-hort:** Children will normally start nursery from the age of three. The nursery cohort for admission in the 2015/16 school year will therefore apply to children born between **1.9.2011 and 31.8.2012** and parents must make their application for a nursery place in the period between 1st September 2014 and 15th January 2015.
- 4.4 **Information on Nursery Admission Arrangements:** Pupil Services has sent the 'Starting School in Tower Hamlets 2015/16' brochure to all primary schools, nursery schools, under-fives provisions, care providers and community organisations. The brochure explains the nursery application and admission process with contact information for all Tower Hamlets schools and nurseries, including own admissions authority schools. Further information on individual schools can be found on their websites. The LA will also include information on nursery admission arrangements in its advertisements across the borough. Advice sessions will be held for parents in various locations around the borough, to raise awareness of the new policy and arrangements.
- 4.5 **Common Application Form (CAF) and Procedure:** Pupil Services has sent the new Nursery CAF, including guidance notes on how to complete the form to all schools and nurseries. Schools should distribute the CAF to parents with the 'Starting School' brochure from September. Schools should also ensure that parents who have previously registered an interest for 2015/16 now complete the CAF, in order to capture all relevant information. Parents wishing to apply for a nursery place at a later date i.e. for the 2016/17 school year should be informed that they can make their application from September 2015 on the CAF that will be issued for that year's co-hort.
- 4.6 Parents are required to complete a CAF for each of their preferred schools and include all relevant information, enabling schools and nurseries to capture the information necessary to determine who gets a place. This includes assessing a child's eligibility for a full or part-time place. If the child is in Public Care or there are strong social and/or medical reasons why they need to attend a particular school, this should be stated on the CAF. Parents will also need to submit supporting documentation with their application, i.e. letter from a doctor, social worker or similar professional. Where the parent has applied for priority admission under the aforementioned criterion, but has not provided the necessary supporting information, the school should contact the family to request this information before decisions are made. This information can then be used to determine whether the child should be given priority consideration.

- 4.7 **Nursery Application Closing Date:** The closing date for application for the 2015/16 school year is **15th January 2015**. Parents should return the CAF direct to the school or nursery concerned, a copy does not need to be sent to the LA. Where possible, schools should remind parents to complete the CAF well before the deadline. Applications received after the closing date, but before the period when decisions are taken, can still be considered and this will be at the discretion of the school's headteacher. For example, if there is an unavoidable reason for the application being late i.e. that the family has only just moved into the area, the school should make an exception and consider the application as received on time.
- 4.8 **Final Application Checks:** Schools should use the period between the 15th and 31st January 2015 to ensure that the applications received include all the necessary information to determine the application in line with the nursery admission criteria.
- 4.9 **Changes to pupil information after the closing date:** Parents must notify changes, for example, change of address, to schools or nurseries to which the application has been made immediately. Schools should use the most recently notified (and accepted) changes when decisions on nursery applications are made.
- 4.10 **Determining Applications:** All applications for Tower Hamlets community schools and nurseries must be considered simultaneously by each school/nursery, in accordance with the admission policy and in line with the composite timetable that has been issued to schools under separate cover. This will ensure that all parents receive notification of the outcome of their nursery application on the same day.
- 4.11 **Obtaining Distance Measurements and Confirmation of Child's Catchment area:** Community schools should send their list of applicants, including the full address, to Pupil Services via USO-FX by **6th February 2015**. This will enable the LA to provide the distance measurements, catchment area and the 'nearest school' information to enable the school to rank applications in the correct order and then make decisions in line with the nursery admission criteria.
- 4.12 Own Admission Authority Schools who require distance measurements to determine and rank applications should also send their list of applicants, with the full address, to Pupil Services by **6th February 2015**.
- 4.13 Pupil Services will return the list of applicants, with the required information, to schools by **15th April 2015**. Schools should then ensure that they have all the necessary information to make decisions in line with their admission criteria. The criteria for Community Schools is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 4.14 **Making Decisions:** In the period between the **15th April and 7th May 2015** schools must make decisions on their nursery applications.
- 4.15 **Determining priority for a full or part-time nursery place:** All schools must now use the following criteria to determine full-time and part-time places for successful applicants:

Priority 1	Children with Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan
Priority 2	Children looked after by the local authority, previously looked after children who left care under a residence or special guardianship order, or those adopted from local authority care

Priority 3	Children for whom it is deemed there is strong medical or social reason to attend the school applied to
Priority 4	Children of working parents or parents who are studying.

- 4.16 Headteachers should seek advice from the Pupil Services Manager where there are competing claims for full and part-time places.
- 4.17 **Notifying parents:** The 'Offer Day' for Nursery Admissions is **8th May 2015**. Schools must, therefore, send a letter to parents with the outcome of their application on this date.
- 4.18 **Successful Applicants:** The offer letter should advise successful applicants whether the child is being offered a full or part-time place and that they must provide the necessary verification (see 3.21) to confirm their acceptance of the offer by **22nd May 2015**.
- 4.19 **Unsuccessful Applicants:** Unsuccessful applicants should be advised that they can contact the school for further information on the reasons for refusal. A model letter will be sent to schools under separate cover.
- 4.20 **Waiting lists:** There is no requirement for schools to maintain a nursery waiting list, however, if they do decide to keep a waiting list this should be kept and ordered in accordance with the Admissions Criteria and not on a 'first come first served' basis . Any vacancies that arise should be offered to the child who is next on the waiting list Schools can inform unsuccessful applicants of their position on the waiting list, but must also advise them that their child's position on the waiting list can go up as well as down.
- 4.21 **Parents wishing to make representation about nursery decisions:** Parents who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their nursery application should contact the school's headteacher in the first instance. If, after this discussion they remain dissatisfied then parents should be advised to contact the Pupil Services Manager. However, there is no right of appeal against the decision to refuse a child admission to a nursery class/school.
- 4.22 **Late applications:** Schools should not consider late applications, received after the closing date, until after the decisions for on-time applications have been made, unless there is good reason for the application being late. See note 4.7.
- 4.23 **Notifying Pupil Services:** As soon as their nursery admission lists are finalised, schools/nurseries must send these to Pupil Services, and should be received by no later than the end of June 2015. This should be done via a secure data exchange.
- 4.24 **Further Information and Guidance:**
A composite timetable for the admissions process has been sent to schools under separate cover and should be referred to in conjunction with this guidance. Reminders to this guidance will be issued via the Headteachers' Bulletin and/or direct to SAOs by e-mail.

5. GUIDANCE SPECIFIC TO PRIMARY RECEPTION ADMISSIONS

- 5.1. The primary co-ordinated admissions arrangements form part of the Pan-London Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme that includes all London boroughs. The Scheme requires that parents make their application through the local authority in which they live, regardless of where the school they are applying to is located. Parents living in Tower Hamlets must therefore complete the Common Application Form (CAF) for both Tower Hamlets and out-borough schools. Likewise, parents living outside of Tower Hamlets must complete their home borough's CAF.
- 5.2. **Cohort:** The primary co-ordination cohort for September 2015 includes all children born between **1.9.2010 and 31.8.2011** and they must be included in the primary co-ordinated admission arrangements. Schools will be asked to provide the Local Authority with CTF files for children in their nursery and also complete a proforma providing details of children on their waiting lists.
- 5.3. Children in the school's nursery class will not automatically be given a reception place. Their parents must therefore apply separately by completing the Reception CAF, even when there is an older sibling in the main school. Schools must check the lists of applicants sent from Pupil Services in order to ensure that all children in the nursery have had an application submitted for a place in reception.
- 5.4. **Timetable:** The composite timetable for primary co-ordinated admissions is sent to schools under separate cover and should be referred to in conjunction with this guidance.
- 5.5. **Starting School Brochure:** All parents of children starting the reception year in September 2015 will receive a copy of the 'Starting School in Tower Hamlets 2015' brochure. The brochure explains the admission process and has contact information for all Tower Hamlets primary schools. Information can also be found on how to access information relating to the admissions criteria for own admission authority schools. In September Pupil Services will send the 'Starting School in Tower Hamlets 2015' brochure with the application form and guidance notes to schools, private nurseries and playgroups.
- 5.6. **School Prospectus:** More detailed information on particular schools can be found in the schools prospectus available.
- 5.7. **Schools in other boroughs:** Information about schools in other boroughs can be obtained from the school's home borough. Contact details for the Admission Teams in all London boroughs are included in **Appendix A**.
- 5.8. **School Admission Policies:** Before making applications, parents are advised to consider the oversubscription criteria to assess the chances of their applications being successful. Details of oversubscribed schools from the previous year are given in the Starting School brochure. Pupil Services will be able to provide further. The admission policy used for Tower Hamlets community primary schools is set out in **Appendix C**. The admission policies for own admission authority schools in Tower Hamlets can be accessed via: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/schooladmissions.
- For schools outside Tower Hamlets parents should check the admission policies and arrangements directly with the school or borough concerned.

