School Admissions & School Admission Appeals Services for Voluntary Aided & Foundation Schools

Service Description

September 2016– August 2017
Introduction

This Service Description has been produced by the Admissions Service of Cambridgeshire County Council. It explains that there are two core service packages available for purchase, from the Local Authority (LA), by those maintained Schools, for whom the Governing Body is the admissions authority. The Governing Body, as the admissions authority, has a responsibility to decide how it will manage admissions including, whether it will purchase services in order to enable it to meet its duties.

NB. Own admission authority schools who wish the Admissions Team to continue to co-ordinate in year admissions on their behalf will be able to use this service free of charge, for the academic year 2016/17 but should ensure that their decision to use this Service Package 1b Admissions Service In Year is provided by completion of the Voluntary Aided & Foundation School Sign Up Notification Form.

The cost to the LA of providing admissions and admission appeals services has in some years, exceeded the amount recouped from own admission authority schools. In acknowledgement of this, the level of charge is reviewed annually, and a decision taken to adjust this, if necessary, to take account of variations in demand. Schools will be given due notification of any proposed changes.

Service Packages 2a and 2b for ‘pay-as-you-go’ admission appeals services can only be purchased by Voluntary Aided & Foundation schools that buy Service Packages 1a and 1b respectively, and will therefore only be available for in-year appeals to those schools who choose to ask the Cambridgeshire County Council’s School Admissions Team to continue to co-ordinate and manage in-year admissions on their behalf. Service Packages 2a and 2b will be charged on a ‘pay-as-you-go’ basis and invoiced termly. Charges for appeals only become due if it were to prove necessary for appeals for your school to be heard within the contract period of the academic year 2016/17.

In addition to core Admission services 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b a range of admissions services including but not limited to, consideration of, and decisions on, requests for accelerated and deferred entry and an admissions policy checking service are also available upon request. These are charged on a ‘pay-as-you-go’ basis and invoiced termly.

Full details of the Admissions services available are contained in Appendix 1. The services that will continue to be provided free of charge to Schools are contained in Appendix 2. A feedback form has also been provided and this can be found in Appendix 3.
1. Terms of Agreement

1.1 The Governing Body for the Voluntary Aided or Foundation School ("the School") appoints the Authority to provide a School Admissions and School Admission Appeals Service ("the Services") for the period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017, as requested by completion and return of the Voluntary Aided & Foundation School Service Level Agreement Sign-Up Notification Form, School Admissions and School Admission Appeals Services for Academies 2016/17.

1.2 The Authority agrees to provide the Voluntary Aided or Foundation School with the Services in accordance with the specification and the terms of this Agreement. The specification is set out in Appendix 1.

1.3 The School agrees that the Services are to be provided as follows:

(a) Direct to the School unless the School and the Authority’s Manager of Admissions and Transport otherwise agree in writing;

(b) Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement; and.

(c) Subject to the payment of the appropriate charge.

2. The Charge

2.1 The charge for Service Package 1 will be invoiced annually in September 2016. Charges that may become due for Service Packages 2a, 2b and any additional adhoc services supplied are invoiced termly on a "pay-as-you-go" basis.

2.2 Invoices will be raised manually and sent to the School by GPO or by email. The School shall pay the charge made in accordance with the invoice terms and within 28 days of the date of the invoice.

3. Voluntary Aided & Foundation School Responsibilities

The School undertakes to:

3.1 provide Cambridgeshire County Council’s School Admissions Team with all relevant, up to date information it may reasonably require to enable it to carry out the obligations under this Agreement;

3.2 support the preparation of appeal cases by responding in a timely manner to requests for information for, and approval of, the School’s final appeal statement.

3.3 inform the Manager of Admissions and Transport at the earliest opportunity when a problem arises or where one is anticipated; and

3.4 adhere to all relevant legislation and the School Admissions and Admission Appeals Codes.

3.5 Hold, store and use all information provided to it by Cambridgeshire County Council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
4. Cambridgeshire County Council (The Authority)’s Obligations

Cambridgeshire County Council School Admissions Team undertakes to:

4.1 commit to undertake all reasonable steps to deliver the services described in this agreement. If it is impossible, due to factors beyond the Authority’s control such as changes in legislation, the Authority undertakes to agree any new provision with the School before any changes to service are implemented;

4.2 respond to a request for a School visit/meeting to discuss particular admissions or appeals issues with staff and/or governors, as a result of tasks undertaken by the Authority’s Admissions Team under the terms of this agreement:

4.3 adhere to all relevant legislation and the School Admissions and Admission Appeals Codes; and

4.4 give due notice of any proposed changes in the terms of the agreement or charges.

5. Quality Assurance

5.1 In the event that the School is dissatisfied with the quality of the Services being provided the Headteacher/Principal should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve the issue with the Authority’s Manager of Admissions and Transport

5.2 If this issue remains unresolved the matter will be put before an Officer Panel of the Authority, to include the Head of 0-19 Places Planning & Organisation Service and a representative from Children, Families & Adult Services Finance department, to investigate with the aim of securing a resolution.

