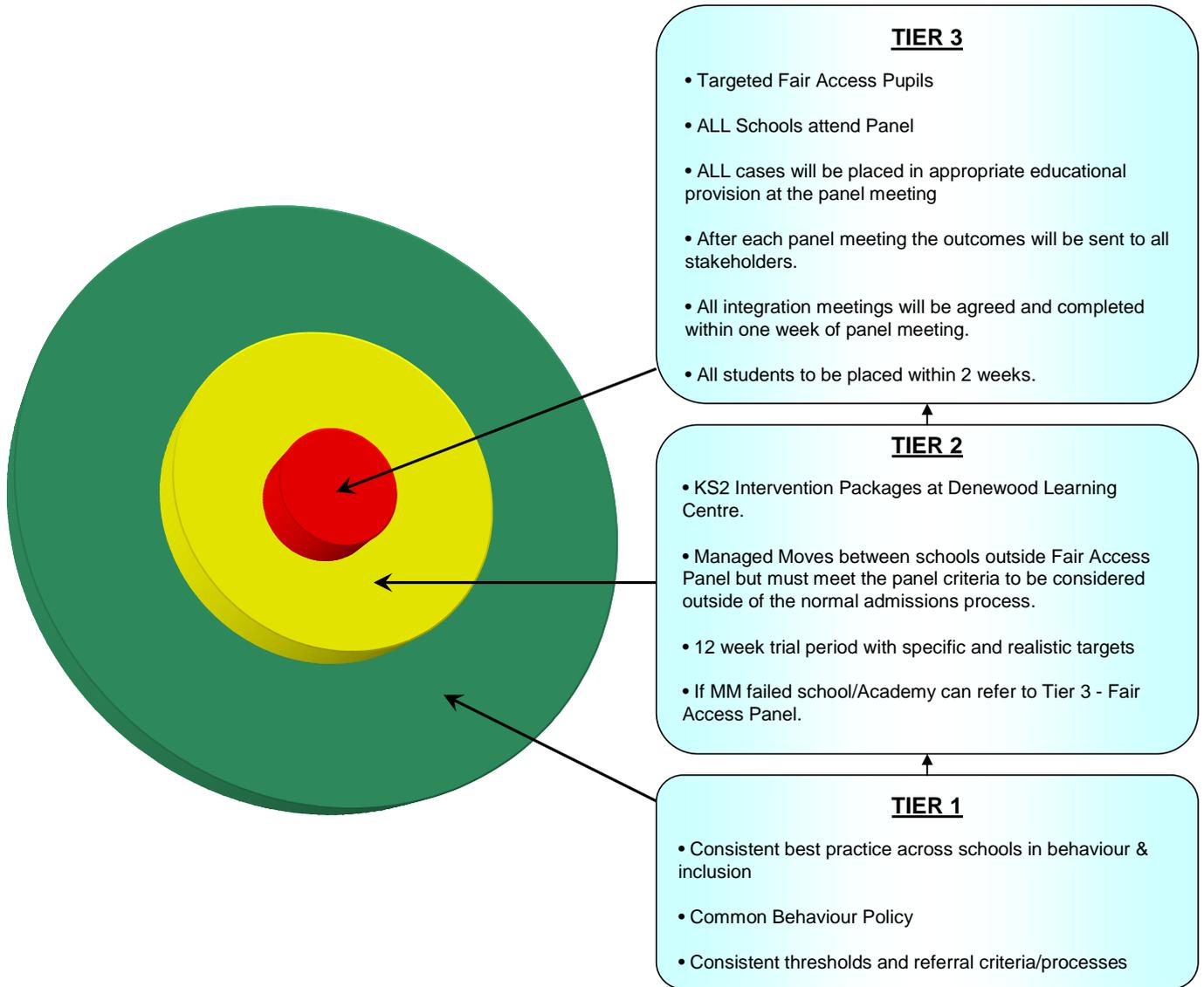


Fair Access Protocol

Primary
Key Stage 1 & 2

Updated: September 2012

Overview of Support Leading to the Fair Access Protocol



Fair Access Protocol

1. Background

- 1.1. The School Admission Code which came into force on 1 February 2012 and requires there to be a Fair Access Protocol in operation in every Local Authority which has been agreed 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. In agreeing a protocol, no school - including those with available places - is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools, or who have challenging behaviour (School Admissions Code, 3.9).

This is issued under Sections 84 and 85 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The School Admissions Code can be viewed in full at <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/school%20admissions%20code%201%20february%202012.pdf>

- 1.2. The Fair Access Protocol (FAP) exists to ensure that access to education is secured quickly for children who have no school place, but for whom a place at a mainstream school/Academy or alternative provision is appropriate, and to ensure that all schools/Academies in an area admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour. The operation of Fair Access Protocols is outside the arrangements of co-ordination
- 1.3. The Protocol encourages local authorities, schools and Academies to work together in partnership to improve behaviour and tackle persistent absence. There is no duty for local authorities or admissions authorities to comply with parental preference when allocating places through this protocol.
- 1.4. **All** Admissions Authorities **must** participate in the agreed Fair Access protocol (School Admissions Code 2012, paragraph 3.11) in order to ensure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school/Academy as soon as possible. This includes admitting children above the published admission number where the year group is already full. Nottingham City Council, Church of England and Catholic Diocesans, Academy Sponsors and Governing Bodies and their associated schools and Academies agree to comply with this protocol.
- 1.5. Children with statements of special educational need are **not** covered by this protocol as their needs are considered through a separate procedure.

2. Key Principles

- 2.1. There must be a balance between finding a place quickly, when the place might be in an undersubscribed school/Academy or one facing challenging circumstances, and finding a school/Academy place that is appropriate for the child. The principle of considering the individual circumstances of the pupil, in terms of what is best for them, whether they are ready for mainstream

schooling and, if so, which mainstream school/Academy will be best able to meet their needs **should** guide the operation of Fair Access Protocol.

- 2.2. The School Admissions Code states local authorities **must** ensure that no school/Academy, including undersubscribed schools/Academies, is asked to admit a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools/Academies or who have challenging behaviour (School Admissions Code 2012, paragraph 3.9).
- 2.3. It is expected that pupils on roll at a school or Academy within the City of Nottingham, considered at the Reintegration and Placement Panel (RAP), under the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) will have a Common Assessment Framework Form (CAF) and be open to the Team Around the Child (TAC) process.
- 2.4. Whilst each protocol covers only the schools/Academies in its local authority area, the home Local Authority should contact neighbouring authorities to help secure a place in that area under the protocol. The protocol is in effect a safety net for where normal admission procedures for in year admission have failed.
- 2.5. For the protocol to operate in accordance with the statutory requirement:
 - 2.5.1. Schools/Academies will continue to admit pupils whose parents apply for an available place, under normal admission arrangements.
 - 2.5.2. Pupils identified as Panel cases under the Fair Access Protocol will be given priority for admission over others on a waiting list or awaiting an appeal. Managed Moves will not be given priority for admission, unless they meet the criteria outlined in section 4.2 below.

3. Exceptions

- 3.1. The School Admissions Code states in paragraph 3.8:

*“Admission authorities **must not** refuse to admit children in the normal admissions round on the basis of their poor behaviour elsewhere. Where a child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools there is no need for an admission authority to comply with parental preference for a period of two years from the last exclusion.”*

- 3.2. However, the School Admissions Code continues in paragraph 3.12:

*“Where a governing body does not wish to admit a child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, even though places are available, it **must** refer the case to the local authority for action under the Fair Access Protocol. This will normally only be appropriate where a school has a particularly high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously excluded children. The use of this provision will depend on local circumstances and **must** be described in the local authority’s Fair Access Protocol. This provision will not apply to a looked after child, a previously looked after*

*child or a child with a statement of special educational needs naming the school in question, as these children **must** be admitted.”*

- 3.3. All schools and Academies will be expected to participate fully with the Fair Access Protocol and to admit pupils who are hard to place. The Local Authority and, if necessary, a Primary Reintegration and Placement Panel (P-RAP) will consider any valid concerns about admission (e.g. a previous serious breakdown in the relationship between the school/Academy and the family or serious historical issues with other children at the preferred school/Academy). Consideration will also be given to the individual situation, and contextual data for each school or Academy, including, the number of pupils admitted through the protocol and being supported by the school or Academy.
- 3.4. If a school or academy refuses to comply with the decision of the Local Authority or the P-RAP Panel, they must state their reasons in writing to the Inclusion Officer within 5 school days from the date of the decision. The Inclusion Officer will then determine a written view after consulting with the school/Academy and other agencies. All schools and academies will support the view and decisions through the protocol. Additionally, the Local Authority or Secretary of State can enforce the protocol decision by using any powers of direction, if required.

