

Scheme for the Co-ordination of admissions into Reception / Junior (Yr3) in September 2020



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Definitions used in this scheme:

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| “LBH” | The London Borough Of Havering |
| “LIAAG” | The London Inter Admissions Authority Group |
| “the Application Year” | the academic year in which the parent makes an application (i.e. in relation to the academic year of entry, the academic year preceding it). |
| “the Board” | the Pan-London Admissions Executive Board, which is responsible for the Scheme |
| “the Business User Guide (BUG)” | the document issued annually to participating LAs setting out the operational procedures of the Scheme |
| “the Common Application Form” | this is the form that each authority must have under the Regulations for parents to use to express their preferences, set out in rank order |
| “the Equal Preference System” | the model whereby all preferences listed by parents on the Common Application Form are considered under the over-subscription criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings. Where a pupil is eligible to be offered a place at more than one school within an LA, or across more than one participating LA, the rankings are used to determine the single offer by selecting the school ranked highest of those which can offer a place |
| “the Highly Recommended Elements” | the elements of the Template Scheme that are not mandatory but to which subscription is strongly recommended in order to maximise co-ordination and thereby simplify the application process as far as possible |
| “the Home LA” | the LA in which the applicant/parent/carer is resident |
| “the LIAAG Address Verification Register” | the document containing the address verification policy of each participating LA |
| “the Local Admission System (LAS)” | the IT module for administering admissions in each LA and for determining the highest offer both within and between participating LAs |
| “the London E-Admissions Portal” | the common online application system used by the 33 London LAs and Surrey County Council |
| “the Maintaining LA” | the LA which maintains a school, or within whose area an academy is situated, for which a preference has been expressed |
| “the Mandatory Elements” | those elements of the Template Scheme to which authorities must subscribe in order to be considered as ‘Participating Authorities’ and to benefit from use of the Pan-London Register |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| “the Notification Letter” | the agreed form of letter sent to applicants on the Prescribed Day which communicates any determination granting or refusing admission to a primary or secondary school, which is attached as Schedule 2 |
| “the Prescribed Day” | the day on which outcome letters are posted to parents/carers. 1 March (secondary) and 16 April (primary) in the year following the relevant determination year except that, in any year in which that day is not a working day, the prescribed day shall be the next working day. |
| “the Pan-London Register (PLR)” | the database which will sort and transmit application and outcome data between the LAS of each participating LA |
| “the Pan-London Timetable” | the framework for processing of application and outcome data, which is attached as Schedule 3 |
| “the Participating LA” | any LA that has indicated in the Memorandum of Agreement that they are willing to incorporate, at a minimum, the mandatory elements of the Template LA Scheme presented here. |
| “the Qualifying Scheme” | the scheme which each LA is required to formulate in accordance with The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012, for co-ordinating arrangements for the admission of children to maintained primary and secondary schools and academies. |

Scheme for the Co-ordination of Admissions to Reception / Junior in 2019/20

Background

In accordance with the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, all Local Authorities (LAs) are required to formulate a schemes for co-ordinating arrangements for the admission of children to maintained Infant / Junior and Primary schools and academies. Details of the London Borough of Havering (LBH) scheme for **2020/21** for the Reception / Junior entry which forms part of the Pan-London Co-ordinated Admissions System are set out in this document. All maintained schools and academies are required to take part.

Where Parents/carers apply for places at a Voluntary Aided Denominational School or an Academy / Free School (in or outside Havering) they may need to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) for each of these Schools / Academies and submit them direct to the School / Academy concerned with any documents that the School requests by the closing date. The SIF forms will be available via Schools own websites.

