



# **School Admissions Forum**

## **Terms of reference**

**Version 2 June 2017**

## Introduction

Section 85A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires all local authorities to establish an Admission Forum. The Admission Forum provides a vehicle for admission authorities and other key interested parties to: discuss the effectiveness of local admission arrangements, consider how to deal with difficult admission issues, and advise admission authorities on ways in which their arrangements can be improved.

The Admission Forum has a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that promotes social equity. With their focus on transparency, fairness and non prejudicial school admission arrangements, processes and protocols across the local authority and the family of schools in Newham.

## Scope

The Admission Forum is a representative group that discusses all aspects of school admissions and associated matters and deliver recommendations for all development of new or existing policies and protocols. Their role spans all admissions of all state funded education establishments for children and young people in Newham, and independent schools where appropriate.

## Membership

The Admission Forum aims to fully represent all key parties:

- Local authority maintained schools – nursery, primary and secondary
- Academies (academies, academy convertors and free schools) – nursery, primary and secondary
- Faith schools – primary, secondary and their districts
- Independent schools (not state funded) – primary and secondary
- Private, Voluntary, Independent sector (early years)
- 14-19 – colleges, sixth forms, studio schools and university technical colleges
- Special schools and resources provisions

## Roles

Chair: Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

In their absence they will nominate another member of the council to fulfil this role.

Council officers from Children and Young People's Services will also attend to provide recommendations, information and guidance.

Clerking will be provided by Pupil Services.

Membership will be reviewed every two years from July 2018.

Expressions of interest will be sought and where there are more candidates for one position than places available, others in that group will be asked to vote. In the event of

a tie, unless mutual agreement is offered, the representative will be chosen from those with the equal number of votes by a draw.

Where a representative misses two consecutive meetings or two meetings in one academic year they may lose their position [The process in other situations is explained: when does a representative lose their seat?] and a new member will be elected.

If a representative leaves Newham they will lose their place on the forum and a new representative will be elected.

Where a representative is no longer in a role from the group they are representing, the forum can ask them to stand down and a new representative for that group will be elected.

### **Frequency**

The Admission Forum will meet three times per school year, once per academic term.

### **Function and responsibilities**

Admission authorities of all maintained schools and Academies, when exercising their functions, should have regard to any advice offered by the Forum.

The Admission Forum will:

- widely promote their role, responsibilities, and agreed powers;
- remind that any party seeking change to or challenging of the current processes or protocols relating to any aspects of schools admissions, are required to submit their representations via a member of the forum;
- represent the forum and publicise the importance of it's role at head teachers meetings including Newham Association of Secondary Headteachers (NASH), Newham Association of Primary Headteachers (NAPH) and Primary Partnership Board (PPB)
- promote best practice in the application of the existing determined arrangements, the Admissions Code, local protocols and agreements and challenge where they are not clear, transparent, rationale or child focused;
- work with local authority officers to formulate proposed admission arrangements and develop new or existing processes/protocols relating to school admissions ensuring they are fair, clear, transparent, best serve the community and promote community cohesion;
- review and consider how well the existing and proposed admission arrangements for each academy and school located within the LB Newham serve the interests of the local children, young people and families.

- raise a collective objection during consultation where an admission authority consults on a proposed change to their admission arrangements that is not presented to the admissions forum and does not meet the statutory and local need;
- refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator where either it identifies admissions policy, practice or oversubscription criteria of a school that may be unfair, unlawful or that contravene the mandatory provisions of this Code, or where its advice has been disregarded by admission authorities;
- where appropriate refer non compliant arrangements to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator;
- consider evidence of alleged admissions malpractice;
- review the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the 'local offer' including the advice relating information regarding SEND admission of advice and guidance for parents by the local authority, and the delivery of advice and support for families;
- review and provide constructive suggestion based on the needs of families regarding the two annual composite prospectus – Starting primary School and Starting Secondary School
- consider the effectiveness of Pan London normal admissions and local In Year co-ordination, review the local authority data and other information to identify current or emerging themes and deliver recommendations;
- review and monitor admissions processes, see how they may be improved and how actual placements relate to the admission numbers published, for both normal and In Year admissions;
- monitor the admission of children who arrive in the authority's area outside a normal admission round with a view to developing the Fair Access protocol to ensure fair distribution of such children among local schools, taking account of any preference expressed and local challenges;
- work with officers to ensure the arrangements for children with special educational needs, children in care and children who have been excluded from school or have a managed move are placed to best meet their needs;
- review local protocols to ensure they do not result in any school having a disproportionate number of challenging children that would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources;
- work in partnership with the local authority to develop and implement the Fair Access protocol, then carry out annual reviews to monitor compliance and effectiveness.

### Scrutiny

Membership is open to all parties from the represented groups with recruitment via invitation. Where there is more than one candidate for their group, all members of that group will be given the opportunity to vote for their preferred representative.

The Admission Forum publishes all minutes on the Newham website <https://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/ServiceChild/Admissions-Forum.aspx>

## Information Sharing

Minutes and actions are shared with the Newham Association of Secondary Headteachers (NASH) and Newham Association of Primary Headteachers and relevant officers of the Council.

## References sources for the forum

School Standards and Framework Act 1998 - Chapter 1 of Part 3, Sections 86 and 94 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents>

The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/8/contents/made>

The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/10/body/made>

The School Admissions (Appeals) (England) Regulations 2012; <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2012-admissions-appeals-regulations.pdf>

The School Information (England) Regulations 2008; [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/3093/pdfs/uksi\\_20083093\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/3093/pdfs/uksi_20083093_en.pdf)

School Admissions Code 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

School Admission Appeals Code 2012 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code>

Admission of summer-born children in schools 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission>