

Before you determine your admission arrangements for 2024

Before you determine your 2024 admission arrangements, there are a number of important issues which must be addressed if you have not already done so:

- Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) no longer exists. For schools in West Northants, all references to Northamptonshire County Council or NCC should be removed and replaced with West Northamptonshire Council or WNC (NB: not West Northamptonshire County Council or WNCC).
- The application deadlines remain the same – 31 October for Secondary and 15 January for Primary. Only the year that the policy applies to will need to be changed (if you have included one).
- There is also no longer a 5pm deadline for applications – please remove all references to this time as applications will be accepted until midnight on the closing dates.
- The year that the admission arrangements apply to should be clearly marked on the title page of the document and it is also a good idea to put the date on which the arrangements were determined on there too. Make sure any reference to “Proposed” arrangements is removed.
- Any mention of Statements of Educational Needs should be removed. These statements were phased out between 2014 and 2018. School Adjudicators have stated that including obsolete terms in the arrangements renders them unclear.
- National Offer Days may change depending on whether they fall on a non-working day. We suggest that any reference to National Offer Day is written as follows without a year so it does not require altering every year: For Secondary schools “National Offer Day (1 March or the next working day)” or for Primary schools “National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day)”
- The Code says top priority should be given to looked after and previously looked after children but some schools still have “Children in public care and previously in public care” stated as their first criterion in their oversubscription criteria. Children who are looked after are not always in public care so this no longer correct. This should be changed to “Looked after and all previously looked after children”. Please also ensure your definition of previously looked after children has been extended to include those children who appear to the admission authority of a school to have been in state care outside of England prior to adoption.

Please see below for definitions of LAC and PLAC you can use in your arrangements:

Looked after children

A ‘looked after child’ is a child who, at the time of making an application to a school, is:

- a) In the care of a local authority, or
- b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989)

Previously looked after children

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- a) were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders), or
- b) became subject to a child arrangements order (as defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014), or
- c) became subject to a special guardianship order (see Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a ‘special guardianship order’ as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian (or special guardians).

This includes children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

If you have any queries, or if you would like us to look at your admission arrangements prior to determination to check it is compliant with the School Admissions Code (2021), please get in touch. We are happy to help.