- 5.9 **Application arrangements:** Tower Hamlets Local Authority (LA) is responsible for the processing of applications for all Tower Hamlets resident pupils, regardless of the borough of the primary school they are applying to. The responsibility for all out-borough pupils in Tower Hamlets under-fives provision is with their home LA. Pupil Services will notify other LAs of their known pupils in our under-fives provision based on the census information collected from schools in May/June. Please immediately notify Pupil Services if there have been any changes to this information.
- 5.10 **Common Application form:** The common application form (CAF) is distributed to schools with the starting school brochure by Pupil Services early September.
- (i) Online Application
The online application facility is available online from early September. Schools should encourage parents to apply online as an easy alternative to completing the paper application form at:
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/schooladmissions.
- Pupil Services offers workshops to assist parents to apply online. Any schools wishing to host a workshop should contact Pupil Services. However, please note that parents invited to these workshops must first obtain an email address so that their online application can be processed. The 'Starting School in Tower Hamlets 2015' brochure includes step-by-step guidance on how to complete an online application.
- Schools wishing to check if any of their parents have made an online application can view this information on the internet. Please email school.admissions@towerhamlets.gov.uk for a password and instructions.
- 5.11 **Completing the CAF:** Parents can name up to six schools, ranked in order of preference. These can be for maintained schools i.e. community, voluntary aided, free schools and academies in Tower Hamlets and across the London area.
- Parents who apply for a **voluntary aided, free school or academy** must also complete the schools supplementary information form (SIF) as well the CAF. Schools **must** ensure that all parents are made aware that they must complete both the school's SIF and the CAF. If the SIF is not completed the application cannot be fully considered by the school. A model letter is attached as Appendix E for school use.
- Parents can state the reasons why they wish their child to attend a particular school. If the child is in Public Care or there are strong social and/or medical reasons why the pupil should attend a particular school, parents and carers can apply for priority admission. They will need to submit supporting documentation from a doctor, social worker or similar professional with their application. Schools will know of children in their nursery who will have circumstances that mean they should be considered under the medical/social criterion. It is therefore important for schools to identify and support these families at the application stage so that situations are avoided where it is claimed that the child or family's circumstances were not taken into account.
- 5.12 **Reminder Letters:** In early December Pupil Services will ask primary schools to distribute letters and emails to parents reminding them to apply by the closing date.

- 5.13 **Closing Date:** Parents should return the completed application form to the nursery or primary school by the end of the first week of the Spring Term. These should be forwarded to Pupil Services to be received by the 15th January closing date. The primary school may wish to keep a copy. Please date stamp any forms returned after the closing date without obscuring any information on the form. If parents complete their application online they must do so by 12 midnight on the closing date.
- 5.14 **Changes to Preferences / Pupil Information:** Changes to information on the application, for example change of Address or choice of primary school, must be notified to Pupil Services immediately, in writing. It may not be possible to make changes to an application if a request is received after the closing date. Changes to online applications can be made up until midnight on 15th January. When decisions are made they will be based on the most recently submitted or notified (and accepted) change.
- 5.15 **Late applications / entrants:** Applications received after the 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. Late applications will be given a lower priority and will be dealt with after all on time applications in the first round of offers are made. Where a school is oversubscribed late applications will be refused and placed on the waiting list in accordance with the admission criteria.

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. Late applications to out-borough schools will be subject to that LA's rule. Late applications cannot be submitted online.

- 5.16 **Determining Applications:** all applications for Tower Hamlets schools will be considered simultaneously in accordance with each school's admission policy. Pupil Services will collate the applications received and exchange application information with schools and other London boroughs through the Pan London process as follows:

By early February Pupil Services will send schools, via the secure website, a file listing details of all the applications received, including out-borough applications. The ranked order of the parents' preferences will not be disclosed. Schools **must**:

- check the lists for discrepancies and "missing applicants", e.g. siblings or children in the nursery class who have not yet made an application and inform Pupil Services immediately.
- check distance measurements. Where schools have changed an entrance, perhaps as part of a building programme, they should notify Pupil Services to allow distances to be calculated accurately. Schools should also check the distance measurements for accuracy, using their local knowledge about public rights of way through estates and blocks of flats. Schools that use distance as 'measured in a straight line' should also check these measurements for accuracy.
- In the case of an own admission authority school, check their application lists against the supplementary information forms (SIFs) that they have received direct.

- 5.17 **Deciding on Applications:** between mid to late February governors of own admission authority schools must make decisions on applications and return lists to Pupil Services of children who can and cannot be offered places by the deadline. Refusals must be listed in ranked order as it will enable Pupil Services to provide these schools with a definitive list of acceptances, refusals and withdrawals once the Pan London process is complete. Schools that miss this date may not be able to be included in the single offer allocation process. Pupil Services will make decisions for community schools using the LA Admissions Criteria set out at (Appendix C).
- 5.18 **Co-ordinating Decisions**
- During early March Pupil Services will finalise the decisions for community schools in conjunction with the decisions notified by voluntary aided schools. It will then, along with all the other LAs in the Pan London System, begin the process of exchanging the results of applications to determine, where possible, a single offer at the highest ranked school able to offer a place. This process will complete by the end of March.
- 5.19 **Notification of Decisions:** Decisions are notified as follows:
- (i) Notifying Primary Schools
- By the end of March. Pupil Services will notify primary schools of decisions. Schools will receive complete listings of offers, refusals and withdrawals. Pupils whose applications have been withdrawn (cancelled) because of an offer at a higher preference school will also be included for information purposes only. **This information should remain confidential until after the Offer day when the LA will send notification letters to parents.**
- (ii) Notifying Parents
- Parents of children in London will be sent a letter by the 'home' LA on **offer day**. The letter will notify parents of the result of their applications. Families who have submitted an online application will receive an e-mail after 5pm on offer day.
- 5.20 **Successful Applicants:** the letter will inform parents that the child is able to be offered a place at one of the chosen schools and that the school will shortly write to confirm this. The offer will be subject to the parent providing acceptable proof of the child's date of birth and address to the school.
- Unsuccessful Applicants:** the letter will inform parents that the child has not been offered a place at any of their preferred schools and who parents should contact to obtain additional information on the reasons for refusal. The letter will also explain the waiting list and appeal arrangements.
- 5.21 **Acceptance of Offers:** Immediately following the **offer day** primary schools **must** write to parents to confirm the offer of a place and the arrangements for the child's admission. This letter must also include a requirement for parents to provide the school with documentation that gives proof of the child's date of birth and address. Parents of pupils who are offered places at out-borough schools will be required to confirm their acceptance of the place by completing and returning a confirmation slip to Tower Hamlets Pupil Services. Parents will also be required to provide proof of address at this stage.

- 5.22 **Children whose parents choose to defer admission:** Parents can defer their child's admission to reception until later in the school year as follows:

Child becomes five between	Point until which entry can be deferred
Sept – December	January (Start of the Spring Term)
January – March	March/April (Start of Summer Term)
April – August	May/June (2nd Half of the Summer Term)

Should parents decide to defer, they will be required to complete a deferral form, available from Pupil Services. This must be signed by the headteacher of the primary school to be offered, as well as the headteacher of their child's current under-fives provision (if applicable). Pupil Services will notify schools of any children for whom admission has been deferred, the primary school must keep places open for these children, until the start of the term for which the child's admission has been deferred.

Headteacher's may give advice to parents, but cannot refuse a request to defer a child's admission. In cases where there is dispute between the primary school and the current under-fives provision regarding the merits of a child's deferred admission, these must be referred to the Service Head for Learning and Achievement c/o Head of Pupil Services. A leaflet for parents giving advice on deferring admission will be provided to schools under separate cover.

- 5.23 **Unplaced Children:** Parents of unplaced Tower Hamlets children will, if possible, be advised of the school that a place has been allocated (reserved) in the notification letter sent on the offer day. This will be at the nearest Tower Hamlets school with an available place. However, given the ongoing pressure on infant year places, it may not be possible to allocate a place for every child at this stage. In this scenario, parents will be advised that they will be notified of the school at which a place is available for their child by early June. In the event that the place available is not within the statutory walking distance of 2 miles from the family home, assistance with home to school travel will be provided, but this may not necessarily be in the form of school bus transport.
- 5.24 **Waiting lists:** The parents of children not offered a place at their preferred community school(s), will be asked to confirm in writing to Pupil Services if they want their child's name to be placed on the waiting list. The waiting list arrangements for own admission authority schools will be different. Parents should therefore contact the individual schools for advice.
- 5.25 **Right of Appeal:** Parents will be notified of their right of appeal against the refusal of a place at a higher ranked preference school. Lower ranked preferences will be withdrawn (cancelled) For example, if a place is offered at the 2nd preference school, the parent will have the right of appeal to the 1st preference school, and the 3rd preference application will be withdrawn (cancelled).
- 5.26 **Appeal Hearings:** Appeals for community schools will be heard in May/June subject to the availability of independent panel members. Headteachers of community schools will be consulted about the appeal statement and invited to the hearing.

- 5.27 **Further Information and Guidance:** Reminders to this guidance will be issued at each point in the timetable via the Headteachers' Bulletin and direct to SAOs by e-mail.

