



## **PROPOSED VARIATION TO NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR 2014-2015 AND 2015-2016**

### **Determined admission arrangements**

Nottinghamshire County Council determined admission arrangements on:

- 11 March 2013 for admission during 2014-2015
- 17 March 2014 for admission during 2015-2016

These arrangements are available at [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions).

### **Waiting lists**

In line with the School Admissions Code 2012 (2.14) Nottinghamshire County Council maintains a clear, fair and objective waiting list for the first term of the academic year of admission for intake groups (up to 31 December). Waiting lists must be held in admission oversubscription criteria order.

Neighbouring local authorities and some own admission authority schools in Nottinghamshire hold all-year round waiting lists. Whilst being on a waiting list does not guarantee that a place will eventually become available, it does ensure that places are always allocated according to the admission oversubscription criteria, if a child leaves during the year and a place is subsequently made available.

For Nottinghamshire community and voluntary controlled schools waiting lists are not held at any other time. Therefore, if parents apply for a place in an intake year group after 1 September, the application is processed as an in-year application. If the school is oversubscribed, the child's name is added to the intake waiting list until 31 December.

After 31 December, waiting lists for community and voluntary controlled schools cease to exist and applications received after this date are processed as in-year applications but there are no waiting lists.

This means that:

- If a place becomes available at the beginning of December at an oversubscribed school, the place is offered to the child with highest priority on the waiting list.
- If a place becomes available in January (after the waiting list has ceased to exist), the place remains vacant until a further application is received. This could be a new application where the child has never been on the waiting list or has recently moved into the district.

Parents often perceive this to be unfair, particularly if they have been first on a waiting list for several months. Consequently, some parents submit repeat applications for the same school in the same school year, hoping that a place will become available. As outlined in the Admissions to schools: guide for parents, repeat applications will not be considered unless there has been a significant and material change in the circumstance of the parent or the school.

All Nottinghamshire children have an offer of a school place. For intake rounds for admission in September 2014, there are currently 1542 preferences on waiting lists for community and voluntary controlled schools – which equates to approximately 500 children. This is subject to change due to appeals and further late applications being received during the year. For in-year applications during the 2013 admission round, 1502 preferences were refused for community and voluntary controlled schools in year groups reception through to current year 4 – again this would equate to approximately 500 children. These figures will also include non-Nottinghamshire residents.

## **Proposed variation to determined admission arrangements**

The Place Planning and Admissions Board at its meeting on 18 March 2014 considered the issue of waiting lists. The Board supported the proposed change to admission arrangements.

Nottinghamshire County Council consulted on a proposal to change existing admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools within Nottinghamshire to extend the waiting list period to an all-year round waiting list for all primary year groups (with the exception of year 6). These arrangements apply to pupils who will be starting school for the first time and pupils transferring school during the school year 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. The consultation period was 27 May 2014 to 27 June 2014.

## **Outcome of consultation**

All responses received by 27 June 2014 were considered. The responses received were in support of the proposal to seek a variation from the Schools Adjudicator in respect of determined admission arrangements for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed change to all year round waiting lists would benefit Nottinghamshire families for the following reasons:

- If a place becomes available during the year, it will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list. The parent can then decide whether to accept the place and move the child, or decline the place and let the child remain at the current school.
- The allocation of places in year will be in accordance with the admission oversubscription criteria rather than being dependent on the timing of an application and the availability of a school place. It will be easier for parents to understand how places are allocated throughout the year.
- Parents will no longer need to make repeat applications for the same school in the same school year.

The proposed change will not affect the right to an independent appeal if an application is refused.

Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, will continue to take precedence over those on a waiting list.