Scheme for the co-ordination of Admissions into Reception / Junior in 2019/20

1. Applications from residents of LBH will be made on the Common Application Form (CAF). The CAF will include all the fields and information specified in Schedule 1. These will be supplemented by any additional fields and information which are deemed necessary by LBH to enable the admission authorities in the LA area to apply their published oversubscription criteria. Applicants can complete the CAF by applying online via the London eAdmissions portal provided by London Grid For Learning (LGFL). This can be accessed via the LBH website at: www.havering.gov.uk/eadmissions.
2. LBH will take reasonable steps to ensure that every parent of a child due to start school in **September 2020** is made aware of the application process. LBH will also provide information to every Ofsted registered early years provider within LBH for them to disseminate to parents of children that are due to start school in **September 2020**. The information provided will detail how parents can access LBH's composite prospectus (referred to as the "online admissions booklet" in this document) and details of how to apply online. The online admissions booklet will also be available to parents who do not live in LBH, and will include information on how they can access their home LA's CAF.
3. The admission authorities within LBH will not use Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs) except where the information available through the CAF is insufficient for consideration of the application against the published oversubscription criteria. Where SIFs are used by the admissions authorities within LBH, the LA will seek to ensure that these only collect information which is required by the published oversubscription criteria, in accordance with paragraph 2.4 of the School Admissions Code 2014.
4. Where SIFs are used by admission authorities in LBH, they will be accessible via the schools website. Such forms will advise parents that they **must also** complete their Home LA's CAF. LBH's online admission booklet and website will indicate which schools in LBH require SIFs to be completed.
5. Where a school in LBH receives a SIF, LBH will not consider it to be a valid application unless the parent has also listed the school on their Home LA's CAF, in accordance with

paragraph 2.3 of the School Admissions Code 2014.

6. Applicants will be able to express a preference for **up to six** maintained infant, junior or primary schools or academies within and/or outside the Home LA.
7. The order of preference given on the CAF will not be revealed to any school in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2014. However, where a parent resident in LBH expresses a preference for schools in the area of another LA, the order of preference for that LA's schools will be revealed to that LA in order that it can determine the highest ranked preference in cases where a child is eligible for a place at more than one school in that LA's area.
8. If parents experience difficulties completing a CAF online they will be advised to visit the Public Advise and Service Centre (PASC) based in Romford where a member of the School Admissions Staff will be able to assist. Parents unable to attend PASC can access support by contacting the Havering School Admissions Team via phone or email. All applications must be submitted by 11.59pm on the closing date **15 January 2019**.
9. The online Admissions booklet provides guidance and should be read in conjunction with making an online application. Where more than one version of the online application is submitted, the last version submitted will be used.
10. LBH undertakes to carry out the address verification process set out in its entry in the LIAAG Address Verification Register. This will, in all cases, include validation of resident applicants against LBH's maintained nursery data and the further investigation of any discrepancy. In addition, LBH may request documentary evidence of the child's address. Where LBH is not satisfied as to the validity of an address of an applicant whose preference has been sent to a maintaining LA, it must advise the maintaining LA no later than **11 February 2020**.
11. Where there is a discrepancy between the address given on the CAF and a school SIF, the Admissions Team will work to identify the correct home address. If the matter remains unresolved, the address on the CAF will be deemed as the correct address.
12. Applications made from LBH resident families working, or temporary living abroad, will be processed with all other applicants. The address that the child is living at the time of application, and at the closing date, will be used for purpose of processing. The applicant must inform the LA on their return in order for the address to be updated. Proof of address and occupancy will be requested.
13. LBH will check the status of any resident applicant who is a 'Looked After Child' or 'Previously Looked After Child' and provide evidence to the maintaining LA in respect of a preference for a school not in LBH's area by **5 February 2020**.
14. LBH will advise a maintaining LA of the reason for any preference expressed for a school not in LBH's area, in respect of a resident child born outside of the correct age cohort and will forward any supporting documentation to the maintaining LA by **5 February 2020**.

Processing Applications

15. Applicants resident in LBH must submit the Common Application Form **online** by **15 January 2020**.
16. Application data relating to all preferences for schools in the area of a participating LA, which have been expressed within the terms of LBH's scheme, will be uploaded to the Pan London Register (PLR) by **5 February 2020**. Supplementary information provided with the CAF will be sent to maintaining LAs by the same date.

17. The timetable for the exchange of application and offer information between the LA and schools within LBH is outlined in Schedule 2.
18. LBH will not normally consider late applications (i.e. applications received after the closing date) until after the National offer date unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Examples of what will be considered as good reason include: when a single parent has been ill for some time, or has been dealing with the death of a close relative; a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a property within LBH will be required in these cases) or there is uncertainty affecting the date that the application was received. Each case will be decided on its own merits.
19. Where such applications contain preferences for schools in other LAs, LBH will forward the details to maintaining LAs via the PLR as they are received. LBH will accept late applications which are considered to be on time within the terms of the Home LA's scheme.
20. The latest date for the upload of late applications which are considered to be on-time to the PLR is on **11 February 2020**.
21. Where a parent moves from one participating home LA to another after submitting an on-time application under the terms of the former home LA's scheme, the new home LA will accept the application as on-time up to **11 February 2020**, on the basis that an on-time application already exists within the Pan-London system.
22. LBH will participate in the application data checking exercise to be scheduled between **12 and 26 February 2020** in the Pan-London timetable in Schedule 3.
23. All preferences for schools and academies within LBH will be considered by the relevant admission authorities against the school's published oversubscription criteria without reference to rank order in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code (December 2014). When the admission authorities within LBH have provided a list of applicants in criteria order to LBH, LBH shall, for each applicant to its schools for whom more than one potential offer is available, use the highest ranked preference to decide which single potential offer to make (This is the 'Equal Preference System' as defined in Schedule 4).
24. All pupils applying for a school must be included on the schools ranked list. LBH will provide all own admission authorities home to school distances (straight line) to prioritise applicants tied under a certain criterion and/or rank applicants not meeting faith or other criteria. Where a school specifies a certain number of places to be offered under each category e.g. performing arts and distance, a ranked list should be provided for each category. Where appropriate, pupils may be included on more than one list.
25. LBH will carry out all reasonable checks to ensure that pupil rankings are correctly held in its LAS for all maintained schools and academies in LBH before uploading data to the PLR.
26. LBH will upload the highest potential offer available to an applicant for a maintained school in LBH to the PLR by **20 March 2020**. The PLR will transmit the highest offer made by the Maintaining LA to the Home LA.
27. The Local Admission System (LAS) of LBH will eliminate, as a Home LA, all but the highest ranked offer where an applicant has more than one potential offer across Maintaining LAs submitting information within deadline to the PLR. This will involve exchanges of preference outcomes between the LAS and the PLR (in accordance with the iterative timetable published in the annual Business User Guide) which will continue until notification that a steady state has been achieved or until **27 March 2020** if this is sooner.
28. LBH will not make an additional offer between the end of the iterative process and **16 April 2020** which may impact on an offer being made by another participating LA.

29. Notwithstanding paragraph 28, if an error is identified within the allocation of places at a maintained school or academy in LBH, LBH will attempt to manually resolve the allocation to correct the error. Where this impacts on another LA (either as a Home or Maintaining LA) LBH will liaise with that LA to attempt to resolve the correct offer and any multiple offers which might occur. However, if another LA is unable to resolve a multiple offer, or if the impact is too far reaching, LBH will accept that the applicant(s) affected might receive a multiple offer.
30. LBH will participate in the offer data checking exercise to be scheduled between **30 March and 9 April 2020** in the Pan-London timetable (Schedule 3).
31. LBH will send a file to the eAdmissions portal, with outcomes for all residents who have applied online, no later than **14 April 2020**. (33 London LAs & Surrey LA only).

Offers

32. LBH will inform all Havering applicants via the online eAdmissions application system of their highest potential offer of a school place and, where relevant, the reasons why higher preferences were not offered, whether they were for schools in the Home LA or in other participating LAs.
33. LBH will ensure that, if there are places available, each resident applicant who cannot be offered a preference expressed on the Common Application Form, receives an offer of an alternative school place in accordance with paragraph 2.11 of the Schools Admissions Code 2014. In these circumstances the nearest school with vacancies, after all other on-time offers have been made, will be offered (as measured by straight line distance).
34. On **16 April 2020**, LBH will send notification of the outcome to resident applicants via the eAdmissions portal. The notification and subsequent letter (which will be available to view online) will include the information set out as detailed below (depending on the outcome):
 - i) the name of the school at which a place is offered. If it is not possible to offer a school preference listed on the CAF, an alternative offer will be made to the closest school at which a vacancy exists after all other offers have been made.
 - ii) the reason why an offer was not made for any school for which a higher preference may have been expressed;
 - iii) notifies parents of their statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse a place at any school for which they expressed a higher preference;
 - iv) Parents will be asked to respond to their offer of a place by **30 April 2020**.
35. If parents do not respond by **30 April 2020** LBH will issue a reminder. If the parent still does not respond LBH will make every reasonable effort to contact the parent to find out whether or not they wish to accept the place. Only where the parent fails to respond and LBH can demonstrate that every reasonable effort has been made to contact the parent, will the offer of a place be withdrawn.