6. GUIDANCE SPECIFIC TO YEAR 7 ADMISSIONS (SECONDARY TRANSFER)

- 6.1 The secondary co-ordinated admissions arrangements form part of the Pan-London Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme that involves all London boroughs. The Scheme requires that parents make their application through the local authority in which they live, regardless of where the school they are applying to is located. Parents living in Tower Hamlets must therefore complete the Common Application Form (CAF) for schools in Tower Hamlets and out-borough schools. Likewise, parents living outside of Tower Hamlets must complete their home borough's CAF.
- 6.2 The secondary transfer cohort for September 2015 includes all pupils born between **01/09/03 - 31/08/04**. All Year 6 pupils in mainstream schools must be included in the secondary transfer cohort. However the procedure for pupils with statements of special educational needs is slightly different and is set out in Section 12 below.
- 6.3 **Early/Late Transfer:** The Authority's policy is that children should be educated with pupils who are in the same year group. Any variation to the usual arrangement would need the prior approval of Anne Canning, Service Head. This would include requests for pupils to transfer early or to remain an additional year at primary school
- 6.4 **Timetable:** The composite timetable for secondary transfer co-ordinated admissions has been sent to schools under separate cover and should be referred to in conjunction with this guidance.
- 6.5 **Banding:** The LA operates a policy of banding pupils to try to ensure that secondary schools admit an even balance of pupils in different ability ranges. All Tower Hamlets community schools, Central Foundation Girls', George Green's and Sir John Cass use banding. Pupils are assigned to one of four bands A, B, C or D, with D being the highest. A pupil's band is determined from the combined score they achieved in the Year 5 Optional SATs Tests. The cut-off points for this year are as follows:

0 – 68	Band A
69 – 95	Band B
96 – 121	Band C
122 – 183	Band D

NB the Reading Test I marks are double weighted. For example, a pupil achieving 32 marks in Reading and 75 marks in Maths would have a combined score as follows: $(32 \times 2) + 75 = 139$. This would place the pupil in Band D.

- 6.6 **Common Application Form:** In September primary schools will receive a supply of the LA common application form's (CAF) as well as an information sheet for each child with the scores and band from the Year 5 Optional SATs test they sat in June. The CAF should only be distributed to Tower Hamlets parents, but the 'Banding' information sheet should be given to all parents. Parents will need this information when they complete either the CAF or apply online. (Please also see 6.12)

Parents must not be given and should not use forms from previous years. The CAF must also **not** be given to the parents of pupils who are not resident in Tower Hamlets. They should be given the LBTH supplementary application form with a letter (see Appendix E) advising them of the procedures for out-borough residents.

6.7 **Untested pupils**

Schools may arrange for untested pupils to sit the Optional SATs Test or assign a band based on teacher assessment. Copies of the test and guidance on how to administer it can be obtained from the Research and Statistics Team on 020 7364 4942.

6.8 **Banding for year 6 pupils in special schools**

Special schools should notify the individual test scores or band for their pupils to Pupil Services.

6.9 **Guidance Advice and Support for Parents:**

(i) LA Admissions Guide

All parents of children transferring must be given a copy of the **'Ready for Secondary School in Tower Hamlets'** brochure. The brochure explains the secondary transfer admission process and provides information on all Tower Hamlets maintained schools, admission policies and application arrangements. Parents can also find more information on the schools' websites

(ii) School Prospectus

Detailed information on individual schools can be found in the prospectus available from each school

(iii) Secondary School Visits

Parents should be encouraged to visit secondary schools in order to learn more about the facilities and the range of provision available. Information on school visiting times is given in the **'Ready for Secondary School in Tower Hamlets'** brochure.

(iv) Out-Borough Schools

Information about schools in other boroughs can be obtained from the school or borough concerned. Contact details for the School Admission Teams in all the London boroughs are included in Appendix A.

(v) LA Secondary Transfer Advice Session for Parents

Pupil Services holds a secondary transfer advice session for parents; the date is published in the **'Ready for Secondary School in Tower Hamlets'** brochure and the Secondary Transfer Timetable.

6.10 **Admissions Policies:**

(i) Community schools

The LA admission policy is used for Tower Hamlets community schools, Bethnal Green Academy, Central Foundation, George Green's and St Paul's Way Trust. It is set out in Appendix D.

(ii) Own Admission Authority Schools

Bishop Challoner Schools, Raine's, Sir John Cass, Wapping High and London Enterprise Academy have their own individual admission policies and these are set out under each school's section of the **'Ready for Secondary School in Tower Hamlets'** brochure.

(iii) Out-Borough Schools

Parents should be advised to check the admission policies and arrangements with the school or borough concerned before applying. They should be advised to consider the admissions criteria and assess the chances of the child's application being successful. Details of last year's applications and acceptances by band for the over-subscribed schools that use the Council's admission policy are provided under a separate cover. Pupil Services will also be able to provide further information and advice.

6.11 **Application Arrangements:** Tower Hamlets LA is responsible for processing the secondary school applications for all Tower Hamlets resident pupils, regardless of the borough of their primary school. The responsibility for all out-borough pupils in Tower Hamlets primary schools is with their home LA. Pupil Services will notify other LAs of their known pupils in our primary schools based on the address information collected from primary schools in the Summer Term census. Please immediately notify Pupil Services if there have been any changes to this information.

6.12 **Completing the application:** Please encourage parents to **apply on-line** at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/school_admissions. This is an easy alternative to completing the paper form and will help to enable the Local Authority to meet E-government targets for its online services. Guidance for parents on how to complete an online application has been sent to schools under separate cover.

Secondary schools may also wish to provide facilities for parents to apply online at their secondary school open days. Further advice on how best to do this can be obtained from Pupil Services. Please see the Section 'Completing the Application Form' overleaf. Primary schools wishing to check whether any of their Year 6 parents have made an online application can view this information online. Please email mohammed.malik@towerhamlets.gov.uk for a password and instructions.

6.13 Parents should make their application online or by completing the paper application. They should name up to six maintained schools, ranked in order of preference. This can be for maintained schools in Tower Hamlets and across the London area.

(i) Siblings

If an older child is already attending the school and will still be in attendance when the younger child is due to start, then this information should be included on the form. Sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address

(ii) Supporting Information

Parents can give reasons why they wish their child to attend a particular school. If the child is in Public Care or there are strong social and/or medical reasons why the pupil should attend a particular school, parents and carers can apply for priority admission. They will need to submit supporting documentation from a doctor, social worker or similar professional with their application. Parents should submit this information with their application form, so that it is received by the closing date of the 31st October. Parents of out-borough pupils should submit this information to their home LA with their form.

- 6.14 **Supplementary forms:** Sir John Cass, Raine's and the Bishop Challoner schools require all parents to complete a supplementary form to provide additional information necessary to fully consider their application. Parents must complete their home LA application and the school's supplementary form when applying to any of these schools.

The supplementary form can only be obtained from the school and must be returned directly to the school. If the supplementary form is not completed this may affect the outcome of the application. It is imperative that parents complete application forms carefully and provide all required information. Schools will have limited opportunity to check the information provided.

Out-borough parents applying to any of the Tower Hamlets schools that use the Council's admission policy must complete the Tower Hamlets supplementary form, which is available from Pupil Services. Failure to complete and return the supplementary form to Pupil Services could mean that their application is given a lesser priority under the Council's admission policy. **A supplementary form on its own does not constitute an application.**

- 6.15 **Appointment with Primary Headteacher:** Parents can request an appointment with their primary Headteacher for advice and assistance. Primary Headteachers may themselves decide to offer personal interviews or group sessions. Parents can also be advised to contact Pupil Services for advice.
- 6.16 **Closing date:** Parents should return the completed application form to primary schools no later than Friday 24th October (half term). These should be forwarded to Pupil Services to be received by the closing date of **31st October** at the latest. The primary school may wish to keep a copy. Please date stamp any forms returned after the closing date without obscuring any information on the form. If parents complete their application online they must do so by 12 midnight on the 31st October.
- 6.17 **Changes to preferences / pupil information:** Any changes to the application, for example, change of address, or choice of secondary school must be notified to Pupil Services immediately, in writing. It may not be possible to make changes to an application if a request is received after the closing date. Changes to online applications can be made up until midnight on 31st October.

When decisions on applications are made this will be based on the most recently submitted or notified (and accepted) change.

- 6.18 **Late applications / entrants:** Applications received after the 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. Late applications will be given a lower priority and will be dealt with after all on time applications in the first round of offers are made. Where a school is oversubscribed late applications will be refused and placed on the waiting list in accordance with the admission criteria.

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. Late applications to out-borough schools will be subject to that LA's rule. Late applications cannot be submitted online.

6.19 **How applications are considered:** All applications to Tower Hamlets secondary schools will be considered simultaneously in accordance with each school's admission policy. Where applications are for own admission authority schools, information will be passed electronically through the PLR system to the school or maintaining LA. The ranked order of the parents' preferences will not be disclosed.