4. Criteria for Priority Pupils

- 4.1. A pupil placed under this Protocol is not necessarily a “challenging” pupil. Any child in this category is however potentially a vulnerable child as long as an appropriate educational placement has not been secured.
- 4.2. The School Admissions Code 2012 states 7 minimum categories¹ to include in a Fair Access Protocol. These categories identify a child as potentially “Hard to Place or vulnerable”. These are not meant to be exhaustive but provide an example of pupils who **must** be considered under the protocol. It is proposed that the City protocol monitors these pupils, but will have specific focus on the following criteria:

Priority Pupils - Triggers

1. Children in Public Care.
2. Children attending Learning Centres who have been permanently excluded and who need to be reintegrated back into mainstream education. (See Section 7 below)

¹School Admissions Code 2012 – 7 Minimum Fair Access Criteria

- a) children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Units who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education;
- b) children who have been out of education for two months or more;
- c) children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
- d) children who are homeless;
- e) children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought;
- f) children who are carers; and
- g) children with special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions (but without a statement).

3. Children seeking an alternative to permanent exclusion with a history of intensive multi-agency support (CAF) and where alternative placements have been unsuccessful e.g. managed move.
 4. Children who have been out of education for longer than one school term and/or have a history of serious attendance problems (below 50% attendance within a 12 month period)
 5. Children fleeing domestic violence
 6. Children returning from the criminal justice system
 7. Children whose parents have been unable to find them a school place because of a shortage of places:
 - a) after moving into the area
 - b) without a school place
 8. Children from unsupportive families where a place has not been sought.
- 4.3. Looked After Children², will be given the highest priority for admission. The Inclusion Officer will establish in consultation with Social Care, the Virtual School and other agencies the preferred preferences for their education. The views of the schools preferenced and any potential prejudice as a result of the placement will always be considered. However, in most circumstances a Looked After Child will be offered, in agreement with school or Academy, even if the year group is oversubscribed if the offer is considered in their best interests. Once an offer has been made, the Lead professional will normally, but not always arrange a multi-agency meeting to bring together all the professionals that have been working with the child to support their transition into their new educational provision.
- 4.4. The Inclusion Officer will determine if a pupil meets the Priority Pupils criteria (4.2). All pupils who meet the criteria will be considered as 'Priority Pupils' and background information (including a CAF or other relevant documentation) will be collated by Nottingham City Council. This information will be used to support any application to school and the pupil's subsequent admission. All schools and Academies participating in the protocol will ensure background information is shared without delay. If the pupil does not meet the above criteria, the application will be processed through the normal admissions procedures, however, if a place is not secured pupils may then be considered under point 7 above.
- 4.5. Pupils, who meet the above criteria, will be managed by the Inclusion Officer and consideration of a school place for Priority Pupils will be based on the school in their local area/catchment and the individual circumstances of the case. These cases will be brokered by the Local Authority with schools and admission authorities. However, if a resolution cannot be established a Primary Reintegration and Placement Panel will review the case and issue a decision. The decisions of the Primary Fair Access Protocol, for all schools, will be reported termly to Education Improvement Partnerships. In addition an annual report will be sent to the schools adjudicator.

² A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

- 4.6. Pupils who are considered through the normal admission round but are unable to secure a school placement may first be offered a mandatory offer through the School Admissions Team. However, if this cannot be arranged they will be considered as a Priority Pupil.
- 4.7. The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act determined that by September 2001, no infant child should be in a class above 30. The School Admissions Code states in paragraph 2.15 that:

2.15 Infant class size – Infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) **must not** contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an ‘excepted pupil’ for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The excepted children are:

- a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs specifying a school;
- b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round³;
- c) children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process;
- d) children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
- e) children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

Consideration will be given to the legal limit of class sizes in Key Stage 1. However, it may be necessary to admit pupils as exceptions through the Fair Access Protocol. If pupils do not meet one of the excepted pupil criteria, as stated in point 4.7 above, Priority Pupils will be given precedence for admission over others on a waiting list or awaiting an appeal.