5.3 If having undertaken the steps to resolve the issues specified in clause 5.1 and 5.2 above, either party to this Agreement is satisfied that no resolution can be reached, either party may terminate this Agreement by serving written notice on the other party. The Authority will refund the part of the payment already made by the School for Service Package 1a for the remainder of the contract as a proportion of the annual payment. An invoice will be issued for any work carried out by the Admissions Team, up to and including, the date of termination. This must be paid in full and within the normal terms.

5.4 Upon termination of this Agreement pursuant to clause 5.4 the Authority shall (except as limited by law) have no liability to the School in contract or tort in respect of any loss, damages, compensation or claims arising directly or indirectly in connection with the provision of the Services or this Agreement.
6. **Termination of the Agreement**

   If the School does not intend to renew the Service Level Agreement on expiry, notice must formally be given to the Manager of Admissions and Transport by 31 August 2017.

7. **Liaison**

   The points of contact for the School will be:

   For School Admissions enquiries:
   Abhishek Joshi (Mark)
   Manager: Admissions & Transport
   Telephone number 07825 125251
   Email: mark.joshi@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

   For School Admission Appeals enquiries:
   Samantha Bennett
   Education Admission Appeals & Fair Access Officer
   Telephone number: (01223) 699794
   Email: samantha.bennett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

8. **Review of the Service Level Agreement**

8.1 The Authority undertakes to review this Agreement by 30 June 2017

8.2 By 31 July 2017 the School must decide whether it wishes to purchase any of the Services covered by this Agreement for the Academic Year 2017/18. At that point the School will have the opportunity to choose to do one of the following:

   - Extend the SLA;
   - or
   - Withdraw from the SLA.

   The School shall advise the Authority of its decision by notice in writing to be given by 31 July 2017.

NB. Any School which does not purchase service packages through the Service Level Agreement will continue to receive only those services described as per Appendix 2 of this Agreement.
APPENDIX 1: SERVICE PACKAGES

Service Packages 1a: School Admissions Validation Transitions Service

Validation services covering admissions at the point of entry to the School which includes checking:

- that a claimed Statement of Special Educational Needs, Education Health Care Plan and/or Looked After Status exists;
- which School/Academy the child currently attends;
- which catchment area the child’s address is in;
- that the School and parent have provided the same home address;
- that a claimed sibling does attend the School in accordance with published over-subscription criteria;
- priority ranking, using the School admissions criteria;
- distance measurements (using straight line distance measurement);
- maintenance of reserve lists in accordance with published admissions arrangements; and
- provision of copies of the School’s admissions policy and/or LA booklet to parents, and application forms, for the remainder of the intake year.

The School would still be required to:

- rank children under any church criteria;
- carry out any confirmation checks not routinely undertaken by the LA;
- refer potential applicants to the Admissions Team; and
- inform the Admissions Team when children are taken off roll or are to be permanently educated off-site

Charge per Primary Voluntary Aided/Foundation School: £326.40 net
Charge per Secondary Voluntary Aided/Foundation School: £1938 net

Any School subscribing to Service Package 1a will be invoiced annually, in September 2016.

Service Packages 1b: Admissions Validation In Year Service

Validation services as detailed above for Service package 1a (Transitions) but applied to In Year Admissions.

Charge per Primary Voluntary Aided/Foundation School: £0.00
Charge per Secondary Voluntary Aided/Foundation School: £0.00
Service Package 2a: Admission Appeals Transitions

This service package can only be purchased in addition to Service Package 1a. This package offers full co-ordination for all Transition Admission Appeals for the Academic Year: 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2017, and includes all work undertaken in preparation for the Appeal Hearing and the Hearing itself, with professional and independent input from Cambridgeshire County Council departments to ensure adherence to the School Admission Appeals Code, as follows.

The Admissions Team

- issuing refusal letters;
- providing information to parents on the appeal process;
- issuing appeal forms;
- arranging dates and venues for the hearing;
- issuing of all appeal correspondence to parents, including production/posting of appeals packs to all parties except panel members;
- providing maps showing appellants’ homes, relevant School, distance measurement routes;
- preparation of School case in liaison with School (NB. this does not necessarily include a visit to the School by the presenting officer);
- presentation of School case; and
- assistance with responses to complaints / Ombudsman cases / MP letters regarding appeals.

Cambridgeshire County Council Legal Services

- independent clerking by legal officer or solicitor from Legal Services, or appointed representative, independent of the admissions team;
- training of panel members;
- communication and training of panel members following changes to the Codes;
- reading of case papers prior to hearing;
- issuing decision letter on the Appeal to appellants and School;
- administrative duties in relation to the safe-guarding of the information following the hearing;
- follow up communication with the appellants; and
- assistance with responses to Ombudsman cases.

Democratic Services

- arranging attendance of panel members at the hearing;
- processing expenses claims received from panel members in relation to their attendance;
- posting of appeals packs to panel members;
- assistance with responses to Ombudsman cases; and
- recruitment of panel members.