6.20 **Notifying schools of applications and decisions (See Timetable for exact dates)**

(i) December

Pupil Services will send details of applications received to own admission authority schools. The file will include details of out-borough applications. The school should check the applications against the supplementary forms that they receive direct from parents and notify Pupil Services of any discrepancies.

The Pupil Services Manager will send secondary head teachers a breakdown of the number of applications received for their school. Primary school heads will also receive listings of their pupils and the schools they have applied to. Primary schools should check the lists to see whether there are any pupils for whom applications are not recorded or where information is incorrect and notify Pupil Services.

(ii) January

Between November and January Pupil Services will process applications received for Tower Hamlets schools that use the Council's oversubscription criteria.

Own admission authority schools must return to Pupil Services the full list of all their applicants indicating those to be provisionally offered and refused places. The pupils to be refused places must be placed in ranked order. Schools **must** provide their lists in this format as it will enable Pupil Services to provide them with a definitive listing of their acceptances, refusals and withdrawals once the Pan London process is complete.

(iii) February

Pupil Services along with all the other LAs in the Pan London System will begin the process of exchanging the results of applications to determine, where possible, a single offer at the highest ranked school able to offer a place.

Pupil Services will notify primary and secondary schools of decisions. Primary schools will receive complete listings of offers, refusals and withdrawals. Community secondary schools will receive the details of pupils who will be offered places. This will include a statistical breakdown of applications and acceptances. **This information should remain confidential until after 2nd March when notification letters will be sent to parents.**

Pupil Services will also return the list of applicants for own admission authority confirming the pupils for whom offer or refusal letters should be sent. Pupils whose applications have been withdrawn (cancelled) because of an offer at a higher preference school will also be included, but there is no requirement for schools to write to the parents of these pupils.

6.21 **Notifying parents of decisions:** Parents in Tower Hamlets and the other Pan London LAs will be sent a letter on **2nd March** advising them of the outcome of their applications. Parents who have submitted online applications will receive an e-mail

after 5pm on 2nd March. If an application for a higher ranked school is unsuccessful the letter will tell parents how they can appeal against the decision to refuse a place. Those Tower Hamlets parents without the offer of any place will also be advised of the Tower Hamlets schools with vacancies that they can apply for.

For unsuccessful applications the letter will explain who parents should contact to obtain additional information on the reasons for refusal and, if necessary, how to request a place on the waiting list.

- 6.22 **Acceptance of Offers:** Immediately following the **offer day** secondary schools **must** write to parents to confirm the offer of a place and the school's admission arrangements. This letter must also include a requirement for parents to provide the school with documentation that gives proof of the child's date of birth and address.

Parents of pupils who are offered places at out-borough schools will be required to confirm their acceptance of a place by completing a confirmation slip and returning it to Tower Hamlets Pupil Services. Parents will also be required to provide proof of address at this stage.

- 6.23 **Unplaced pupils:** Parents of unplaced Tower Hamlets pupils will be advised of the schools that still have places so that they may make further applications. Information on vacancies will also be sent to primary schools so that they can advise parents.

Further applications together with the applications received after the October closing date will be considered in late March/ April and parents will be notified of the outcome by the end of April. Pupils for whom a place cannot be offered at the school(s) applied for, will have a place reserved at the nearest Tower Hamlets school with an appropriate vacancy.

By the end of April there should be no child for whom an application was submitted who does not have an offer of a school place.

- 6.24 **Waiting lists:** Pupils who are refused a place at any of the schools that use the Council's admission policy will automatically be placed on the waiting list.

From March until the end of August each school which uses the Local Authority's admission policy will have a separate waiting list for each band, which will be kept in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Late applicants will be added to the appropriate list. If a vacancy arises, it will be offered to the first applicant on the waiting list for that band. If a school cannot fill all the available places in a particular band, they will be filled by applicants from adjoining bands.

From September the waiting lists will be combined into one list which will be administered by Pupil Services. The waiting list arrangements for own admission authority and out-borough schools will be different. Parents should be advised to contact the individual schools for advice.

- 6.25 **Pupils in mainstream primary schools and special schools with an SEN statement or Education, Health and Care Plan:** The LA collects information from primary and special schools to confirm details of the pupils transferring, including any with statements of special educational needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and those undergoing assessment. Pupil Services will check this information against the records held by the SEN Team. Special schools should

include, in the secondary transfer cohort, all pupils for whom transfer to mainstream school is desirable and appropriate. These children should have been identified at the Year 5 annual review. Pupils who have been placed in a special school during assessment should also be included.

Tower Hamlets pupils with statements of SEN/EHCP will receive the **SEN Secondary Transfer Application Form and not the LA Application form** at the same time as other pupils transferring. The SEN transfer form will include details of the pupil's banding. Schools should send the model letter (Appendix F), along with the SEN Secondary Transfer Application Form, to all parents of children with a Statement or EHCP at their school.

The SEN Secondary Transfer form will ask parents to name three schools in order of preference. These can be for maintained mainstream schools in Tower Hamlets or across London.

Parents must return the form to their child's primary school for forwarding to the SEN Team by the 31st October closing date. Applications received after 31st October may be too late to be considered by the SEN Secondary Transfer Panel.

- 6.26 **Out-borough pupils with statements of SEN:** Parents of out-borough pupils should be advised to contact the SEN Team of the LA in which they live. The home LA will be able to advise parents about what they need to do and when - this is often earlier than in Tower Hamlets.

Secondary schools may receive consultations from other LAs prior to naming a school on the SEN statement of a pupil resident in that LA. Secondary schools are strongly advised to inform the Pupil Services Manager of all consultations received from other LAs to ensure the LA has this information. Once a school is named on the statement, the pupil must be admitted.

- 6.27 **SEN panel:** In November the SEN Panel will meet to consider the requests received from parents for schools to be named on their child's statement or Education, Health and Care Plan. Pupils whose parents have not completed the SEN transfer form will not be considered by the SEN Panel and a place will be allocated at the nearest available school. The Panel will comprise of officers from the SEN, Pupil Services, the Education Psychology Service and a secondary headteacher. Tower Hamlets has an inclusive education policy that aims to include every child in a local neighbourhood school. There is, however, no guarantee that the school most preferred will be named. This is because the LA seeks to ensure that pupils with statements do not, at secondary transfer time, become unduly concentrated in a few schools. If any school receives a large number of applications for pupils with statements, some of these may be refused. Where a parent has expressed a preference for more than one school to be named in their child's statement and the panel does not agree to name the school most preferred, consideration will be given to naming the other school(s).

- 6.28 **Consulting the secondary school:** In December the SEN Team will consult the relevant secondary schools before the LA decides whether or not to name the school in the statement. The purpose of the consultation is to ensure that a child's placement is:

- suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs;
- compatible with the efficient education of the children with whom the child would be educated, and or with the efficient use of resources.

The secondary school will have 15 days in which to respond with its views, if any, on the proposed placement. It is important that schools respond if there are any issues that need to be raised with the LA.

- 6.29 **Notifying schools of the decision:** Following consultation with the secondary school the LA will confirm with the school whether or not it is to be named in a child's statement. This decision will also be confirmed to Pupil Services who will notify the primary school in February along with the outcome of applications for the other pupils transferring.
- 6.30 **Notifying parents of the decision:** Pupil Services will notify parents of the outcome of their request for a school to be named by letter sent on **2nd March**. This is the same date that all other parents of children transferring receive decision letters. Parents whose requests are not successful will be advised of their right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal.
- 6.31 **Further Information and Guidance:** Reminders to this guidance will be issued at each point in the timetable via the Headteachers' Bulletin and direct to SAOs by e-mail.

7. GUIDANCE SPECIFIC TO IN-YEAR ADMISSION

7.1 The LA has a scheme for co-ordinating all in-year admission applications – admissions which take place outside of the normal points of entry. It provides for all applications for in-year admission to be processed centrally by Pupil Services. Community schools are not able to accept direct applications and own admission authority schools must ensure that applicants complete the Local Authority In-Year application form and notify Pupil Services immediately of every application they receive. The guidance below applies to all Tower Hamlets schools and incorporates the requirements of the local authority's Fair Access Protocol.

7.2 **Making In-Year Applications:**

(i) Application Form(s)

The in-year application forms have been provided to schools under separate cover. . The forms are colour coded with a symbol in the top right hand corner to easily distinguish them between primary and secondary. The yellow form with 'P' is for a primary school application and the green form with and 'S' is for secondary school application. Parents can obtain an in-year form from any school or direct from Pupil Services on Tel: 020 7364 5006.

(ii) Completing the form

Parents should see that all sections of the form are completed naming up to three schools in order of preference. This can be to schools in Tower Hamlets or out-of-Borough. The application form must be returned to Pupil Services. This can be direct to Pupil Services in the pre-paid envelopes provided or given to the school to forward on.

7.3 **Processing Applications:** Pupil Services will process the applications for all schools. When processing applications Pupil Services will, where possible, offer a place at the highest ranked school applied for. Any lower ranked applications will be withdrawn.

