



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

**A consultation on proposals to
change our school admission
arrangements from
September 2005**

For community
and voluntary controlled schools



If you would like a copy of this leaflet on tape, in large print or in another language, please get in touch with:

Surrey County Council, County Hall, Penrhyn Road,
Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

Phone: 08456 009 009

Minicom: 020 8541 8914

Fax: 020 8541 9004

Email: surreyinfo@surreycc.gov.uk

www.surreycc.gov.uk

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如果你需要這份文件的大字體印刷、錄音帶、另一種格式或語言的版本，請與我們聯絡，電話：08456 009 099，鍵盤傳訊：020 8541 9004，傳真：020 8541 9004，或電郵 contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk。

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের কপি বড় হরফে ছাপা, টেপ-এ রেকর্ড করা অথবা অন্য কোন সংস্করণে বা ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে আমাদের সঙ্গে এইসব নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন : টেলিফোন 08456 009 009, মিনিকম 020 8541 9004, ফ্যাক্স 020 8541 9004, কিংবা এই ঠিকানায় আমাদের ই-মেইল করুন : contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk

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'اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کی کاپی بڑے حروفوں میں، آواز کی صورت میں آڈیو ٹیپ پر یا کسی اور ڈیزائن یا زبان میں درکار ہے، تو براہ کرم ہم سے رابطہ کریں، فون نمبر: 0845 009 009، مینی کوم: 020 8541 9004، فیکس: 020 8541 9004 یا ای میل: contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk'

As the county council's director with responsibility for the Education Service, I am writing to find out what you think about possible changes to the admission arrangements in some Surrey schools from September 2005. I need to do this because the Education Act 2002 and the accompanying code of practice want to see systems that are **'simple and more streamlined and a better deal for all'**. There is also a new legal requirement to co-ordinate school admissions across all schools. Finally, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is keen to promote the equal preference system, which is explained in more detail on page 10.

If you live in Surrey (and particularly if you are a parent who already has a child in a Surrey school or will have a child in a Surrey school in the future), it is really important that you take the time to read this document and respond to the proposal by filling in the questionnaire at the end. By doing this, you can tell us what you think about the proposed changes. Your responses are **very important**, so please reply whether or not you agree with the proposed changes.

We are genuinely interested in your views and haven't made a decision about the changes yet. When I have received your responses, I will discuss this again with councillors early in the New Year. Once the councillors have looked at your responses I will make sure you know what has happened as a result of your valuable contributions.

Admission arrangements are unavoidably complicated and I apologise if this document is difficult to understand – please bear with it!

If you want to talk to someone about this consultation or have anything explained further, please phone 01483 517449/50. Someone will be there to help you from 17 November 2003 to 9 January 2004. Or, you can find more information on our website at www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions

Paul Gray

Executive Director for Children and Young People

Our current admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools are outlined below. You can find more details on www.surreycc.gov.uk, by clicking on 'Learning, Schools, School Admissions, IFP'.

In summary, the current system is as follows.

First priority: Exceptional arrangements

- Children in local-authority care
- Children with a statement of special educational needs that names a school in the statement
- Medical reasons and other sensitive family circumstances

Second priority: Siblings

After we consider 'exceptional arrangements', we will then offer places to siblings. A sibling is a child who will have another brother or sister at the school concerned or a junior school on a shared site at the time of the younger sibling's admission. We will give a younger sibling priority for a place only if the older sibling will still be at the school when the younger sibling starts in September. **Whenever the word 'sibling' is used in this document this is what we mean.**

Third priority: Children who live in the admission priority area (APA)

After we have offered places to siblings as described above, and if places are still available, we use an admission priority area (APA) to fill the places that are left. We will only use an admission priority area if the number of first preferences we receive by the closing date is more than the published admission number.

The advantages and disadvantages of the present system are outlined below.

Advantages

- Siblings have a high priority and are guaranteed a place.
- Living in the admission priority area can secure your child a place.
- We have managed the system for many years and have generally achieved a good record of meeting parents' preferences.

Disadvantages

- If your child does not have a sibling, there is no guarantee that we will offer them a place even if you live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Siblings often travel long distances to go to a school and can take priority over other children living nearer the school.
- The admission priority area is flexible and can change from year to year, which can cause uncertainty.
- The current system depends on a **preference weighted system**, as explained on page 10. If we cannot meet your first preference and you have named other popular schools, we may not be able to offer your second or third preference either.

Possible admission arrangements for September 2005

If we change the admission arrangements, we will only use them when more children want a place than there are places available. In that case, the suggested arrangements would be as follows.

First priority: Exceptional arrangements

There is no change to the existing priority, as explained on page 7.

Any new policy would then use the borough or district council boundaries of Elmbridge, Epsom and Ewell, Guildford, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Tandridge, Waverley and Woking.

After taking account of exceptional arrangements, we will offer places according to the following priorities.