Charges for this service are as follows:
For the first five appeals heard within the contract period for the School £305net/Appeal
For 6th–10th appeal heard within the contract period £280net/Appeal
For 11th and subsequent appeals heard within the contract period £200net/Appeal
Any School requesting services within Package 2a will be invoiced termly on a ‘pay-as-you-go’ basis.

Please note: If a School intends to ask the Admissions Team to organise their appeals for first entry to the School, they must inform the Admissions Team no later than the deadline for parents submitting their appeal requests.

The deadline for appeal requests has been revised according to the School Admission Appeals Code, published by the Department for Education (DfE) 1 February 2012.

The new deadlines for appeal requests are:

- Primary Voluntary Aided/Foundation School 17 May 2017
- Secondary Voluntary Aided/Foundation School 13 April 2017

This will enable the Admissions Team to ensure all appeals are heard within the statutory deadlines, 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

Service Package 2b: Admission Appeals In Year

This service package can only be purchased in addition to Service Package 1b. It offers full co-ordination for all In Year Admission Appeals for the Academic Year: 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017, and includes all work undertaken in preparation for the Appeal Hearing and the Hearing itself, with professional and independent input from Cambridgeshire County Council departments to ensure adherence to the School Admission Appeals Code as detailed above for service package 2a.

NB Charges for appeals only become due if it proves necessary for appeals for your school to be heard and invoices are then subsequently raised after the end of the term in which these appeals have been heard. Please therefore consider whether there may be occasion during the contract period when your school may require these service packages. Unfortunately in instances where schools have not selected Service Package 2a and 2b in advance of the contract period but later identify a requirement for Admission Appeals services then an additional £100 net administrative amendment fee will be charged to permit the buy in of these service packages mid contract.

Additional Services

Admissions services that are additional to the core Admissions and appeals service packages are also available on an adhoc basis. These include but are not limited to:

- Accelerations and Deferrals
- Admissions Policy-checking Service
- Additional Admissions tasks

Accelerations and Deferrals

This covers requests from parents seeking places for their children outside their normal age group or from a School on behalf of the child or parent. Examples include gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year.

The Authority has a well established process whereby a cross-service officer panel considers all aspects of the individual cases.
The tasks undertaken by the Authority would include:

- answering queries from the person making the request for deferral or acceleration (this could be the parent or the School), including explanation of the process, timescales, right of appeal;
- co-ordinating the work of the officer panel who will consider the case, including copying and distribution of the written evidence received in support of the request;
- seeking the views of the current and receiving School;
- issuing a decision letter to the parent or person making the request, and, where the decision is to refuse the request, synthesising the reasons for the panel’s decision and informing parents of their right of appeal; and
- seeking a review of the case by the relevant Head of Service (Primary or Secondary) where the parent challenges the decision

Charges for this service are as follows:    

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Per hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Officer</td>
<td>£50.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Admissions Policy–checking Service

Any School wishing to review their admissions arrangements, can request this as a service from the Admissions Team. This would include checking the School admissions policy documents to ensure they are compliant with the relevant School Admissions Code.

Requests for this service should be made in writing and/or e-mailed to the Manager of Admissions and Transport. An estimate of the cost of the service will be provided, together with an indication of when the task could be carried out.

Charges for this service are as follows:    

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Per hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Manager of Admissions and Transport</td>
<td>£45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of Admissions and Transport</td>
<td>£50.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Admissions tasks

Any School requesting services not covered under the packages outlined above will be invoiced according to the hourly rate for the officer(s) carrying out the work. Requests for services should be made in writing and/or e-mailed to the relevant Admissions Team contact. An estimate of the cost of the service will be provided, together with an indication of when the task could be carried out.

Charges for this service are as follows:    

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Per hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Admissions Officer</td>
<td>£25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Officer</td>
<td>£30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Team Leader</td>
<td>£40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Manager of Admissions and Transport and Presenting Officer at School Appeal Hearing</td>
<td>£45.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any School requesting additional adhoc services will be invoiced termly on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis.
APPENDIX 2: TASKS FOR WHICH THERE IS NO CHARGE

Tasks for which a Voluntary Aided or Foundation School would not be charged include:

- Point of contact/advice for parents seeking to apply;
- Issuing of common application forms and application information;
- Data entry of applications;
- Printing and issuing of offer letters;
- Provision of appeals information and forms to parents;
- Maintenance of reserve lists and further offer letters as places become available; and
- the issuing and handling of application forms.
APPENDIX 3: FEEDBACK FORM

The School Admissions Team is committed to improving the service it provides and would welcome your views. Please assist us by completing and returning this form to Mark Joshi, Manager of Admissions and Transport, 0-19 Places Planning & Organisation Service, Learning Directorate, Children Families & Adult Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, OCT 1221, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB3 0AP.

School Name:
Contact for follow up discussion:

Have you used the Admissions Team’s Services previously?

Have you been happy with the service that you have received? If not please provide details below.

Do you feel that the Services provided offers value for money?

Do you think that the service could be improved?
Either in its delivery?

Or in the packages offered?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?