

APPENDIX B

SECONDARY FAIR ACCESS & MANAGED TRANSFER PROTOCOL

1. Fair Access

National Guidance

The 2012 School Admissions Code requires each Local Authority to have a Fair Access Protocol, agreed with schools in the area. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure vulnerable children are provided with education as soon as possible. Slough introduced its first protocol in 2005, before it became mandatory, and this revised version builds on successful practice since then. Schools and the Local Authority agree which groups of children can be considered under the protocol and how they will be placed in schools. The normal admissions arrangements do not apply for children admitted under the Fair Access Protocol

Objectives of the protocol:

The objectives are to:

- Identify hard to place pupils.
- Agree arrangements with all schools about how these pupils will be placed.
- Distribute these pupils across Slough schools, so that no schools take a disproportionate number of pupils.
- Reduce the time pupils spend out of school, if possible to a maximum of 4 weeks.

Pupils to be considered Under the Protocol

The Admissions Code lists pupils who must be considered under the protocol. These are referred to as group 1 pupils in this document.

Group 1

- Children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Units
- Children out of education for more than 2 months
- Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers
- Children who are homeless
- Children with unsupportive backgrounds
- Children who are carers
- Children without a statement who have special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions
- Any children refused places through routine admission processes because a school has a high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or pupils previously excluded.

In previous years Slough has also included another list of pupils who will also be considered under the Fair Access protocol and who will receive hard to place funding. The current group 2 list is below.

Group 2

This list reflects recent practice, which includes supporting pupils moving from the PEAR (Pupils Educationally at Risk) Panel list back to mainstream schools and managed transfers between schools.

- Children who have been permanently excluded
- Year 11 pupils
- Pupils referred by the PEAR Panel for admission to mainstream schools
- Pupils considered as managed transfers (please see below)

Fair Access Admissions Process

The secondary Admissions Panel considers all in-year secondary admissions and many pupils considered are in groups 1 and 2 above. The panel manages the hard to place budget for group 2 pupils.

Details of all in-year applications are presented to the Admission Panel and any schools accepting pupils in group 2 may receive a one-off payment to assist with the integration of the pupil, regardless of when the pupil is admitted. Where a pupil transfers from one Slough school to another, it is expected that the application form will be signed by the current school before it is processed. Each case is considered on its merits. Payment follows confirmation that the pupil is on roll.

There is a maximum payment of £4000 per pupil, although the average payment is around £3000. At the end of the financial year the amount available may have to be reduced or payment deferred. Heads will be consulted on this at the time. At Admissions Panel meetings there is a summary report of payments made for the current financial year.

The panel refers to the running total of placements during the financial year to date, then considers the pupil's individual circumstances, parental preference, location of suitable schools and any concerns expressed by schools about admission. The panel will then reach a decision about placement and consider whether the student is eligible for hard to place funding. If a school is eligible for hard to place funding and the place breaks down within 3 months, the funding will be recovered so that it can be used to support another placement.

2. Managed Transfers

Purpose

The purpose of managed transfers is to prevent permanent exclusion where possible and reduce pupil absence due to pupil/parental dissatisfaction with the existing school.

Managed transfers can only be arranged with the consent of parents. There is a commitment by Slough Heads to retain pupils, but there will be circumstances where schools request a transfer and this can be beneficial for both the pupil and the school and often there is a need to arrange this quickly.

Pupils to be Considered

There are usually 2 main reasons why pupils could be considered for a managed transfer.

1. There may have been a critical event such as an incident at school, a fixed term exclusion or the possibility of a permanent exclusion. A rapid response meeting may have been arranged.
2. There may be a history of low level issues, which have led to general dissatisfaction with the current situation on the part of the parent or the school or both. In all cases schools should have attempted to resolve issues with the pupil/parent before considering managed transfer.

Mechanism for Placement of Pupils.

Heads should initially contact the School Access Officer, using the appropriate form. The request should include information about the pupil, action already taken and whether a short term trial placement is required or a permanent transfer. The School Access Officer will contact other schools and responses from schools will be considered and discussed with parents with the aim of completing the transfer quickly. Schools will be kept up to date with progress and receiving schools may be eligible for hard to place funding.

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