

Framework for Surrey's Fair Access Protocol

1.	Introduction	
	1.1	This document sets out the framework within which Surrey's Primary and Secondary Fair Access Protocols will operate during 2015/16.
	1.2	The Fair Access Protocols are operated by Surrey in partnership with all state funded mainstream schools.
	1.3	The following documents form part of this framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Principles of Surrey Fair Access Panels • Primary Fair Access Protocol 2015/16 • Secondary Fair Access Protocol 2015/16
	1.4	This framework should be read alongside each of these documents.
2.	Background	
	2.1	Paragraph 3.9 of the School Admissions Code confirms that each local authority must agree a Fair Access Protocol with the majority of schools in the area 'to ensure that, outside the normal admissions round, unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible'.
	2.2	Paragraph 3.8 of the School Admissions Code confirms that admission authorities must not refuse to admit children in the normal admission round on the basis of their poor behaviour elsewhere. However paragraph 3.9 of the School Admissions Code confirms that in agreeing a Protocol for admissions outside the normal admissions round, 'the local authority must ensure that no school, including those with available places, is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from another school or who have challenging behaviour'.
	2.3	Once agreed, all schools in the area, including all own admission authority schools, must participate in the Fair Access Protocol. Failure by a school to engage in the fair access process will not prevent a child being placed at that school.
	2.4	The protocols ensure that access to education is secured quickly for the most vulnerable and challenging children; and that all schools in Surrey admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour, whether or not the school is undersubscribed.
	2.5	Whilst the protocols provide for the most vulnerable children to be admitted to school quickly, unnecessary transfers between schools are strongly discouraged. Schools are expected to work with children and their families/carers to prevent unnecessary transfers between schools.
	2.6	Surrey works together with schools to reduce and prevent permanent exclusion. Managed moves which may be arranged between schools before

		a child reaches the point of permanent exclusion will not qualify as a placement under Surrey's Fair Access Protocol.
3	Principles of Surrey's Fair Access Protocol	
	3.1	The Fair Access Protocol applies to all state funded schools in Surrey. All schools will work collaboratively regardless of the type of school.
	3.2	The majority of children applying outside a normal admission round will be admitted to a school through each school's in year admission procedures. However Surrey's Fair Access Protocol will be triggered when a child who is applying for in year admission is identified as falling within one of the criteria set out within the protocol.
	3.3	Children applying for a place as part of the normal admissions round to Reception, Year 3 and Year 7 must be considered alongside all other applicants and cannot be placed through the Fair Access Protocol.
	3.4	Where possible, parental preference will be considered but this will not override the Fair Access Protocol if the preferred school is unable to admit the child. However, all applicants will be advised of their right of appeal if a place at a preferred school is not offered.
	3.5	While all schools will be part of the Fair Access Protocol, exceptionally there may be circumstances where a school will not be expected to take a child under the Protocol. The circumstances where a school might not be asked or might refuse to admit such a child are set out in each Protocol.
	3.6	Admission authorities will not refuse to admit a child thought to be potentially disruptive or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour on the grounds that the child is first to be assessed for special educational needs (paragraph 3.13 of the School Admissions Code).
	3.7	Admission authorities will not cite oversubscription as a reason for not admitting a child under this Protocol unless an extra child would breach the Infant Class Size Regulations and the child to be admitted could not be treated as an excepted child (see Appendix 1 to the Primary Protocol for cases that might be considered as an exception to Infant Class Size legislation).
	3.8	There are clear benefits of the panel process in placing fair access children. This works well in the secondary sector and is currently being piloted for primary children in a number of areas. This approach is encouraged as it provides for a fair and transparent distribution of children and enables headteachers to make collaborative decisions.
	3.9	Children placed under the Fair Access Protocol will be given priority for admission over others on a waiting list (Paragraph 2.14 of the School Admissions Code).
	3.10	A child will not be counted as having been placed under the Fair Access Protocol for a particular school if the placement breaks down within 12

		school weeks of the child's start date and the child is taken off roll of that school.
	3.11	At the latest, a child being placed through the Fair Access Protocol will be placed on roll within 7 calendar days of the school receiving a copy of the offer letter to the parent/carer, and the child should start at the school within 7 calendar days of going on roll. Placing on roll should not be subject to a meeting with the parent/carer, although a meeting might be arranged to discuss a start date and to discuss the child's integration to the school.
	3.12	A copy of the offer letter will be sent by Admissions to the Area Lead for Education Welfare. Once on roll any attendance issues should be dealt with as appropriate through the school's attached Education Welfare officer.
	3.13	Under no circumstances will a school ask a parent/carer to withdraw a child from the school's roll. If a school continues to face difficulty with a child who is on their roll, such as through poor attendance or challenging behaviour, they will seek support from the Area Lead for Education Welfare or Area Lead for Specialist Teachers in the first instance.
	3.14	If information comes to light which indicates that a school has taken a child off roll inappropriately or has not sought appropriate support for a child whilst they were on roll, the admissions team will refer that information to the Area Lead for Education Welfare who will liaise with the school as appropriate.
	3.15	In the unlikely event of a child not being placed through the Fair Access Protocol, Surrey's Admissions team will identify a school in liaison with the Area Lead for Pupil Support. In such circumstances, the school identified by Surrey's Admissions team will be expected to admit the child without delay. However in the event of the identified school refusing to admit the child, Surrey's Admissions team will follow due process in order to instruct or direct the school to admit the child.
	3.16	Fair access children who cannot be offered a place at a preferred school have the same right of appeal as any other child. The admission authority for that school must inform the parent of their right of appeal promptly.
4.	Roles and responsibilities	
	4.1	<p>Admissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify fair access children, either through direct in year applications or via a referral from an own admission authority school; • where an area panel exists and the child is in a fair access category to be placed at a panel, refer pupils to the Access to Education (A2E) team through the Area Lead for Pupil Support; • attend the area panels as appropriate, and send the offer letters following notification of placements; • where there is no area panel or the child is not in a fair access category to be placed at a panel or the child is unplaced at panel, allocate a school to the child, via a direction if necessary; • monitor the placements to ensure the child is placed on roll and completes 12 weeks on roll;

- authorise the release of Fair Access funding to the relevant school;
- maintain statistics on number of fair access placements agreed for each school.

Area Leads for Pupil Support:

- refer recently excluded children to a Pupil Referral Unit;
- consider whether a managed placement can be arranged with a school for a child in a Pupil Referral Unit or in alternative provision ready for mainstream reintegration, or whether the child needs to be placed via the Fair Access Protocol;
- refer any children who may not be suitable for mainstream schooling to Education Psychology for assessment prior to deciding an appropriate placement;
- refer other fair access children to the A2E team when notified by Admissions;
- arrange for an A2E assessment and collate information to be submitted to the area panel;
- facilitate the placing of fair access children at the area panel;
- notify Admissions of panel placements;
- where a placement breaks down, work with the school to identify an alternative solution.

Access to Education (A2E)

- receive referrals through the Area Leads for Pupil Support, from Admissions;
- complete an assessment of the child and arrange interim tutoring;
- provide written information on the child's progress to the Area Lead for Pupil Support;
- attend the area panels as appropriate;
- provide reintegration support as required to the incoming school.

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

- inform the Area Lead for Pupil Support of pupils in the PRU who are ready for reintegration into a mainstream school;
- receive referrals from the Area Lead for Pupil Support for recently excluded pupils;
- provide written information on the child's progress at the PRU to the Area Lead for Pupil Support;
- attend the area panels as appropriate;
- provide reintegration support as required to the incoming school.

Schools

- own admission authority schools:
 - identify fair access cases from in year applications that are received direct
 - consider whether able to admit without the need to refer to the Fair Access Protocol for placement
 - complete a fair access referral form and send promptly to Admissions indicating whether or not able to admit
- all schools:
 - where a child is not in a fair access category to be placed at panel or where there is no panel in operation, respond promptly to a

		<p>request from Admissions to admit a child, giving a full written explanation if unable to admit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - where an area panel exists, ensure the Headteacher or delegated colleague attends and has read all paperwork in advance - contribute to decision making at panels which maintains an equitable distribution of fair access pupils among schools - once a fair access placement is agreed, make contact with the family and arrange for the child to go on roll within 7 calendar days of the offer and to start within a further 7 calendar days.
5.	Monitoring and reporting	
	5.1	Although no longer a statutory body, Surrey's Admission Forum will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Fair Access Protocol.
	5.2	As part of its annual report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, Surrey is required to report on the effectiveness of the Fair Access Protocol, including how many children have been admitted to each school under the Protocol. Surrey's annual report must be produced by 30 June each year and must be published locally.
6	Funding	
	6.1	Funding for children identified as fair access will be allocated to the school that admits the child in accordance with section 8 of the Primary and Secondary Fair Access Protocols 2015/16.
7.	Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health & Care Plan	
	7.1	Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) are outside the remit of Surrey's Fair Access Protocol as these children are placed in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice.
	7.2	However children who are awaiting a Statement of SEN or an EHCP will continue to be considered under normal admissions processes, including the Fair Access Protocol as appropriate, until their Statement or EHCP is agreed.
	7.3	The Fair Access Protocol does not replace the process for assessing the specialist needs of a child and putting in place appropriate provision.
8.	Looked After Children	
	8.1	Looked After Children are children who are in the care of the local authority as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989.
	8.2	Looked After Children are placed in accordance with Surrey's Protocol for the Processing of in year admissions for Children in Care, and so they are outside the remit of Surrey's Fair Access Protocol.

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