
Managing Primary Admissions 2012

3 November - 8 November 2011



Thank you

The Primary Admissions Team would like to thank all primary schools for their assistance and support throughout the year.



2011 Statistics

(2010 statistics in brackets)

Year R cohort

16,250 (14,920) pupils held on the LA database (this does not include late applicants and those offered a place after the closing of the scheme)

This is an increase of 1330 children across the County

Preferences

95.18% (95.77%) of pupils on the LA database were offered a place at one of their named schools.

85.95% (87.92%) of pupils on the LA database got their first preference.

565 children, who were not offered one of their preferences were allocated places at alternative schools

Appeals

761 (800) appeals were lodged by parents.

627 (700) appeals were heard by an Independent Appeal Panel for places at community schools and voluntary controlled schools.

During this time 99 appeals were also lodged for casual admissions and 70 appeals were heard by an Independent Appeal Panel.

This makes a total of **860** appeals lodged and **697** appeals were heard from 23 May to 25 August

2011 Statistics

(2010 statistics in brackets)

Year 3 cohort

2572 (2456) pupils – a rise of 116 across the County

Preferences

98.74% (98.99%) of pupils were offered a place at one of their named schools.

96.65% (98.53%) of pupils got their first preference.

32 children who were not offered one of their preferences were allocated a place at an alternative junior school.

Appeals

15 (21) appeals were heard by an independent panel for a place at a community or voluntary controlled school.

2011 Reallocation

There were 3 reallocations that took place on 16 May, 20 June and 22 July

The LA reallocated the following number of children

16 May 543 offers

20 June 564 offers

22 July 485 offers

After 22 July all allocations were made as In Year Casual Admissions. Of these 1592 offers, 147 were further reallocations.

Admissions to Primary School September 2012

The scheme to co-ordinate admissions to Kent Primary Schools including In Year admissions was agreed by all admissions authorities and all Kent schools were notified in April 2011 via Kent Schools e-bulletin. It is also available to view on Knet

For Voluntary Controlled schools, the denominational criterion 'tick box' has been removed from their oversubscription criteria and will not be used to rank children when offering places.

It is important for all voluntary controlled and community schools to check the contents of their websites so that they reflect the determined admissions arrangements on Knet.

The scheme for 2013 will be consulted on shortly.

School Admissions Code

3.6 For admissions to schools in the academic year 2011 – 2012 onwards, Local Authorities must formulate schemes for co-ordinating all applications to maintained schools and academies from parents in their area, whenever received, and for whichever age group, under one scheme.

It has proved impossible for the LA to do this whilst meeting other obligations defined in the code. The LA could not offer places from waiting lists as soon as they became available for 550 schools (primary and secondary) on a day to day basis and unfortunately this has created its own set of issues with parents rightly stating that the Code required places to be offered from schools waiting lists as soon as they arise. This has now been raised with the Ombudsman's office and no clear solution has been devised.

On the back of this, the LA has tried to find a way to hand back as much of the process to schools whilst maintaining sufficient elements of coordination so as not to cause discontent with neighbouring LA's and still create a simple process for parents that continue to uphold the safeguarding values that are so important.

Changes for this year

- **3 May** – The LA will run **one reallocation** offering places to late applicants and original applicants that have joined a school's waiting list after 30 March. Original applicants limited initially to schools on their RCAF/JCAF.
 - Schools will collect acceptance and refusal responses and record them on a report sent to them by the LA.
 - If schools receive waiting list requests from parents that are to be included in the LA reallocation, they must be sent to the LA
 - **After 3 May** - the LA will send schools their waiting lists who will then make any further offers to children when vacancies arise and add any other children who apply to go on their waiting lists. Schools **must** notify the LA of any offers that are made.
 - All new applications i.e parents who have not made an application for a school place previously must be sent to the Primary Admissions Team. If it is not possible to offer one of the parents preferences, the LA will allocate a place at an alternative school. The parent will then be able to place their child on **any** school's waiting lists.
 - **After 9 July** all applications will be considered within the In Year Casual Admissions scheme.
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Key Dates for Parents

Saturday 14 January 2012	Because the National Closing Date falls on a Saturday, paper RCAF/JCAF must be returned to schools or to the Primary Admissions Team by midday on Monday 16 January 2012 . If parents apply Online, these must be submitted no later than 11.59pm on Saturday 14 January 2012 .
By Friday 27 January 2012	Late applications will be accepted up to this date BUT only where it is practicably reasonable for the LA to do so or if the parent has a good reason for applying late.
On Friday 30 March 2012	Letters will be sent to parents 1 st class post on this day including those who have applied online. Online applicants will also receive an email after 4pm advising them of their offer and also a letter confirming the offer.
By Thursday 19 April 2012	Date by which parents confirm by letter or email , whether or not they are accepting the place, wish to appeal and/or be placed on a school's waiting list.
On Thursday 3 May 2012	The LA will re-allocate any places that have become available to those who have asked to go on schools waiting lists
After Thursday 3 May 2012	After the initial allocation, schools will maintain waiting lists and fill vacancies as they arise to children on their waiting lists. Schools must notify the LA of any offers that are made

Common Application Form 1 (RCAF/JCAF)

Parents who live in Kent can name other authority's schools on the Kent form and parents who do not live in Kent can name Kent schools on their own authority's form. All authorities will share this information with each other. Please note: other authorities may have different offer dates. This means that some parents may have more than one offer but must accept either school by the date set by that LA

A minimum number of booklets and paper forms will be delivered, to all schools from Monday 7 November onwards. Schools will also receive posters for display purposes and A5 leaflets with the important dates to remember which can be distributed to parents – if schools wish for more supplies of these leaflets, please contact the Primary Admissions Team.

All application forms and admissions booklets are available to download from
www.kent.gov.uk/primaryadmissions

The online application will be available from Monday 7 November 2011 for parents to apply. Parents must apply for places either online **or** (if they do not have access to the internet) by paper for each individual child. They must not apply online **AND** apply on paper – they can only do one or the other.

Up to three preferences in priority order. **Naming one preference or naming one school three times does not give a child priority for a place.**

If a parent is applying and wishes their child to be considered under the health and special access reason criteria they must provide evidence with their application either to the school or the LA which denotes that they have a significant and demonstrable need to attend the named school and explain why it is the only school able to meet the needs. The LA will provide schools with copies of any correspondence that parents provide them with.

Paper applications to be returned to any primary school or the LA by midday on Monday 16 January 2012. Online applications must be submitted no later than 11.59pm on Saturday 14 January 2012. Schools should return any paper applications they receive by Monday 16 January 2012 using recorded or registered post to do so.

Any applications received after this date are to be accepted and posted on to the LA or advise parents to send them to the LA by registered or recorded delivery.

Common Application Form 2 (RCAF/JCAF)

Applications to junior school - **parents must only name junior schools on JCAF. Names of primary schools will be deleted from the form.**

If parents want to apply for Yr3 places at primary schools, they must contact the LA as it will be considered through the casual admissions scheme.

Please be aware that these applications will not be processed until the end of the summer term.

If a child is going through the process of being statemented but has not received a statement by 14 January 2012, the parent must complete a RCAF/JCAF. If they do not, the child will not be offered a school place on 30 March. It should be remembered that not all children who go through the statementing process are granted a statement of educational needs, and parents should be directed to their SEN area office.

Supplementary Information Form

Governors of VA/Foundation Schools can require parents to provide additional information (on a supplementary form) but only where this is necessary to apply their over-subscription criteria (e.g. religious affiliation).

Those schools requiring a supplementary form are clearly identified in the booklet by having the **SIF** box indicated under the school's DFE number.

Supplementary forms are available from and returnable to the appropriate school. Schools **must** chase any forms that they have provided to parents and not received back in order to rank **all** children according to their oversubscription criteria. Even if the parent has applied online, schools must ensure that they have the SIF completed. Forms can also be found on www.kent.gov.uk for parents to download, complete and return to schools.

It is important that your websites also contain information regarding the SIF, your full oversubscription criteria and the importance of parents completing the form has on their application.

Where a school receives a supplementary form it **will not be** regarded as a valid application. The only valid application is the RCAF/JCAF. Schools using SIF's may find it prudent to check with all parents that complete the SIF form that they have also made a formal application to KCC.

Please note: that supplementary forms can only ask for information relevant to applying the school's oversubscription criteria - collecting information relating to employment or ethnicity is prohibited.

Equal Preference Scheme

This is an equal preference scheme and schools are not told in which order a parent has named them.

Even if schools are aware of parental preferences, they **must not** rank children according to their preferences but only according to their published oversubscription criteria. This also applies to children that may have named the school, but are not known to you.

When schools are offering places after the LA reallocation to children on their waiting lists, their lists must be ranked in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria and no priority or lack of priority should be given to children who may already have a school place or who are appealing

In an equal preference scheme, the order a parent names the schools is only taken into account if more than one school can offer a place. In that case, a place will be offered at whichever is school is named highest on the application form and **therefore all applicants must be ranked.**

Distances

Distances, for community and voluntary controlled schools and for some VA/Foundation schools, will be measured in a straight line using Ordnance Survey address point data.

Distances are measured by Kent's software from a point as defined within the child's home to a point as defined within the school as specified by Ordnance Survey for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Some VA/Foundation schools use different means of measurement, which will be stated in their oversubscription criteria.

Where a school fails to specify how distances will be measured within their oversubscription criteria, the method used by the LA must be adopted.

Please ensure that you have a copy of your map indicating where the school's defined point is situated as parents may wish to see where it is. If you do not have a copy, please contact the Systems Team.

Primary School Pupil Data - 1

By 8 February 2012

We will inform each school of the number of first, second and third preference they have, but not the children's details.

By 10 February 2012

Full pupil information will be sent to schools via S2S website for ranking against their oversubscription criteria.

If you have difficulties in accessing the S2S website, please contact the S2S team at the DFE on 01325 392626. S2S is provided by the DFE so KCC are unable to help with issues.

By 1 March 2012

Schools return ranked list of all applicants to the LA. It is important that all schools return their lists by this date. Any delay from even one school means that the LA cannot start to run their system to match parental preferences against school's ranked lists

Primary School pupil Data - 2

By 7 March 2012

The LA will match parental preferences against schools ranked lists and allocate pupils up to school PAN:

Where a child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated.

Where a child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference on their RCAF/JCAF.

Where a child is not eligible for a place at any nominated school, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

By this date the LA will have completed any data exchange with other LAs for parents who have named a school outside of Kent or parents living outside of Kent naming a Kent school.

By 29 March 2012

Schools will receive a list of those children who will be offered places.

Ranking your applicants – 1

Oversubscription Criteria

The list you receive will be in order of the LA's oversubscription criteria, but we ask you to check the order based on your oversubscription criteria and any additional information you may have received either from the parent or the LA regarding siblings, medical conditions etc. This will decide who will get places and allocate a rank number to each child.

You will need to check for:

- siblings that you may be aware of that are not on the list
- sibling links where the child will still be attending in September 2012 i.e. not in Year 6
- attendance of a sibling at a linked school (infant or junior)
- sibling address, to ensure that the family have not moved more than 2 miles from the school **OR** if they have, that they live nearer to the school than when the older sibling was admitted.
- checking for children living at the same address that may be siblings but have different surnames.
- checking that the sibling link actually lives under the same roof

Even if the family have moved **even slightly over** the 2 mile limit it will break the two mile sibling rule

Ranking your Applicants - 2

You must take into account any medical evidence you may have received regarding the **parent's and/or the child's** medical conditions from the LA to consider if the evidence would give the child priority under the Health and Special Access criterion. The evidence must demonstrate a **strong** link between your school and **only your school** and the child.

When considering children against this criterion, it should be undertaken by more than one person and notes of how you arrived at your decision should be kept. The child does **NOT** have to have a Statement of Educational Needs to be considered under this criterion.

Consideration must also be given with regard to addresses (more later!)

All children on this list must be ranked, even if you have many more applicants than you do places.

If you have to alter the position of a child in the ranked list, it is imperative that you move all the columns of that child's details. In past years some schools have only moved children's names and this can result in the wrong children receiving offers.

Also, please ensure that you advise us the reason for moving a child by making a note in the notes column of the ranked list before returning the file to us via the S2S website.

There is a duty on the LA to check that schools have ranked children appropriately – if we are not able to understand why a child has priority we will need to contact the school which can slow down the whole process.

