

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 000925
Date 1 March 2017

School Admission Criteria

Request:

I would be grateful if you could explain why Wolverhampton council ranks siblings already attending the school as the second most important factor, when considering school admissions.

To be specific, in your response can you please list the outcomes/benefits that the council believes are achieved by ensuring siblings are educated at the same school location and therefore give merit to the importance played on this above other factors?

In accordance with paragraph 1.6 of The School Admissions Code, the admission authority must set out in their admission arrangements the criteria against which places will be allocated at the school when there are more applications than places and the order in which criteria must be applied.

It is for admission authorities to formulate their admission arrangements but they must not include any of the points listed in paragraph 1.9 of The School Admissions Code. In addition all children whose statement of special education needs or Education, Health and care plan that names the school must be admitted.

For the avoidance of any doubt the oversubscription criteria is detailed below. This confirms that siblings are not ranked as the second most important factor as stated in the request. Furthermore, by allocating siblings to the same school this can help negate any issues regarding attendance and lateness that results in an extra strain on resources for schools and parents.

1. Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

Priority will be given to a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority or a child who has been adopted (or is subject to a residence order or special guardianship order) immediately following being in the care of a Local Authority.

Supporting Evidence

If the child is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority this must be indicated on the common application form and evidence (e.g. evidence of child in care from the placement authority) to support this claim must be submitted with the preference form.

If the child has previously been in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them and has subsequently been adopted, or is subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order this must be indicated on the common application form and evidence (e.g. adoption certificate/copy of court order) to support this claim must be submitted with the common application form.

2. Children who are attending the corresponding Infant School (Infant to Junior transfers only)

3. Medical/Social

Whether there are specific medical or social circumstances that can be met only by the child's attendance at the preferred school.

Supporting Evidence

If parents believe there are specific reasons, medical or social, for claiming priority for their child to attend a particular school these special factors must be indicated on the form and evidence (e.g. a letter from a registered health professional such as a doctor or a social worker) to support this claim must be submitted with the common application form. The information submitted must state clearly the effects of the condition/illness and why the preferred school is the **only** school that can meet their child's needs. This is necessary because parents would be asking the Authority to assess their child as having a stronger case than many other children, even some who live closer to the school in question than they do. The information provided will be used to prioritise the request for a particular school. Please note that only in exceptional cases are places prioritised in respect of a child's/parent's medical/social grounds.

4. Siblings

Whether siblings attend the school (or the associated Infant/Junior School) and will still be attending the school in September 2017.

5. Religious Reasons for voluntary controlled schools (PRIMARY ONLY)

To a child and family who has religious reasons for attending the preferred voluntary controlled school and for whom it can be demonstrated by the faith leader that s/he has current strong religious connections. This reason will **only** be taken into consideration if the preferred school is the nearest Church of England (voluntary controlled or voluntary aided) school to the child's home address (measured by a straight line from the home address to the school).

Supporting Evidence

A Supporting Evidence form will be provided for parents and your faith leader to complete, to enable them to demonstrate your child and family's current strong religious connections.

6. Distance

How close the child lives to the school requested with those living closest to the school getting the highest priority. The measurement between home and school will be determined by the straight line measurement from the home address to the preferred school carried out by the LA's software.