- 4.8. Pupils transferring between City Schools and Academies in year 6 will be strongly discouraged.

³ The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012. Previously looked after children are not excepted pupils for the purpose of these regulations until school year 2013/14.

5. Primary RAP Panel Meetings

- 5.1. If an admission can not be brokered directly with schools or Academies the Local Authority will arrange a Primary Reintegration and Placement Panel Meeting as outlined in section 4.5 above. There will generally be three panels (North, Central and South, although, these may adapt according to circumstance) which will be held by exception for pupils living in their catchment areas. The collective panel membership will use their expertise and knowledge to secure a decision for each individual pupil that is best for them. The Panel will need to balance between the pupil's needs and what school can best meet their needs, whilst ensuring that both are supported and that no school is asked to admit a disproportionate amount of pupils through the protocol, including consideration of Infant Class Sizes. All schools and Academies will support the decision of the panel.
- 5.2. Panel membership will consist of both school/Academy and support services representatives. All Panel members are responsible for arranging for an informed colleague to attend in their place should they be unable to attend. All professionals must come fully prepared with information pertaining to the individual cases to be discussed.
- 5.3. Schools and Academies will be represented by 3 head teachers from a maintained, Academy and Voluntary Aided Schools. School or Academy representatives will provide educational expertise and knowledge as well as represent an overall educational perspective for the City. Head Teacher representatives will be selected to represent the area schools. If pupils to be considered at the panel live near neighbouring panel borders, panel members may be selected from both panel areas to give an accurate representation of schools and local knowledge to secure appropriate education.
- 5.4. There will also be representatives from Support Services across Children and Families. They will be expected to represent their Service Area and provide relevant information about any involvement and support that can be offered.
- 5.5. The panel members will be provided with case information 5 working days before a panel meeting. Schools being considered for allocation will already have considered the case and expressed concerns in writing. However, they may inform their representative at least 2 working days prior to the meeting of any additional school information to be considered at the panel.
- 5.6. The core membership of the Primary RAP Panel will be (please see next page):

Core Members
Inclusion Officer (Chair) Support Services Representative(s) Denewood Learning Centre Representative Educational Welfare Officer Head Teacher Representatives (See table below)

Schools & Academies		
NORTH Panel	CENTRAL Panel	SOUTH Panel
1x City School 1x Academy 1x VA School	1x City School 1x Academy 1x VA School	1x City School 1x Academy 1x VA School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AMBLESIDE PRIMARY - BULWELL ST. MARY'S PRIMARY - BURFORD PRIMARY - CANTRELL PRIMARY - CARRINGTON PRIMARY - CRABTREE FARM PRIMARY & NURSERY - GLADE HILL PRIMARY - HAYDN PRIMARY - HEATHFIELD PRIMARY - HEMPSHILL HALL PRIMARY - HENRY WHIPPLE PRIMARY - OLD BASFORD PRIMARY - OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR - RISE PARK PRIMARY - ROBIN HOOD PRIMARY - ROSSLYN PARK PRIMARY - RUFFORD PRIMARY - SEELY INFANT & JUNIOR - SNAPE WOOD PRIMARY - SOUTHGLADE PRIMARY - SOUTHWARK PRIMARY - SPRINGFIELD PRIMARY - ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW SCHOOL - STANSTEAD PRIMARY - WARREN PRIMARY - WESTGLADE PRIMARY - WHITEMOOR PRIMARY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BENTINCK PRIMARY - BERRIDGE INFANT & NURSERY - BERRIDGE JUNIOR - BROCKLEWOOD PRIMARY - CLAREMONT PRIMARY - DJANOGLY NORTHGATE PRIMARY - DUNKIRK PRIMARY - EDNA G OLDS PRIMARY - FERNWOOD INFANT - FERNWOOD JUNIOR - FIRBECK PRIMARY & NURSERY - FOREST FIELDS PRIMARY - GLENBROOK PRIMARY - JUBILEE PRIMARY - MELBURY PRIMARY - MELLERS PRIMARY - MIDDLETON PRIMARY - PORTLAND PRIMARY - RADFORD PRIMARY - ROBERT SHAW PRIMARY - SCOTHOLME PRIMARY - SEAGRAVE PRIMARY - SOUTHWOLD PRIMARY - ST TERESA'S R.C. - ST. MARY'S HYSON GREEN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BLESSED ROBERT R.C. SCHOOL - BLUE BELL HILL PRIMARY - DOVECOTE PRIMARY - EDALE RISE PRIMARY & NURSERY - GLAPTON PRIMARY - GREENFIELDS PRIMARY - HIGHBANK PRIMARY - HOGARTH PRIMARY - HUNTINGDON PRIMARY - MILFORD PRIMARY - NOTTINGHAM ACADEMY (PRIMARY) - OUR LADY & ST EDWARD'S R.C. PR - RIVERSIDE PRIMARY - SNEINTON ST. STEPHEN'S PRIMARY - SOUTH WILFORD ENDOWED CE AIDED - ST PATRICKS CATHOLIC PRIMARY - ST. ANN'S WELL PRIMARY - ST. AUGUSTINES C. PRIMARY - SYCAMORE PRIMARY - WALTER HALLS PRIMARY - WELBECK PRIMAY - WHITEGATE PRIMARY - WILLIAM BOOTH PRIMARY & NURSERY - WINDMILL PRIMARY & NURSERY