Post-offer

36. LBH will request that resident applicants accept or decline the offer of a place by **30 April 2020**, or within two weeks of the date of any subsequent offer.
37. Where an applicant resident in LBH accepts or declines a place in a school maintained by another LA by **30 April 2020**, LBH will forward the information to the maintaining LA by **7 May 2020**. Where such information is received from applicants after **30 April 2020**, LBH will

pass it to the maintaining LA as it is received.

38. Where a place becomes available in an oversubscribed maintained school or academy in LBH's area, it will be offered from a waiting list in accordance with paragraph 2.14 of the School Admissions Code 2014.
39. When acting as a maintaining LA, LBH will place an applicant resident in the area of another LA on a waiting list of any higher preference school.
40. Where a waiting list is held and maintained by a school / academy which is its own admission authority in LBH, the admission authority will inform LBH of a potential offer, in order that the offer may be made by the home LA.
41. When acting as a maintaining LA, LBH will inform the home LA, where different, of an offer for a maintained school or Academy in LBH's area which can be made to an applicant resident in the home LA's area, in order that the home LA can offer the place.
42. When acting as a maintaining LA, LBH and the admission authorities within it, will not inform an applicant resident in another LA that a place can be offered.
43. When acting as a home LA, LBH will offer a place at a maintained school or academy in the area of another LA to an applicant resident in its area, provided that the school is ranked higher on the CAF than any school already offered.
44. When acting as a home LA, when LBH is informed by a maintaining LA of an offer which can be made to an applicant resident in LBH's area which is ranked lower on the CAF than any school already offered, it will inform the maintaining LA that the offer will not be made and the applicant must re-apply.
45. When acting as a home LA, when LBH has agreed to a change of preferences or preference order, it will inform any maintaining LA affected by the change. In such cases, paragraphs 43 and 44 shall apply to the revised order of preferences.
46. When acting as a maintaining LA, LBH will inform the home LA, where different, of any change to an applicant's offer status as soon as it occurs.
47. When acting as a maintaining LA, LBH will accept change of preferences or preference order (including reinstated or additional preferences) from home LAs for maintained schools and academies in its area.
48. Applicants' names will be included on waiting lists for schools within LBH which have been named as a higher preference than the one offered. For example, if a child has been offered their third preference school, they will be included on the waiting list for their first and second preference schools. Applicants' names will not be included on waiting lists for schools which were a lower preference than the one offered. Waiting lists will be created on the **30 April 2020** and any places available will be offered after this date. The admissions authority will decide who is offered any subsequent vacancies. These places will be offered to children on the waiting list for a LBH school in accordance with the schools' published admission arrangements.
49. For all schools, late applicants will be included on the school waiting list along with unsuccessful applications received before the closing date, ranked in order of priority under the school's published admission criteria in accordance with paragraph 2.14 of the School Admissions Code 2014.
50. LBH will start to make offers from the waiting list from **1 May 2020**. LBH will continue to make offers as and when places become available.

51. After preferences expressed in accordance with paragraph 6 above have been determined, applicants may, before the start of the school term, revise their application by submitting a changed application form via the LBH website. The total number of preferences will be restricted to 6 at any one time.

SCHEDULE 1 - Minimum Content of Common Application Form (CAF) for Admissions into Reception / Junior in 2020/21

Child's details:

- Surname
- Forename(s)
- Middle name(s)
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Home address
- Name of current school
- Address of current school (if outside home LA)

Parent's details:

- Title
- Surname
- Forename
- Address (if different to child's address)
- Telephone number (home, daytime, mobile)
- Email address
- Relationship to child

Preference details (x 6 recommended):

- Name of school
- Address of school
- Preference ranking
- Local authority in which the school is based

Additional information:

- Reasons for preferences (including any medical or social reasons)
- Does the child have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)? Y/N
- Is the child a 'Looked After Child' or a Previously Looked After Child but now adopted or subject of a 'Child Arrangements Order or 'Special Guardianship Order'? Y/N

If yes

- name of responsible local authority

- Is there a sibling currently attending the school? Y/N

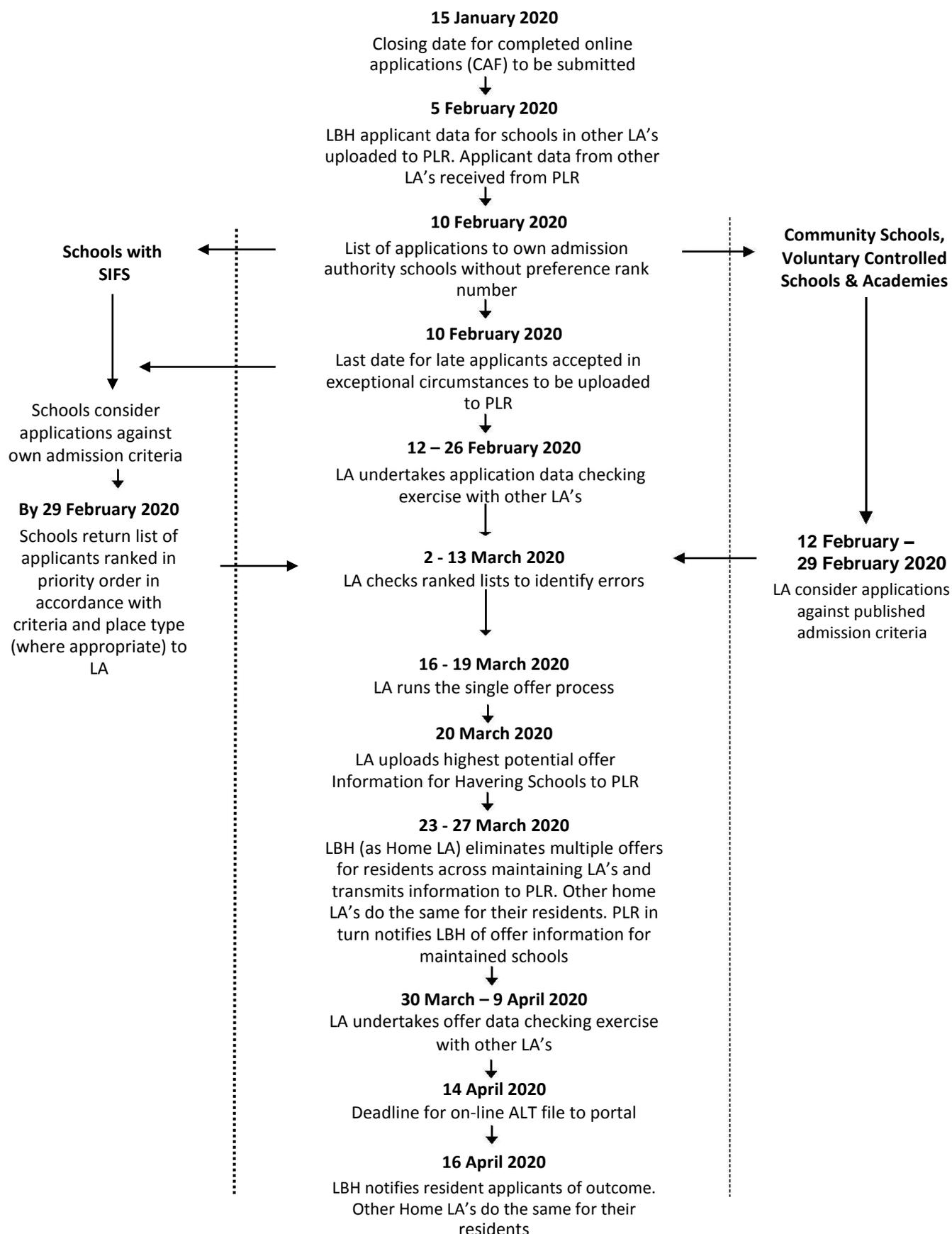
If yes

- Surname of sibling
- Forename of sibling
- Date of birth of sibling
- Gender of sibling
- Name of school the sibling attends