7.4 **Children out of School:** All applications received by Pupil Services will be logged on the central computer system within three days of receipt and an acknowledgement letter sent to the family.

(i) Stage 1

Community Schools - no application information will be passed to the school at this stage as the admission decision will be taken by Pupil Services. Pupil Services will however need to know a school's vacancy position in order to determine whether a place is available in the particular year group(s). Please see Section 4 – '*Maintaining School Vacancy Information*' below.

Own Admissions Authority/Out borough Schools - Where one or more of the schools named is for a own admission authority/out borough school then the application information will be passed to school/LA with a request for Pupil Services to be notified whether or not a place can be offered in accordance with the school's admissions criteria. Own admission authority schools must be able to respond within five working days and a response cannot be delayed for reasons such as the school's admission committee needing to meet. When own admission authority schools are passed information on applications received they will not be told where parents have ranked the school on the application from. (This is a statutory requirement of the

School Admissions Code.)

(ii) Stage 2

Within five days of the application:

- Pupil Services will determine whether there is a place available at the community school.
- the own admission authority school must notify Pupil Services of whether a place can be offered (where applicable).

Pupil Services will then determine the school at which a place can be offered.

NB. If applicable, the own admission authority school may need to be advised that an application has been cancelled due to a place being available at a higher ranked school.

(iii) Stage 3

Pupil Services will notify the school at which a place is to be offered by sending the details to the school via USO-FX, the LGfL secure file transfer facility. A separate e-mail will be sent to relevant school staff to alert them to the fact that a file is available to download. In some cases the file will contain details of more than one child, if a number of places have been offered at the school.

Within three days of notifying the school Pupil Services will then notify the parent of the outcome by letter. Where it has not been possible to offer a place at a higher ranked school and or any of the other schools named, the letter will advise of the right of appeal and of the school at which a place has been reserved for the child. This will normally be the nearest school with an available place.

(iv) Stage 4

The school should then make contact with the family and make the necessary arrangements for the child's admission. The file will advise the school of the 'enrol by date', the date by which the child should be admitted (normally be within 10 school days). Immediately after the 'enrol by' date the school should update the 'outcome' column and return the list to Pupil Services via the USO-FX. This will enable Pupil Services to be certain the child has started school.

- 7.5 **Transfers between schools:** When parents are seeking a transfer from one school to another, the same stages outlined above will be followed. However, the necessity for the child's current school to complete 'Part B' of the application form will ensure the school is aware that a transfer is being sought and give the school opportunity to review the parent's reasons for wanting a move. If necessary, the school should seek to resolve any issues and avert the disruption a transfer may cause to the child's education.

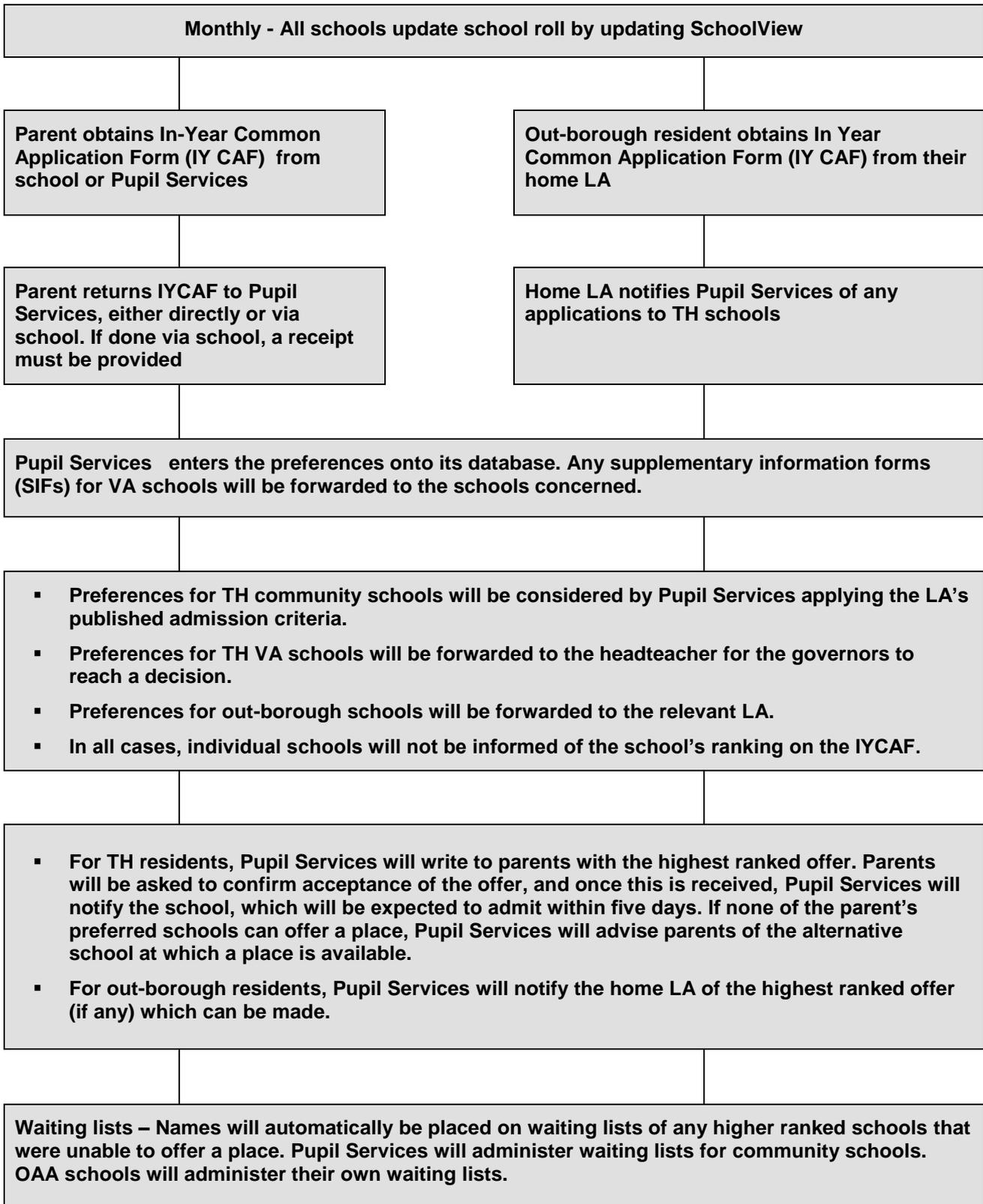
Where a transfer does go ahead, information contained within Part B of the application will ensure that proper arrangements can be put in place to support a pupil's admission to the new school. In some cases the LA may also require the completion of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) so that the child can be considered under its Fair Access Protocol. The LA will advise the child's current school when this is necessary.

- 7.6 **Transfer timetable:** Transfers between schools are timetabled and applications must

be made by the closing date, enabling the transfer to take place at the start of the following half term, if vacancies exist. The timetable for in-year transfers for the relevant school year is issued under separate cover. Transfers made after the closing date for a particular point of entry will be considered for the next point of entry. Pupil Services will decide if there are exceptional reasons for an early transfer to take place. Early transfer will always be allowed in circumstances where a child is in receipt of the LA school bus transport or where any delay would mean a parent having to undertake a difficult journey to more than one school. A child must not be removed from the roll of the current school until it is confirmed that they are enrolled at the new school.

- 7.7 **Where it is not possible to offer a place at the school(s) named:** Where the processes outlined above have been followed but it is not possible to offer a place at any of the parents' preferred schools, Pupil Services will, for a child out of school, allocate a place at a suitable school with a vacancy. Parents will also be advised of their right of appeal for any of the schools at which a place has not been offered. All appeals will be heard by an independent panel within 30 days of being lodged by the parent.
- 7.8 **Offer Letter:** The offer letter will inform parents that the child is able to be placed at one of the chosen schools and that the school will shortly write to confirm this. The offer will be subject to the parent providing acceptable proof to the school of the child's date of birth and address. Where parents do not provide proof of address as outlined in the 'General Guidance'. The child must not be admitted and Pupil Services informed immediately.
- 7.9 **Pupils not taking up places:** All schools must notify Pupil Services of any child for whom a place is offered, but it is not taken up. This will be followed up by Pupil Services and referred to the Attendance and Welfare Services as appropriate.
- 7.10 **Maintaining School Vacancy Information:** All schools are required to provide Pupil Services with a regular update of their vacancy position by updating the school's roll by year group on SchoolView. Schools need to ensure that their vacancy information is correct on SchoolView by the application closing date for each transfer period. Offers will be made to schools with the information provided on SchoolView on this date. Any changes to vacancy information after this point needs to be communicated to Pupil Services.
- 7.11 **Further Information and Guidance:** A flowchart on the In-Year admissions process is below. Reminders to this guidance will be issued at each point in the timetable via the Headteachers' Bulletin and direct to SAOs by e-mail.

IN-YEAR ADMISSION FLOWCHART



7.12 Fair Access Protocol

In keeping with the requirements of the School Admissions Code of Practice and Department for Education (DfE) Guidance, the Local Authority, in partnership with headteachers and other key stakeholders, has established a Fair Access Protocol (FAP) that enables schools to deal with the in-year admission of 'hard to place' pupils.