- 1 Siblings of existing pupils who have or will have an older brother or sister at the school when he or she starts, who live within the borough or district boundary **and** for whom the school is the nearest community, voluntary controlled or foundation* school within the borough or district and maintained by the local education authority (LEA).
- 2 Children with no siblings who live within the borough or district boundary and for whom the school is the nearest community, voluntary controlled or foundation school within the borough or district and maintained by the LEA.
- 3 Siblings of existing pupils who have or will have an older brother or sister at the school when he / she starts and who live outside the borough or district boundary but for whom the school is the nearest community, voluntary controlled or foundation school maintained by **any** LEA.
- 4 Children with no siblings who live outside the borough or district boundary but for whom the school is the nearest community, voluntary controlled or foundation school maintained by **any** LEA.
- 5 Any other applicant.

Within each category, we will rank children in order of how near their home is to the school's nearest entrance or gate measured 'as the crow flies' (in a straight line).

* Whenever the word foundation is used in this document, we mean non-faith foundation schools.

The advantages and disadvantages of the changes are outlined below.

Advantages

- There will be more places available for children who do not have siblings but who live nearer the school.
- You may more realistically assess the chances of your child being offered a place at your preferred school.
- This system does not depend on a preference weighted system. So, you would have all your **preferences treated equally** (as explained on page 10) and a greater chance of having one of your preferences met.
- More local children would go to local schools which may result in less traffic congestion.

Disadvantages

- Siblings living further away from the school would not get top priority but could still qualify for a place under priority 3 or 5.
- In some areas, you may still not get your preferred schools.
- Any new system goes through a period of change which could be confusing.

Preference weighting versus equal preferences

We currently run a **preference weighting system**. This means that we consider all parents' first preferences first. If you do not get your first preference, we will consider second preferences followed by third preferences. The disadvantage of this system to many parents is if they live in an area with more than one 'full' school. If they do not get their first preference, their second-preference school could be full on first-preference applications, as will their third-preference school. Sometimes, parents in this position do not receive any of their preferences and are given a school they may not want.

If we used an **equal preference system** (the system preferred by the DfES), you would not be disadvantaged in the same way as all preferences would be treated equally. Some parents may be offered places at all three preferred schools, which they would prioritise. **The rank order would only be used if parents could be offered more than one of their school preferences.** We would then offer the school the parent had ranked the highest on their application form.

If we kept the current APA (admission priority area) system, we could not change to an equal preference system as we would not be able to decide where to draw the APA boundary. Also, the APA boundary would change shape as and when parents who had ranked schools in second or third place were offered their first preference. We would not be able to consult on and agree a definite boundary.

Moving to a different arrangement would give many parents an advantage in their child being offered a place at a school of their preference, while increasing the percentage of wishes met.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document and filling in and returning the questionnaire, on the next page.

Questionnaire

Changes to admission arrangements for September 2005 and beyond

Please fill in and return this questionnaire to CDS, 7 Eastgate, Leeds, LS2 7LY, by Jan 16 2004

- 1 Please put in the first part of your postcode
(for example, GU2 or RH11).

- 2 Will you have another younger child in school from September 2005 or beyond?

Yes

No

3 What about siblings' priority for admission?

Please tick one box.

You should give priority to **all** siblings of existing pupils at a school.

You should give priority **only** to siblings of existing pupils at a school who live within the district or borough boundary and for whom the school is the nearest community, voluntary controlled or foundation school within the borough and maintained by the LEA.

I'm not sure which of these is the best way to decide priority.

I have no strong opinion.

4 Which is fairer?

Please tick one box.

The possible changes would make the system fairer for children who live close to the school.

The existing system is fairer for local children who live close to the school.

I'm not sure which system is fairer for children who live close to the school.

I have no strong opinion.

5 Which is easier for parents?

Please tick one box.

The **existing system** makes it easier for parents to accurately assess the likelihood of getting their school preferences.

The **possible changes** would make it easier for parents to accurately assess the likelihood of getting their school preferences.

I'm not sure which system would make it easier for parents to accurately assess the likelihood of getting their school preferences.

I have no strong opinion.

6 Equal preference system or preference weighted system (see page 10)?

Please tick one box.

I would prefer an **equal preference system**.

I prefer the current **preference weighted system**.

I'm not sure which system I prefer.

I have no strong opinion.

7 Proposed changes to the admission arrangements – what is your overall opinion?

Please tick one box.

I would prefer the possible changes to be made to the admission arrangements for September 2005 and beyond.

I would prefer to keep the admission arrangements as they are now.

I'm not sure which admission criteria I would prefer.

I have no strong opinion.

8 Have you filled in this form as a:

parent or carer?

headteacher?

governor?

teacher?

member of school staff?

Other (please give details if you want to)

9 If you have children, what age are they now? (Please tick the appropriate age ranges if you have more than one child.)

Pre-school

Primary, age 4 to 11

Secondary, age 11 to 16

Sixth form

Further education and adult

Higher education

10 Do you have any comments you would like to make about any part of the existing arrangements or the possible changes to them that you have not covered in the answers to the questions above? Please write in the box below.

(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)