Other:

- Signature of parent or guardian
- Date of signature

SCHEDULE 2 - LBH Timetable for Reception / Junior Admissions 2020/21



SCHEDULE 3 – LIAAG Timetable for Admissions to Reception / Junior in 2020/21

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Wed 15 Jan 2020 | Statutory deadline for receipt of applications |
| Wed 5 Feb 2020 | Deadline for the transfer of application information by the Home LA to the PLR (ADT file). |
| Mon 10 Feb 2020 | Deadline for the upload of late applications to the PLR. |
| Wed 12 – Wed 26 Feb 2020 | Checking of application data |
| Fri 20 Mar 2020 | Deadline for the transfer of potential offer information from Maintaining LAs to the PLR (ALT file) |
| Thur 26 Mar 2020 | Final ALT file to PLR |
| Fri 27 Mar – Thurs 9 Apr 2020 | Checking of offer data |
| Tues 14 Apr 2020 | Deadline for on-line ALT file to portal |
| Thurs 16 April 2020 | Parents advised of offer |
| Thurs 30 April 2020 | Deadline for return of acceptances |
| Thurs 7 May 2020 | Deadline for transfer of acceptances to maintaining LAs |

SCHEDULE 4 – The Equal Preference System

LBH processes all applications using the equal preference system which is a model system where all preferences listed on the Common Application Form (CAF) are considered under the Admissions Criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings.

The “Equal Preference System” was created to prevent schools giving higher priority to parents who make a particular school their first preference. The system is set out in the School Admissions Code and it has legal force.

Every school that you place on your online application form is treated as if it was a separate application – each one is *equal* – and the highest possible preference will be offered. The admission authority **cannot** discriminate against your application simply because you did not put a school in first place on the CAF.

Schools are **not** told where you ranked them in your preferences. Admission authorities are expressly forbidden by law (again, it is detailed in the Admissions Code) from passing on this information.

Below is a highly simplified explanation of how the system works, but it is important to realise that the system is considerably more complicated than the example below and the admissions criteria for any school are always far more complex than in this example.

A simple example of how the “Equal Preference System” works

“Sample LA” has three schools: Park School, Town School and Wood School, and each school has a published admissions number of 3 (can offer places to three children). There are therefore nine places available across this “sample” Local Authority and there are nine children requiring places.

Places are offered according to the distance the children live from the school. Parents can express up to three preferences, and their applications were completed as follows.

| | Abdul | Beth | Takita | David | Ethan | Fred | Gavin | Harry | Jane |
|---------------|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
| Pref 1 | Town | Park | Park | Park | Wood | Town | Town | Park | Town |
| Pref 2 | Park | Wood | Town | Town | Town | Wood | Park | Wood | Park |
| Pref 3 | - | Town | Wood | - | Park | Park | - | Town | Wood |

After all applications had been considered against the schools published admissions criteria and the equal preference system applied, the outcomes were as follows.

| | PARK – 3 PLACES | TOWN – 3 PLACES | WOOD – 3 PLACES |
|----------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Beth (1) - 0.2km | Jane (1) - 0.1km | Harry (2) - 0.5km |
| 2 | Takita (1) - 0.5km | Abdul (1) - 0.3km | Ethan (1) - 0.8km |
| 3 | David (1) - 0.7km | Fred (1) - 0.5km | Gavin – 2.1km |
| 4 | Harry (1) - 0.9km | Gavin (1) – 2.5km | |
| 5 | Gavin (2) - 2km | | |

A step by step explanation of how these outcomes were achieved is below.

Step 1: The children are listed for all schools that they have named on their application form, not in the order of their preferences, but in order of the admissions criterion which, in this simplified example, is purely distance and nothing else. (That is an unrealistic situation, but the simplified example is designed to help you to understand the essential process.) The

children's application preferences are shown in brackets and distances to the school are also shown.

| | PARK – 3 PLACES | TOWN – 3 PLACES | WOOD – 3 PLACES |
|----------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Beth (1) - 0.2km | Jane (1) - 0.1km | Takita (3) - 0.3km |
| 2 | Fred (3) - 0.3km | Takita (2) - 0.18km | Jane (3) - 0.4km |
| 3 | Jane (2) - 0.4km | Beth (3) - 0.2km | Harry (2) - 0.5km |
| 4 | Takita (1) - 0.5km | Harry (3) - 0.25km | Beth (2) - 0.6km |
| 5 | Ethan (3) - 0.6km | Abdul (1) - 0.3km | Fred (2) - 0.7km |
| 6 | David (1) - 0.7km | Ethan (2) - 0.4km | Ethan (1) - 0.8km |
| 7 | Harry (1) - 0.9km | Fred (1) - 0.5km | |
| 8 | Abdul (2) - 1.0km | David (2) - 0.6km | |
| 9 | Gavin (2) - 2km | Gavin (1) - 2.5km | |

Step 2: Beth and Jane are at the top of the lists for their first preference school, so they are offered places and removed from the lists for the other two schools. Also, as Fred, Harry and Takita can be offered their 2nd preferences, their 3rd preferences are removed from the lists as follows:

| | PARK – 3 PLACES | TOWN – 3 PLACES | WOOD – 3 PLACES |
|----------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Beth (1) - 0.2km | Jane (1) - 0.1km | |
| 2 | | Takita (2) - 0.18km | |
| 3 | | | Harry (2) - 0.5km |
| 4 | Takita (1) - 0.5km | | |
| 5 | Ethan (3) - 0.6km | Abdul (1) - 0.3km | Fred (2) - 0.7km |
| 6 | David (1) - 0.7km | Ethan (2) - 0.4km | Ethan (1) - 0.8km |
| 7 | Harry (1) - 0.9km | Fred (1) - 0.5km | |
| 8 | Abdul (2) - 1.0km | David (2) - 0.6km | |
| 9 | Gavin (2) - 2km | Gavin (1) - 2.5km | |

Step 3: Ethan, Takita, Fred, Abdul and David can be offered a place at their 1st preference so are removed from the lists of their lower preferences.

| | PARK – 3 PLACES | TOWN – 3 PLACES | WOOD – 3 PLACES |
|----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Beth (1) - 0.2km | Jane (1) - 0.1km | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | Harry (2) - 0.5km |
| 4 | Takita (1) - 0.5km | | |
| 5 | | Abdul (1) - 0.3km | |
| 6 | David (1) - 0.7km | | Ethan (1) - 0.8km |
| 7 | Harry (1) - 0.9km | Fred (1) - 0.5km | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | Gavin (2) - 2km | Gavin (1) - 2.5km | |

Step 4: All the remaining children now move up the lists into the vacant places.

| | PARK – 3 PLACES | TOWN – 3 PLACES | WOOD – 3 PLACES |
|----------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Beth (1) - 0.2km | Jane (1) - 0.1km | Harry (2) - 0.5km |
| 2 | Takita (1) - 0.5km | Abdul (1) - 0.3km | Ethan (1) - 0.8km |
| 3 | David (1) - 0.7km | Fred (1) - 0.5km | **Gavin - 2.1km |
| 4 | Harry (1) - 0.9km | Gavin (1) – 2.5km | |
| 5 | Gavin (2) - 2km | | |

Step 5: Harry has received a place at his second preference school but will stay on the waiting list for his first preference, Park School. Unfortunately Gavin has not been offered either of his preference schools, so has receive an allocation of a place at Wood School, which was not one of the preferences on his application but does have a vacancy.

Gavin's situation demonstrates:

The importance of using all the preferences on the application form if you feel that you need to, especially if you are trying to avoid being offered a particular school.

That you must be realistic about your chances of getting in to a particular school. Gavin's parents may not have understood just how poor his chances of getting into their first and second preference schools were.

The example above also demonstrates how pointless it is to do what some parents do, which is to name only one school (often a heavily over-subscribed one) on the application form in the belief that "if I only put that school down they will have to give us a place".

Wherever possible you must name at least one school that would be an acceptable "last resort" for your child.