The detailed FAP guidance is provided to schools under separate cover, but the types of pupil admission that the protocol covers are set out below:

- Children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Unit who need to be reintegrated back into mainstream school (excluding where they were placed at the PRU on health grounds); (DfE Guidance)
- Children who have been out of school or education for two months or more (excluding health grounds) and all of the measures available have been utilised without improvement; (DfE Guidance)
- Children from an unsupportive/uncooperative family background for whom a school place has not been sought by the parent or guardian. (DfE Guidance)
- Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;* (DfE Guidance)
- Children who are homeless;* (DfE Guidance)
- Children who are carers; * (DfE Guidance)
- Children with special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions (but without a statement);* (DfE Guidance)
- Children who have been permanently excluded from a school;
- Children who are at risk of permanent exclusion;
- Children who are known to the police / YOT or social care where there have been difficulties in engaging with education; SIP Referrals where there are serious multi-agency concerns
- Children moving into Tower Hamlets with less than 60% attendance and a deteriorating pattern of absence over the previous two terms at their last school;
- Children moving into Tower Hamlets (or from an independent school) who have a history of serious behaviour difficulties as evidenced by a long term pattern of internal and external exclusion.

** These vulnerable groups are not necessarily "hard to place" and to label them as such could be seen as discriminatory. Such groups do however, need special consideration but should only be considered for placement through FAP if they also fall within one of the other criteria listed.*

Schools can seek additional resource and specialist LA support when the admitting pupils who fall under the above categories. This is explained in the separate guidance on the Fair Access Protocol.

8. GUIDANCE ON THE ADMISSION OF CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

- 8.1 This section of the guidance deals with the admission of children who have special needs, but do not have a Statement of Special Education Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan, and do not fall under any of the FAP categories above.
- 8.2 Children with complex needs (i.e. special needs, disabilities or medical conditions) are not necessarily "hard to place" and to label them as such would be discriminatory. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against children with a disability in a range of circumstances, including admission to school. The Equalities Act dovetails with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice; which is based on the separate definition of special educational needs
- 8.3 A child's disability and or complex needs should not be viewed as a basis to refuse their admission to school. A school **must** therefore make suitable accommodation and reasonable adjustment to first admit the child and then meet the child's particular needs using their delegated budget for SEN if necessary. Pupil Services will support the school with access to advice and expertise.
- 8.4 The application procedure for the admission of a child with complex needs is the same as with the normal admission arrangements. In cases where a child's additional needs are indicated on the admission application form, the parents are contacted by Pupil Services to ascertain the extent of the child's needs. This information is then assessed by a specialist teacher from the Support for Learning Service who works on behalf of Pupil Services. The specialist teacher may then visit the family at home to meet the child and also complete a CAF (Common Assessment Framework). Following this initial assessment it may sometimes be necessary for Pupil Services to liaise with other agencies so that arrangements are in place to support the child and family, both with admission to the school and any ongoing assessment or support that may be required.
- 8.5 In some cases it may not be until after the child has been offered a place and the family arrive at the school for the admission meeting that the child's additional needs become apparent. This is often in cases where the family have arrived from overseas and, in particular, where medical diagnoses of the child's needs are not clear. In this case the school should obtain as much information as possible, ideally using the CAF format, and inform Pupil Services immediately. Pupil Services will use the information to review the application, with input from the Local Authority's SEN team and or other specialist agencies, to ensure the school is supported to provide the pupil with education until further assessment about their long term needs is completed.
- 8.6 Where it is established that a child will need ongoing assessment and planning to support their school placement, this should not delay their admission. The school is therefore still expected to admit the child promptly and irrespective of when an assessment is planned, **even when there is strong opinion that a child may eventually require placement in a specialist provision**. This is because the LA will first need to gather evidence from the school on the child's ability to function in a mainstream setting on which to base a decision on a child's statutory assessment. It follows therefore that some children will need to be placed in a mainstream school for at least a short time until the LA can properly assess the child's needs and establish whether or not a place will be required in specialist provision.

- 8.7 Once a child is admitted the school's SENCo should work with the family to facilitate ongoing assessment as appropriate and also discuss the case with the school's Educational Psychologist. The Tower Hamlets SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (Parents Advice Centre) Tel: 020 7364 6489 can assist in supporting parental participation. The school can then make a request for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessment) and this request could include a request for additional funding and until the assessment is completed. This is called Provision During Assessment.

9. GUIDANCE SPECIFIC TO 6th FORM ADMISSION

- 9.1 **Application form:** There is not a Common Application Form for entry to 6th form. Applications are made direct to the school by the student. Students already in Year 11 of the school will receive information about courses available and minimum entry requirements. All 6th forms can admit external students (i.e. those entering the school for the first time in Year 12) as well as those progressing from Year 11. External students can obtain further information direct from the school.
- 9.2 All applications must be made direct to the school, not through Pupil Services. The deadline for submitting applications must be advised in the timetable set out in the school's prospectus.
- 9.3 Schools must notify students of the outcome of their application on 31st March (subject to consultation) or the Monday immediately following this date if it falls on a weekend.
- 9.4 **Minimum entry requirements (subject to consultation):**
- Level 3 (Advanced level): 5+ A* - C grades at GCSE, including English or maths
 - Level 2: Minimum 4 D grades at GCSE, including English or maths at E or above (BTec / NVQ / Diploma): 5+ C and D pass grades at GCSE
 - Level 1: No entry requirements as such, but some requirements specific to individual courses

These are the minimum entry requirements. There are further requirements specific to individual courses. Students can obtain details direct from schools.

In the event that a 6th form receives more applications than places available (from students meeting the minimum entry requirements for their preferred course), priority will be given to those students living closest to the 6th form as measured by the shortest walking route.

- 9.5 Students refused admission to 6th form must be advised by the school in writing of the reason for the decision *and notified of their right of appeal to an independent panel.* See General Guidance above.
- 9.6 **Further Information and Guidance:** Reminders to this guidance will be issued at each point in the timetable via the Headteachers' Bulletin and direct to SAOs by e-mail.

10. DATA BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND PUPIL SERVICES

10.1 Files containing personal details about pupils must only be exchanged in a manner which is considered to be secure, i.e. via LGfL (USO-FX) or S2S. All schools have access to these systems.

10.2 All schools are required to provide Pupil Services with a regular update of their vacancy position by updating SchoolView. SchoolView will reduce the obvious administrative burden on schools and is compatible with existing school management systems. Instructions for school on how to do this is provided under separate cover. Further advice can also be sought from the Children Information Systems Team on 020 7364 5239.

11. PUPIL SERVICES TEAM (WHO'S WHO)

BRYAN	Terry	Head of Pupil Services	020-7364-4304
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Location:

Full address	4 th Floor, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG
Telephone	020-7364-5006
Fax	020-7364-4311
Email:	schooladmissions@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Description of Service:

- The admission of children into nursery, primary and secondary schools
- Primary Co-ordinated Admissions (reception)
- Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions (secondary transfer)
- In – Year Co-ordinated admissions to Tower Hamlets and out-borough Schools
- Appeals against refusals of places at community and voluntary controlled schools
- Exclusions from school – advice to parents and schools
- Fair Access Protocol (including 6th day provision, managed moves and reintegration of permanently excluded pupils)
- Home to school travel passes
- Home education
- Child employment – child work permits and licences, Chaperone licences
- Applications for arts and boarding school placements

Contacts:

Surname	Forename	Area of responsibility	Direct Line
BASIT	Runa	Pupil Services Manager	020 7364 4306
MACK	Kelly	Secondary Admissions Operations Manager Secondary Co-ordination (Secondary Transfer) and Appeals	020 7364 5860
AHMAD	Adam	Primary Admissions Operations Manager (Primary)	020 7364 4606
ALI	Yasmin	Lead Officer (In-Year Admission)	020 7364 3439
MALIK	Mohammed	Lead Officer (Secondary Transfer)	020 7364 4308
JOHN-BAPTISTE	Serena	Pupil Exclusions and Access Officer (Exclusions, FAP Monitoring, Child Employment and Chaperone Licences)	020 7364 6150
LE	Huong	Finance and Data Manager	020 7364 4301
ALI	Yasmin	Lead Officer (Primary Co-ordination)	020-7364 4413
WAHR	Rekia	Admissions Officer (Primary Co-ordination)	020 7364 4412
BEGUM	Naheeda	Admissions Assistant (Primary Co-ordination)	020 7364 4308

HABIB	Ahsan	Admissions Assistant (In-Year admission and Home Education)	020 7364 4435
HUSSAIN	Hasina	Exclusions Admin Officer	020 7364 0727
AKBAR	Ali	Travel Assistant	020 7364 4435
AHMED	Shorif	Admin Assistant	020 7364 4419
CHOUDHURY	Rezaur	Admin Assistant	020 7364 1014