6. RAP Panel Meetings

- 6.1. Panel meetings will be held as required. It is hoped that all but extremely exceptional cases can be brokered and placed through the main protocol. However, if there are serious concerns about an admission a Panel will be arranged to consider these cases.
- 6.2. Key contextual information will be provided by all schools and academies necessary prior to the panel meeting. This will be collated by the Admissions and Exclusion Team. Additionally, RAP statistics will be provided on a termly basis and shared with schools.

- 6.3. The Inclusion Officer will inform the Headteacher or Principal of the allocated school within 24 hours in writing of the Panel meeting. The school or academy must admit the pupil within 10 working days of being informed. If the Panel agree that a multi-agency meeting take place before admission, schools will have 15 working days in which to admit the pupil.
- 6.4. Funding is secured through the Schools Forum for the administration of the Primary Fair Access Protocol. This figure is currently £80,000. This funding is secured to support Fair Access pupils' integration back into education through, translation costs, assessments, purchasing support services and other inclusion strategies. Pupils are to be allocated funding relevant to their need. Education for pupils who have been permanently excluded will be provided by the appropriate Learning Centre (see section 7 below), and any costs recovered through agreed processes.

7. Learning Centre Reintegration

- 7.1. Within the City we are supported by two Learning Centres rated by Ofsted as 'Good' which support intervention within the City and educate permanently excluded pupils. Our Learning Centres work hard to identify pupils needs, address behaviour, attitudes and academic underperformance to try and raise achievement and reintegrate permanently excluded pupils back into mainstream education. Reintegration into another mainstream school/Academy is the right option for the majority of pupils.
- 7.2. Pupils will not usually be considered for reintegration into a mainstream school/Academy until their behavioural, social or emotional needs have been addressed and they are ready to return to a mainstream setting. The Executive Headteacher will identify and support pupils who are ready to reintegrate back into mainstream education from Denewood Learning Centre or Unity Learning Centre. This will be supported by background information about the pupil and their progress whilst at the learning centre. Permanently excluded pupils ready for reintegration, attending an alternative PRU/Learning Centre will be considered through the panel and a recommendation sought from the Headteacher regarding their readiness for reintegration.
- 7.3. Pupils who live in the City boundary who have been permanently excluded will normally be placed on the roll of either Denewood or Unity Learning Centre. Permanently excluded pupils who move into the City, who are not ready for mainstream education will attend a Learning Centre until they are ready to be reintegrated back to mainstream education.
- 7.4. All schools and Academies will take at least 1 reintegration pupil as required. Further reintegration pupils will be allocated through the panel and consideration will be given to the number of permanent exclusions issued by the school/Academy. Fair Access Protocols **must not** require a school/Academy to automatically take another child with challenging behaviour in the place of a child excluded from the school.

- 7.5. Reintegration placements should follow similar timelines to other panel pupils' admission. However, it is expected that the Denewood Learning Centre will continue to provide reintegration support for a specified period of time for any excluded pupils who are being reintegrated back into a mainstream school/Academy to ensure a smooth transition. Reintegration placements will be recorded and funded through the panel.

8. Other Key Documents

8.1. Other key documents are:

- Going to School in Nottingham – Information about admissions
- Schools Admissions Code – February 2012
- Intervention Protocol – Denewood Learning Centre