



## **Admissions Glossary and Common Definitions**

(Derived from the Department for Education School Admissions Code, Dec 2014)

### **Academic Year**

A period commencing with 1 August and ending with the next 31 July, as defined by Section 88M of the SSFA 1998.

### **Admission Authority**

The body responsible for setting and applying a school's admission arrangements. For community or voluntary controlled schools, this body is the local authority unless it has agreed to delegate responsibility to the governing body. For foundation or voluntary aided schools, this body is the governing body of the school. For Academies, this body is the Academy Trust.

### **Admission Arrangements**

The overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places including any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered.

### **Admission Number (or Published Admission Number – (PAN)**

The number of school places that the admission authority must offer in each relevant age group of a school for which it is the admission authority. Admission numbers are part of a school's admission arrangements.

### **Banding**

A system of oversubscription criteria in which all children applying for a place at a banding school are placed into ability bands based on their performance in a test or other assessment. Places are then allocated so that the school's intake either reflects the ability profile of those children applying to the school, those children applying to a group of schools banding jointly, the local authority ability profile or the national ability profile.



## **Catchment Area**

A geographical area, from which children may be afforded priority for admission to a particular school. A catchment area is part of a school's admission arrangements and must therefore be consulted upon, determined and published in the same way as other admission arrangements.

## **Common Application Form (CAF)**

The form parents complete, listing their preferred choices of schools, and then submit to local authorities when applying for a school place for their child as part of the local co-ordination scheme, during the normal admissions round. Parents must be allowed to express a preference for a minimum of three schools on the relevant common application form as determined by their local authority.

## **Composite prospectus**

The prospectus that a local authority is required to publish by 12 September in the offer year. This prospectus must include detailed admission arrangements of all maintained schools in the area (including admission numbers and catchment areas).

## **Conditionality**

Oversubscription criterion that stipulates conditions which affect the priority given to an application, for example taking account of other preferences or giving priority to families who include in their other preferences a particular type of school (e.g. where other schools are of the same religious denomination). Conditionality is prohibited by the current Admissions Code.

## **Co-ordination / Co-ordinated Scheme**

The process by which local authorities co-ordinate the distribution of offers of places for schools in their area. All local authorities are required to co-ordinate the normal admissions round for primary and secondary schools in their area. Schools can take in-year applications directly from parents, provided they notify their local authority of each application and its outcome.

## **Determined Admission Arrangements**

Admission arrangements that have been formally agreed by the admission authority, for example, agreed at a meeting of the

admission authority and the decision recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

### **Determination Year**

The school year immediately preceding the offer year. This is the school year in which admission authorities determine their admission arrangements.

### **First Preference First**

Oversubscription criterion that giving priority to children according to the order of other schools named as a preference by their parents, or only considering applications stated as a first preference. The First Preference First oversubscription criterion is prohibited by this Code.

### **Governing Bodies**

School governing bodies are bodies corporate responsible for conducting schools with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Governing bodies have three key roles: setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluation.

### **Grammar Schools (designated)**

These were the 164 schools that were designated under Section 104(5) of the SSFA 1998 as grammar schools. A 'grammar school' is defined by Section 104(2) of that Act as a school which selects all (or substantially all) of its pupils on the basis of general (i.e. academic) ability. At the time of publication, most grammar schools have converted to Academy status.

### **Home Local Authority**

A child's home local authority is the local authority in whose area the child resides.

### **Infant Class Size Exceptions**

The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 permit children to be admitted as exceptions to the infant class size limit. These are set out in paragraph 2.15. of the Code.

### **Infant Class Size Limit**

Section 1 of the SSFA 1998 limits the size of an infant class (i.e. a class in which the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven during the school year) to 30 pupils per school teacher.

## **Local Government Ombudsman**

An independent, impartial and free service that investigates complaints about maladministration of certain public bodies.

## **Looked After Children (see also Previously Looked After Children)**

Children who are in the care of local authorities as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school.

## **Maintaining Local Authority**

The area in which a school is located is referred to as the maintaining local authority.

## **National Offer Day**

The day each year on which local authorities are required to send the offer of a school place to all parents of secondary age pupils in their area. For secondary pupils, offers are sent out by the home local authority on 1 March. For primary pupils, this will be on 16 April.

## **Normal Admissions Round**

The period during which parents are invited to express a minimum of three preferences for a place at any state-funded school, in rank order on the common application form provided by their home local authority. This period usually follows publication of the local authority composite prospectus on 12 September, with the deadlines for parental applications of 31 October (for secondary places) and 15 January (for primary places), and subsequent offers made to parents on National Offer Day as defined above.

## **Offer Year**

The school year immediately preceding the school year in which pupils are to be admitted to schools under the admission arrangements in question. This is the school year in which the offers of school places are communicated.

## **Oversubscription**

Where a school has a higher number of applicants than the school's published admission number.

### **Oversubscription Criteria**

This refers to the published criteria that an admission authority applies when a school has more applications than places available in order to decide which children will be allocated a place.

### **Previously Looked After Children**

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order).

### **Reception Class**

Defined by Section 142 of the SSFA 1998 as a class in which education is provided which is suitable for children aged five and any children who are under or over five years old whom it is expedient to educate with pupils of that age.

### **Relevant Age Group**

The age group to which children are normally admitted. Each relevant age group must have admission arrangements, including an admission number. Some schools (for example schools with sixth forms which admit children into the sixth form) may have more than one relevant age group.

### **Relevant Area**

The area for a school (determined by its local authority and then reviewed every two years) within which the admission authority for that school must consult all other prescribed schools on its admission arrangements.

### **Schools Adjudicator**

A statutory office-holder who is appointed by the Secretary of State for Education, but is independent. The Adjudicator decides on objections to published admission arrangements of all state-funded schools and variations of determined admission arrangements for maintained schools.

**School Year**

The period beginning with the first school term to begin after July and ending with the beginning of the first such term to begin after the following July, as defined by Section 579 of the Education Act 1996.

**Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN)**

A Statement of Special Educational Need is a statement made by the local authority under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996, specifying the special educational provision required for that child.

**Waiting Lists**

A list of children held and maintained by the admission authority when the school has allocated all of its places, on which children are ranked in priority order against the school's published oversubscription criteria.