

CHARLOTTE SHARMAN PRIMARY (FOUNDATION) SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2011 TO JULY 2012

ADMISSIONS: POLICY AND CRITERIA

PRINCIPLES

- 1 Governors recognise and support the principle of parental choice of school. Parents and carers considering applying for places for their children are welcome to view the school and staff are always willing to advise parents and carers on application procedures.
- 2 Governors have set the school's admissions criteria in the belief that they are transparent, unambiguous, fair and appropriate and that they do not discriminate either directly or indirectly on the basis of any factors other than those made explicit in the criteria.
- 3 The admissions criteria will be applied objectively and without regard for any additional factors.
- 4 The admissions criteria apply equally to the 'normal admissions round', that is the annual admission of new pupils to nursery and reception classes, and to casual in-year vacancies.
- 5 The school recognises its duty to provide fair access to pupils applying outside the normal round and has adopted an in-year fair access protocol, which is appended to this document. [Not produced yet – guidance awaited.]
- 6 The admissions criteria herein apply both to the nursery and to the primary school (Reception to Year 6) but see 7 below.
- 7 Admission to the nursery does not constitute admission to the primary school and a new allocation will be made for reception places each year. No priority will be given to children who have attended the school's nursery.
- 8 Children will be admitted only into classes appropriate for their chronological age. This does not affect the possibility of there being informal arrangements for pupils to spend time in other classes at the discretion of the head teacher if she judges it to be appropriate for their needs and providing it does not violate the legal restriction on infant class sizes.
- 9 Throughout the admissions criteria and procedures, as throughout all the school's operations, legally adoptive families have the same status as biologically related ones.

- 10 The guiding principle applied to less formal care arrangements is that children will be considered as resident with whom and where they spend the majority of the school week, that is the nights from Sunday to Thursday inclusive during school terms. Documentary evidence of such arrangements will be required.
- 11 All applications must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence for the relevant criteria, which will be examined in a fair but critical light. Governors adopt this as a principle in the belief that it is necessary in order to safeguard the places of those children who are entitled to be admitted under the school's admissions criteria and by doing so, to eradicate discrimination. All applicants are required to produce documentary evidence and hence no applicant should interpret the request to do so as evidence of mistrust. All offers of places are conditional upon receipt of the required documentary evidence before the place is taken up. Documentary evidence is normally required at the time of registration of the child but may be requested earlier.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 The school's governing body sets its admissions criteria.
- 2 The admissions committee of the governing body is responsible for ensuring that the admissions policy and criteria are applied accurately and consistently to all admissions.
- 3 The admissions committee decides the annual intake into nursery and reception classes by the application of the admissions criteria set by the governing body for the relevant year.
- 4 The head teacher may allocate in-year vacancies and places which are exceptions to class size constraints except as specified in 5 and 6 below, subject to the following.
 - She must do so strictly in accordance with the admissions criteria contained herein, which have been set by the governing body.
 - She must report every case to the next meeting of the admissions committee for ratification.

It remains the responsibility of the admissions committee to satisfy itself that all places are allocated correctly in accordance with this policy and the criteria set out below.

- 5 All applications considered under criterion 4, special needs, must be referred to the admissions committee.
- 6 All cases involving a tiebreaker must be dealt with by the admissions committee.

ADMISSIONS AND CLASS SIZES

The admissions number for each year group except nursery is 60 and each year group except nursery consists of two classes of 25. Classes will normally be maintained at 30 when there are sufficient applicants to do so, that is classes of 30 are defined as 'full'. The school will not admit more pupils than the admission number in any year group except as specified in 'Exceptions to Class Size Constraints' below. The nursery has 50 part-time places and these form a single class.

EXCEPTIONS TO CLASS SIZE CONSTRAINTS

- 1 Infant classes, that are Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, are constrained by law not to exceed 30 unless one or more of the following apply.
 - A child has moved into the area outside the normal admissions round and there is no other suitable school within a reasonable distance of home. The school will consult the local authority as to the availability of alternative school places.
 - A child gains, outside the normal admissions round, a statement of special educational need naming this school.
 - An application is made for a child in public care outside the normal admissions round.
 - An independent appeals panel upholds a parent's appeal.
 - A child normally attends a special school, special unit or resource base but spends time in one of our (mainstream) infant classes.
- 2 All other classes will be kept at the numbers given above except in the following circumstances and cases.
 - There are insufficient applicants to reach that number.
 - The school is legally obliged to take an additional pupil despite the class being full, for example if the school is named on an applicant's statement of special educational need or if the local authority properly exercises its powers to direct the school to admit a pupil.
 - The school should admit an additional pupil under the terms of its in-year fair access protocol.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

All applicants with a statement of special education needs naming the school will be admitted and any remaining places will be filled using the oversubscription criteria.

The school will admit any child of nursery or primary school age unless

- the appropriate year group for the child is already full (but see 'Exceptions to Class Size Constraints' above), or
- the admission would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources, always excepting cases in which it would be unlawful to make such a decision.

In the event of the school having more applicants than places, either in the normal admissions round or for in-year vacancies, places will be allocated in the following priority order, with 1 as highest priority.

1 Children in public care (looked after children)

A child in public care is, for the purpose of this criterion, a child who is provided by social services with accommodation by agreement with his or her parents/carers under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or who is the subject of a care order under sections 31 or 38 of the Act. Children who are looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements (such as respite) are excluded.

2 Siblings of children attending the school at the time of admission

- These must be brothers and sisters who will still be attending the school at the time of admission of the child for whom application is being made. If the child attending the school at the time of the allocation of the place to his or her sibling leaves the school before that place is taken up, the allocation is invalidated and the place will be reallocated to another child.
- For the purpose of this criterion, 'siblings' includes all children, for example half-siblings and step-siblings, who live together in the same home as a family for all or the majority of the school week, that is who sleep in that home most nights from Sunday to Thursday inclusive.

3 Children with special social or medical needs for whom this is the nearest school to their home address or whose needs this school is particularly able to meet

- These needs may be
 - ❖ medical needs, applying to the child or the child's parent(s) or carer(s),

- ❖ exceptionally pressing family or social needs.
- In all cases, the need is not of itself sufficient: it must also be the case
 - ❖ either that this school is the nearest school to the applicant's home address, along the shortest safe walking route as defined in 4 below, or
 - ❖ that this school is better able to meet the need than any schools nearer to the applicant's home address.
- Parents or carers who want their children to be considered under this criterion must write to the school setting out clearly
 - ❖ that they are asking to be considered under this criterion,
 - ❖ what the special needs is,
 - ❖ whether or not the school is the nearest primary school to their home address and
 - ❖ if not, how this school is better able to meet their needs than a school closer to their home address and

must include supporting evidence as described in the following bullet point.

- All applications under this criterion must be supported in writing by appropriate involved professionals.
- The admissions committee will consider all applications made under this criterion to establish whether or not it accepts the validity of the special need for a place at this school. Parents/carers in each case will be informed whether or not admission has been considered under this criterion.

4 Other applicants: children who live nearest to the school measured along the shortest safe walking route

- The relevant distance is the distance along the shortest safe walking route from the front door of the child's home address to the school's main gate.
- The admissions committee may from time to time specify routes it considers unsafe. Such routes will not be used in the measurement of the shortest safe walking route. A list of any routes deemed unsafe by the admissions committee is available on request from the school office.
- Measurements will be deemed to be as provided by the local authority's GIS computerised mapping system.

- The relevant address is the child's home address, which is the place the child is normally resident.
- In the case of children whose care is divided between two or more parents or carers living in different homes, the relevant address will be the one at which the child spends the majority of school nights (that is Sundays to Thursdays inclusive during school terms).
- In the case of children whose care arrangements are complex or frequently change, the school will accept any address upheld as appropriate by any relevant involved statutory agency, for example social services.
- If a child's home address not the same as the address of at least one parent named on the child's birth certificate or adoption papers, further corroboration of the home address by an involved statutory authority will be required (but see below).
- The school reserves the right to request further documentary evidence where it has reasonable grounds for doubting the validity of a home address.
- For proof of address, the school will normally require a Council Tax bill, tenancy agreement or rent book for the address in the name of one of the parents named on a child's birth certificate or adoption papers. If parents or carers are unable to provide one of these, the case will be referred to the admissions committee of the governing body for consideration. The admissions committee will only accept alternative proofs of address if they are reasonably compelling, for example if they appear on a range of official documents and, for example, the landlord and Council Tax departments are aware of the residency of the parent or carer.

TIEBREAKER

- 1 If there is a tie of one or more children for a place allocated under 1, 2 or 3 above (normally occurring only for in-year vacancies), it will be resolved by the application of criterion 4 to the competing applicants. If there remains a tie, the tiebreak given at 2 should be used.
- 2 If in any circumstances, after the application of all criteria, and, if applicable, the tie-breaker given at 1 above, a tie between two or more children has to be resolved, the place will be allocated randomly between those children by the drawing of names unseen from a hat. The draw will be made by the chair of the admissions committee at a meeting of that committee. The admissions committee is responsible for ensuring that the draw is entirely fair and made in such a way as to ensure all applicants have an equal chance of being chosen. Governors understand that it is sometimes hard for parents/carers to accept an arbitrary choice but point out that it is fairer and no more arbitrary than to decide the allocation by reference to an irrelevant criterion. Governors believe that all relevant criteria are already included at 1 to 4 above.

INFORMATION AND RIGHT OF APPEAL

- 1 All parents/carers who have applied for places in the normal admissions round in either nursery or reception will be informed of the outcome of their application.
- 2 All parents/carers whose children are not allocated places in any year of the primary school, that is Reception to Year 6 inclusive, whether during the normal admissions round or at another time, have the right to appeal and will be informed of this right by the school. Any parent or carer wishing to appeal should contact the school.
- 3 There is no right of appeal against the school's decision on nursery places.
- 4 Parents/carers with children on the waiting list for casual places will only be contacted if the school has a place available by Southwark In Year Admissions Team (or for periodic updating of the waiting list).

WAITING LIST

- 1 A waiting list for reception places will be maintained initially by Southwark Children's Services. The school also maintains a waiting list for children wanting to transfer to the school from other schools later in the reception year or in subsequent years should places become available.
- 2 Parents/Carers of children who have applied and been refused places either during the normal admissions round or for in-year vacancies will be offered the opportunity to put their children's names on the waiting list by completing a form.
- 3 Putting a child's name on the waiting list in no way affects a parent's or carer's right to appeal against the school's decision not to offer a place to their child(ren).
- 4 Only those children whose parents or carers have returned this form, those who are exempted from such provisions under the in-year fair access protocol appended to this document and those whose parents or carers applied late for the normal admissions round will be entered on the waiting list.
- 5 All in-year vacancies will be filled from Southwark In Year Admissions List.
- 6 Applicants on the list will be admitted strictly in accordance with the school's admissions criteria. Length of time on the list will not confer any advantage.