Appendix A

SCHOOL ADMISSION TEAMS IN LONDON

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham London Road Barking IG11 8BB Phone: 020 8227 3032/5484	London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Education Department Hammersmith Town Hall King Street London W6 9JU Phone: 020 8753 2627/3625	London Borough of Merton 10th Floor, Civic Centre London Road Morden SM4 5DX Phone: 020 8545 3262
London Borough of Barnet 1st Floor Building 4 North London Business Park Oakleigh Road South N11 1NP Phone: 020 8359 7651/	Haringey Education Authority 48 Station Road Wood Green London N22 7TR Phone: 020 8489 3162/3338	London Borough of Newham Broadway House 322 High Street, Stratford, London E15 1AJ Phone: 020 8430 2000 Ext.35789
Bexley Council Directorate of Education and Community Services, Hill View Drive Welling DA16 3RY Phone: 020 8303 7777 ext 4427 (0208 8368230)	Harrow Council PO Box 22, Civic Centre Harrow Middx HA1 2UW Phone: 020 8424 1680	London Borough of Redbridge 255-259 High Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 1NN Phone: 020 8708 3139/3140/3129
Brent Education Authority Chesterfield House, 9 Park Lane Wembley Middlesex HA9 7RW Phone: 0208 937 3000	London Borough of Havering Education Service Scimitar House, 23 Eastern Road, Romford, Essex RM1 3NH Phone: 01708 434284	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Regal House, First Floor, London Road, Twickenham TW1 3QB Phone: 020 8891 7514
Camden Education Authority Crowndale Centre 218-220 Eversholt Street London NW1 1BD Phone: 020 7974 1536/1625	London Borough of Hillingdon Civic Centre 4E/09, Uxbridge, Middx UB8 1UW Phone: 01895 556644	London Borough of Southwark John Smith House 144-152 Walworth Road London SE17 1JL Phone: 020 7525 2910/5337
Corporation of London Education Service Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ Phone: 020 7332 3998	London Borough of Hounslow LLLCS Civic Centre Lampton Road, Hounslow TW3 4DN Phone: 020 8583 2649/2652	London Borough of Sutton The Grove Carshalton Surrey SM5 3AL Phone: 020 8770 6652/6080
Croydon Council Education Department 2 nd Floor, South West Corner Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon C09 1PP Phone: 020 8760 5453	Islington Director of Children's Services 222 Upper Street London N1 1XR Phone: 020 7527 5661/5836	London Borough of Waltham Forest - EduAction Municipal Offices High Road, Leyton E10 6QE Phone: 020 8496 5026

Ealing Council Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road London W5 2HL Phone: 020 8825 5151/5511	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Family and Children's Services 247, Town Hall Hornton Street London W8 7NX Phone: 0207 361 3009	Wandsworth Council Town Hall, Wandsworth High Street London SW18 2PU Phone: 020 8871 8028
London Borough of Enfield PO Box 56 Civic Centre Silver Street, Enfield EN1 3XY Phone: 020 8379 5501	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Guildhall 2, Kingston upon Thames Surrey KT11EU Phone: 020 8547 4610	Westminster Education School Admissions Team 1st Floor, 215 Lisson Grove London NW8 8LF 020 7641 1816/1817
London Borough of Greenwich Riverside House, 9th Floor Woolwich High Street Woolwich London SE18 6DF Phone: 020 8921 8133/8043	London Borough of Lambeth 4th Floor International House Canterbury Crescent SW9 7QE Phone: 020 7926 9827	
Hackney Education Authority The Learning Trust (Hackney) 1 Reading Lane London E8 1GQ Phone: 020 8820 7000/7197	London Borough of Lewisham 3rd Floor, Laurence House 1 Catford Road, SE6 4RU Phone: 020 8314 6212/ 8282	

Appendix B

Admission Criteria for Community Nursery Schools and Classes 2015/16

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Nursery education is provided in a range of settings in Tower Hamlets. This policy is for nursery education provided in community schools. Children will normally attend either a nursery school or a nursery class attached to a primary school. Some schools provide nursery education in an Early Years Unit attached to their school (EYU). The EYUs accept children aged from three to five years inclusive. All of these schools offer a mixture of part time places (either a morning or an afternoon); and full time places.
- 1.2 In this policy the term 'school' refers to a nursery school, a nursery class attached to a primary school or a school with an EYU.

2. Nursery Entitlement

- 2.1 All children aged three and four are entitled to 15 hours a week free nursery education during school term times (38 weeks a year), from the term following their third birthday.
- 2.2 Parents considering sending their child to a playgroup as well as a nursery class may wish to think about what impact this would have on their child and how they would cope with the two environments. The adjustment is often very demanding and confusing for children of this age and much of the benefit from either setting could be lost. Once children take up a nursery place, it is in their interests to remain at that school until they have to move on. Children take at least a term to settle and can find it very upsetting to move at this stage. Transfers are only considered if a family has moved from the area or on exceptional grounds.

3. Age of Admission to a Nursery School/Class

- 3.1 Parents who would like a nursery place for their child should get in touch with the preferred school when the child reaches the age of two.
- 3.2 The actual age at which a child can start will depend on the number of places available but will not be before the term after they turn three. In exceptional circumstances a child may start in the term they turn three but this will need agreement from the Local Authority.

4. Applying for a Place

- 4.3 Applications can be made by parents or carers with parental responsibilities who are residents of Tower Hamlets and professionals with parents' agreement. Application forms are available from schools, nurseries and children centres.
- 4.4 The closing date for applications is **15th January 2015** and the date on which families are sent notification of the outcome is **8th May 2015**.
- 4.5 Further information on the nursery schools and classes and how to apply for a place is set out in the Local Authority's school admissions booklet, 'Starting School in Tower Hamlets'.

5. How Decisions are Made

- 5.1 Individual schools will make decisions on applications for nursery places in accordance with the criteria and arrangements set out below. Children who attend a school's nursery class do not have priority for admission to the reception year as decisions on primary school admissions are taken separately.

6. Oversubscription Criteria

- 6.1 If a community school receives more nursery applications than places available the decision on whether or not a place can be offered will be made in accordance with the admission criteria set out in priority order below:
1. Children looked after by local authority, previously looked after children who left care under a residence or special guardianship order, or those adopted from local authority care
 2. Children for whom it is deemed there is strong educational, 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 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.

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.

Note 1: 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 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.

Note 3: A digitised Ordnance Survey map is used to measure the distance from the home address to the school's designated official entrance.

Note 4: Private, independent, academy and voluntary aided school nurseries have their own admission policy.

Note 5: Tie- Break - If a school receives more applications for children in the catchment area than there are places available, the 'tie-break' used gives priority to children who live closest to the school measured by the shortest walking distance. This reduces the possibility of a family having to undertake an unreasonable school journey and equal opportunity for families living in areas where there are a limited number of schools.

7. Catchment Area

- 7.1 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 designed to ensure that each address in the borough falls into the catchment area of a local school. Details of 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>.

8. Full and Part-Time Places

- 8.1 Once places are offered, children are then allocated full-time or part-time places. This is done in accordance to the following list of priority:

Priority 1	Children with Special Educational or Complex Needs
Priority 2	Children looked after by the local authority, previously looked after children who left care under a residence or special guardianship order, or those adopted from local authority care
Priority 3	Children for whom it is deemed there is strong medical or social reason, for the school they are applying to.
Priority 4	Children of working parents or parents who are studying.

- 8.2 It is important that the Common Application Form is completed and all relevant information is provided to support your child's application. The information on the form will not only determine admission to the school; it will also help decide whether your child is offered a full-time or part-time place.

9. Late Applications

- 9.1 Applications received after the 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. Late applications will be given a lower priority and will be dealt with after all on time applications in the first round of offers are made. Where a school is oversubscribed late applications will be refused and placed on the waiting list in accordance with the admission criteria.
- 9.2 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.

10. Waiting List

- 10.1 There is no requirement for schools to maintain a waiting list, however if schools are going to maintain a list then this should be kept in line with the Admissions Policy. Any vacancy should be filled with the child at the top of the waiting list and must not be on a first-come-first-serve basis

11. Twins and Multiple Births

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 school 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 school 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.

12. Parents wishing to make representation about nursery decisions

- 12.1 Parents who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the nursery application should contact the headteacher of the school in the first instance. If they remain dissatisfied then they should contact the Pupil Services Manager.

Appendix C

Admission Criteria for Community Primary Schools

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 by the local authority, previously looked after children who left care under a residence or special guardianship order, or those adopted from local authority care 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 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:** 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 2013/14 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 designed to ensure that each address in the borough falls into the catchment area of 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 2010 and 31 August 2011 start primary school in Reception in the school year beginning in September 2015. 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 Parents who choose to defer entry should know that their child would then 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 [here](#).
- 6.2 The closing date for applications is the **15 January 2015** and the date on which families are sent notification of the outcome is the **16 April 2015**.

7. Late Applications

- 7.1 Applications received after the 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. Late applications will be given a lower priority and will be dealt with after all on time applications in the first round of offers are made. 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 Pupil Services 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.