Verifying Addresses

Once offers have been made, parents are advised to take evidence of their address to schools when they accept their places. It is important that the addresses of the children who have been offered places at your school are confirmed by requesting proof of address, including siblings as the family may have moved since the older sibling was admitted. This can be by, for example:

- a utility bill and bank or credit card statement to verify the family's address
- a child tax and working tax credit letter (TC602), the child's medical card or a letter from a medical centre, hospital or GP to confirm the child's residence, a letter from the child's nursery or playgroup or a bank statement of a savings account in the child's name.

These should not be more than three months old (depending on circumstances) and preferably should show that the child was resident at the time that the parent had signed the application.

You may also accept any evidence that you feel is proof of residence even if it is not named above or within the Admission to Primary School booklet. Parents should produce this evidence by 19 April which is the deadline for them to accept the places offered on 30 March.

Offer Day

On 30 March 2012 (offer day)

The LA will send an offer email after 4pm to those parents who have applied online and provided a valid email address. (*Please note, some email providers may delay sending the messages to account holders where anti spam software is engaged – parents will need to check with their own e-mail suppliers in this regard*)

The LA will send **ALL** parents an offer letter which will advise them of:

- The name of the school at which a place has been offered;
- The reasons why the child is not being offered a place at one of their preferred schools named on the RCAF/JCAF'
- Information about the right of appeal against the decisions refusing the child a place at their preferred schools;
- Information on how to place the child on a listing list for the schools that were named on the RCAF/JCAF to be considered for any places that may become available.

Schools can send their own welcome letters out after 30 March **NOT BEFORE**

After Offer Day

By 19 April 2012

Parents must inform schools whether they wish to accept or refuse the place offered to them on 30 March by this date. Acceptances/refusals must be made in writing either via email or letter to the school.

Parents must also advise the LA by returning the waiting list form, to join their preferred schools waiting lists by this date which will also include any late applications. The LA will allocate any places that become available to children from these lists.

By 23 April 2012

The LA will provide all schools with their waiting lists for them to rank in accordance with their oversubscription criteria. The children should not be given any more priority or less priority if they already have a school place, if an appeal has been lodged or if they were late applications but **only in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.**

By 26 April 2012

Schools must return their ranked waiting lists to the LA and also return their completed acceptance/refusal reports to ensure the LA can calculate available places for the LA reallocation day.

On 3 May 2012

The LA will offer any available places to children on schools waiting lists by writing to parents by 1st class post on this day. The LA will send schools a list of all new offers and the remainder of their waiting lists.

Schools' Waiting Lists 1

19 April 2011

The deadline for parents to let the LA know **in writing**, whether or not they are accepting the place that has been offered and if they wish to go on school's waiting lists. They must also lodge their appeal by this date for any of the schools named on their RCAF/JCAF.

It is important that schools request evidence of residence from those parents, who have accepted the offered places to ensure that there have not been any fraudulent applications made. If it is found that a RCAF/JCAF has been completed fraudulently, the place offered may be withdrawn (right up until the end of the first term). The place would then be offered to the child who was the next one on the school's original ranked list **NOT** necessarily to the next child on the waiting list. Schools should contact the LA to determine which child the place would be offered to before making any offers.

Schools who do not receive evidence of residence from parents who have been offered places by this date, should make every effort to chase parents to produce the residence by this date. Without it other parents may challenge whether a school has ranked children fairly.

School's Waiting List 2

After 3 May 2012

Parents that have already received an offer can request to go on **any** school's waiting lists and if places become available, schools will offer directly to parents.

Schools must inform the LA whenever an offer is made so that we can record all activity on the children's records.

Schools can only offer places to parents who have already made an application through the primary or junior admission rounds

Schools can also offer to parents who live in the area but who may not have named their school on the original application

Any parent that has moved since first applying and is now some distance from when submitting the original application must be considered as a late application and directed to apply to the LA

The school's waiting list should be ranked in accordance with their oversubscription criteria and **not** ranked on the basis of:

- parents applied on time but were not offered a place
- a late application
- parents who are appealing for places.

If the LA cannot offer a place to late applicants, we will formally write to advise the parent, allocate the child an alternative school and advise them of their right to appeal. Once the school reaches its Published Admission Number, children can only be admitted as a result of Independent Appeal Panel decisions or through a Fair Access Protocol.