Appendix D

Admission Criteria for Community Secondary Schools

(Central Foundation Girls School, George Greens School and Bethnal Green Academy)

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 an extensive 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. The place will be provided in the appropriate band. Sometimes there are particular reasons why the Local Authority is unable to do so. (See note 1).
- 2.1 A quarter of the total places available at these schools are then allocated to each of the four bands. If any of these are oversubscribed in any band, the admission criteria below will be used (in descending order of priority) to allocate places:
 - 1) Children looked after by the local authority, previously looked after children who have left care under a special arrangements (residence) or special guardianship order, or those adopted from local authority care (See note 2).
 - 2) Pupils who have a strong medical or social reason to attend the school applied to. 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. (See note 3).
 - 3) Pupils living nearest the school who are the first born of their sex in the case of a single sex school, or the eldest child in the case of a mixed school. The number of children admitted under this category will reflect 25% of the intake of the school in each band.
 - 4) Pupils who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of admission. (See note 4).
 - 5) Pupils who live nearest to the school by the shortest walking route. (See note 5).
- 2.2 In categories 3, 4 and 5 above, a higher priority will be given to pupils who live in the priority geographical areas of south Wapping or west Bethnal Green applying to one of the designated schools. (See 'Priority Areas' below).

2.3 **Note 1:** Parents of children with a statement of special educational need or education, health and care plan should note that Tower Hamlets LA seeks to ensure that pupils with statements do not, at secondary transfer time, become unduly concentrated in a few schools. Experience indicates that this can compromise the efficient education of children and the efficient use of resources. This means that if any particular school receives a large number of applications for pupils with statements, some of these may be refused. All applications for pupils with statements or education, health and care plans will be considered by the Special Educational Needs Panel.

Note 2: Confirmation of a child's looked after status will be required.

Note 3: Applications under this category are considered by the Primary to Secondary Transfer Committee, comprising a Headteacher, a senior member of the Attendance and Welfare Service and a medical professional. The Committee will decide whether the application should be given priority under this category.

Note 4: Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address. The address used should be the one that the child usually lives at and attends school from.

Note 5: Home to school distances will be measured by the shortest walking route from the home address to the nearest available pupil entrance in constant use to the school, using a computerised digitised map.

3. Priority Areas

- 3.1 The south Wapping priority area is the area south of Cable Street and Royal Mint Street, west of Butcher Row, north of the Thames and east of Mansell Street and Tower Bridge Approach. Children living in this area will have priority for admission to the designated schools, which are Mulberry and Stepney Green.
- 3.2 The west Bethnal Green priority area is the area south of Quaker Street, west of Brick Lane, north of Whitechapel High Street and east of Middlesex Street. Children living in this area will have priority for admission to the designated school, which is Swanlea.

4. Exceptional Medical or Social Reasons

- 4.1 Where there is a very strong medical or social reason for attending a particular school priority may be given for admission. Parents must complete the relevant section on the transfer form and attach medical and/or social reports signed by a doctor or social worker to the form. These reports must be received by the closing date on 31st October 2014. The application will be considered by the Primary / Secondary Transfer Committee.

5. Confirmation of Address

- 5.1 Parents may be required to provide acceptable independent proof of their child's address. They must make sure that the application form they complete is accurate and to contact Pupil Services or tell their child's headteacher if there are relevant changes after it is submitted. Places may be withdrawn if false information is entered on the application form. Parents who do not provide evidence of their child's address as requested, or provide conflicting or inconclusive information, may have the place withdrawn, even if it has already been accepted. When parents live separately, the address used should be the one that their child usually lives at and attends school from. If a child lives equally with both parents at different addresses, it is the parents' responsibility to make this clear on the application form. Parents may be asked to provide acceptable proof that this is the case.

6. Siblings in the same year group transferring

Where two or more siblings are in the same year group (e.g. twins), and it is the parent's wish that the siblings should attend the same school, if one sibling can be offered a place at a school, the other will automatically be offered so as not to separate them.

7. Changing Preferences

- 7.1 Parents and carers may not change their preferences unless there is exceptional and genuine reasons for doing so, for example, change of address. Requests to change preferences must be made in writing giving the full reasons.

Appendix E

Letter to Out-Borough Residents

To Parents of Year 6 Pupils in
Tower Hamlets Primary Schools
living in other boroughs

September

Dear Parent,

Transfer from Primary to Secondary School – applying to Tower Hamlets schools

As you do not live in the borough of Tower Hamlets you must use the secondary transfer application form provided by your home borough. You can get a copy by contacting the School Admissions Team in your local council. A list of the addresses and telephone numbers for all the London boroughs is enclosed. Alternatively you can apply online by visiting www.eadmissions.org.uk.

You must complete the application form and return it to your home borough by 31st October, **even if you are applying to schools in Tower Hamlets**. You can apply for six maintained schools and you should name the schools in your preferred order. If any of your applications are to Tower Hamlets schools you must also complete additional forms. These are known as 'supplementary forms' and can be obtained as follows:-

Sir John Cass, Raine's and Bishop Challoner Boys' and Girls' Schools – contact these schools for their supplementary forms. Once completed, please return the form direct to the school by the closing date.

The supplementary form **for all other Tower Hamlets Schools** is enclosed with this letter. This form must be returned to Pupil Services by **31st October**.

Do remember to complete your home borough's application form and the supplementary form. If you do not complete **both** forms, your applications to Tower Hamlets schools cannot be fully considered and may reduce the chances of a place being offered.

If you need further advice, please contact Pupil Services on tel: 020 7364 5006 or read the information in our brochure, 'Ready for Secondary School in Tower Hamlets', that was sent to you earlier this term.

Yours faithfully,

Pupil Services Manager

Letter to Parents of SEN Statemented Pupils

To Parents of Tower Hamlets
Year 6 Pupils with a Statement
of Special Educational Needs

September

Secondary Transfer September 2015

Dear Parents

As you know, your child who has a Statement of Special Educational Needs is due to transfer to secondary school in September 2015.

I am writing to tell you of the special arrangements that apply to children with statements.

Parents of a child with a statement of special educational needs have the right to ask the Local Authority to name their preferred school in their child's statement. To request that we name a particular school (either mainstream or special) at secondary transfer, you must return the attached form to your child's primary school by **FRIDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2014**.

If you do not request a school to be named, your child will be allocated a place at the nearest secondary school with a vacancy.

In order to make the secondary transfer process as fair as possible, all requests for secondary school places will be considered at a special meeting of the SEN panel. It is therefore very important that you return your form on time.

You can ask for 3 schools to be consulted in order of preference. If the LA does not agree to name the school you most prefer, consideration will be given to naming one of the other schools. However, you are not guaranteed a place at the schools you request to be named. If you request just the one school, and a place cannot be allocated to your child, the panel will name the nearest suitable school with a vacancy.

If your child attends a special school with a secondary department, you should still return the form indicating that you wish your child to remain at his/her current school. In this case, you do not need to make three choices.

Please also note that transport to secondary schools is only provided in exceptional circumstances, and any requests will be considered individually by the SEN panel. Transport is not automatically provided to children with statements and you will need to explain why you are not able to take your child

to school yourself. Your child will then be assessed by the Independent Travel Training Team to ascertain whether they would benefit from training. When choosing your preferred school(s), please take into consideration the transport arrangements you will need to make for your child. If you have any queries about transport, we recommend that you speak to the SEN Section before making your choice so as to make an informed decision.

Finally, it is exceptionally difficult to change the school named in a statement once it has been finalised; if you change your mind it may result in another child losing a place at their preferred school. We urge you to consider your choice of school very carefully so as to avoid any difficulties of this kind. Where circumstances are beyond your control, e.g. if you move house, we will do our best to accommodate changes after the statement has been finalised.

Further information about the secondary transfer process can be found in the booklet entitled "Ready for Secondary School in Tower Hamlets 2015" a copy of which is enclosed.

Please complete the secondary transfer form that you receive from your child's primary school, and return it to the SENCo or Head Teacher by 24th October 2014.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Bailey
Head of SEN
Special Educational Needs Section

Appendix G

Reminder letter from own admissions authority Schools to Parents who completed SIF but not the Common Application Form

To Parents of Reception age children

January/February

Dear Parent,

Reminder Letter to Parents to complete the Common Application Form

All parents were required to complete the Local Authority's s Common Application Form (CAF) and return to the Local Authority's Pupil Services Department by the closing date of 15th January; in order for their application for a reception place to be considered.

The school's supplementary information form (SIF) is used to enable the school to determine a child's admission under its faith criteria. Parents must complete both the SIF and CAF for their application to be complete.

As you have completed the SIF, you are being given the further opportunity to complete the enclosed CAF and return it to Pupil Services by **12th February 2015**, at the following address: Pupil Services, 4th Floor, Mulberry Place, and 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG. Failure to complete the CAF and return by this date will mean that your application is not complete and your child will not be considered as an on-time applicant. This may result with your child not being offered a place at *[insert: school name]*.

Please contact the school on *[insert: school contact number]* or the Local Authority on 020 7364 5006 for more information.

Yours faithfully,

[Insert: name]
School Admission Officer