On 9 July 2012

Schools must ensure the LA is provided with a current copy of the waiting list that they have. From this date, every application will then be considered through the In Year Casual process.

The School Admissions Code

The School Admission Code has made some important points affecting acceptances, appeals and the offer of vacant places.

(1.50) 'If a parent has not responded to the offer of a place within reasonable time (21 days), the admissions authority **must** remind the parent of the need to respond and point out that the place may be withdrawn if they do not'. - **It would be prudent to keep records of any such efforts prior to the place being re-offered (e.g details of phone calls attempting to reach parents, copies of letters sent to parents etc as these could be used to defend a school's actions during an appeal).**

(3.23) When children apply for a place outside the normal admissions round 'Such applications **must** be considered without delay, and a formal decision either to offer or to refuse a place **must** be made and notified to the applicant, advising them of their statutory right of appeal when a place cannot be offered. Applicants **must not** be refused the opportunity to make an application, or told that they can only be placed on a waiting list rather than make a formal application.' - **Refusal letters are now required to be included in any appeal documentation and by the Local Government Ombudsman when they are investigating a complaint – this also applies to Academies, Aided and Foundation schools**

(3.20) 'As soon as school places become vacant, admissions authorities must fill these vacancies from their waiting list, even if this is before admission appeals have been heard. Placing a child's name on a waiting list does not affect an applicant's right of appeal against an unsuccessful application.'

Appeals

Appeals should be lodged by 19 April 2012 either with the LA for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and for Academies, Foundation and Aided schools, with the Clerk of the Governors, sent care of the school.

Parents will receive information on how to lodge an appeal with their offer letter and they can request an appeal pack from the Primary Admissions Team

Parents can appeal for any of the schools they have named on their application form.

After 3 May, parents can apply for any school they wish to even if they had not applied for the school on their original application and if refused a place at any school, parents do have the right appeal.



Parents can apply for their Year R or Year 3 place using the Kent Online Admissions System at www.kent.gov.uk/ola

When parents register on the website, they create a username and password which lets them log on to:

- view their application online at any time
- edit their application at any time until the closing date for applications (If any changes are made after submission parents must resubmit their application or changes will be ignored)
- view their offer on 30 March 2012 after 4pm, prior to receiving the formal letter from the LA. Where they have provided a valid email address, they will also be emailed their offer on 30 March 2012 after 5pm. Please note, some email providers may delay sending the message to account holders where anti spam software is engaged. Parents will need to check in this regard. KCC has no control over e-mail delivery times once they have left their servers.

Note: *parents who apply online must not submit a paper RCAF /JCAF as well.*

We can only accept one application and checking duplicates will slow processing down.

Parents will be able to print off confirmation that a successful online application has been made showing all information that has been submitted.

In Year Casual Admissions

4836 applications were received in September/October for primary and secondary places.

3602 of these were for primary aged children.

2378 children were offered a place at one of their preferred schools in various year groups across the County.

571 children were allocated places at schools as it was not possible to offer them a place at any of their preferences.

In Year Casual

To ensure that offers are made as quickly as possible the LA will require the following:

- Schools to provide up to date role numbers for each year group
 - Schools to ensure they take into account pending cases when communicating role numbers
 - Forward all acceptances or refusals of offers to Primary Admissions Team if parents return forms to schools instead of LA and to chase parents to do so – it is important for this information to be given to the team as soon as possible to ensure that places are reoffered as soon as they become available.
 - As information will be passed verbally, A&T staff members will make a note of the name of the person they talked to and the date and time
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In Year

If a school provides the Primary Team with a Quick Form, the child's admission can be arranged between schools and parents without waiting for the confirmation offer letter to arrive.

When an offer is made, schools can confirm offer with the LA and admit the child as soon as possible without waiting for an offer letter to be received.

Schools will receive an activity report once a week and if you are aware of any children that have started but are still on the report as offered or withdrawn from the school please advise the LA as soon as possible.

Communication will take place via telephone for Primary applications for VC and Community schools. For VA and foundation schools the team will email you with details of the application.

A&T will process an application in preference order until a space is found. All subsequent preferences on that application will **not** be contacted
