

TRACKING FAIR ACCESS APPLICATIONS time line

Check list of actions

What you are responsible for:

1. When you receive a Fair Access Admission request check asap that you are satisfied that it does meet the Fair Access criteria. If in doubt contact AS
2. If it does not send the request back to Admissions and phone them
3. If it does check that you have sufficient information – if necessary
 - a. Contact Admissions
 - b. Contact previous school
 - c. Contact the parent/carer. Be clear that this is an admissions decision that is taken by local schools collectively. The Parent does not have a free choice in these circumstances but can appeal against the decision to the Local Authority (not to you)
4. Either asap put the case on a Core Group/Panel agenda
5. Or: start the background process of negotiating with schools
6. If you suspect that you may find schools refusing make sure you have sent a clear and formal invite to all schools as in email 1 below. You need to make sure that every school knows that a binding decision will be made at the meeting.
7. At the meeting keep careful minutes of the Fair Access discussion to make sure that you can show that the decision reached is a reasonable balance between meeting the needs of the child and sharing the load of in year admissions between schools. Remember that the Fair Access Protocol has sections on children returning to a school after EHE and about movement between schools at KS4. These sections will help your panel make the right decision.
8. **Once the decision has been reached inform the school using email 2, copying the email to Admissions and to the Inclusion Team. Make sure the contact details for the parent/carer are included with the email (send securely). Send email 3 to Admissions**
9. **A week later check with the school as to whether the child is on roll. If not send email 4 to Admissions.**
10. Your responsibility for the process is now ended. If the school is still refusing to take on roll it is up to the LA to take the next step. They might decide to re refer to you for a further fair access discussion but you can expect that they will discuss this with you.
11. Do not confuse a referral for Partnership support with Fair Access. If the child needs support then it is the responsibility of the school to make a referral to you in the normal way. You might link the two together to help the school accept the child swiftly but you shouldn't allow schools to make your support a condition of their acceptance.

TRACKING SHEET (Or use your own system)

1. Application received from School Admissions	Date:		
2. Is further information needed before decision can be made?	Yes/No If No go to 6		
3. Request for further information made to School Admissions team	Date:		
4. Request for further information made to others	Previous school	Date:	
	Other service		
	Family		
5. Additional information has been received	Date:		
6. Sounding out schools before formal decision made if appropriate or email sent to invite schools to meeting (email 1)	Date and details		
7. Formal decision made at a meeting of on.....	Date and title of meeting		
8. School allocated			
9. Brief background to the decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Why is this school appropriate for the child? b. Why is it fair that this school was chosen at this time? c. Was the school present at any discussion about the child? If the decision was taken without the school's involvement why? 			
10. School informed of decision by Co-ordinator using the standard format (see below) and copied to School Admissions (email 2)	Date the email and its copy sent		
11. School Admissions informed of decision by Co-ordinator using standard format (see below) (email 3)	Date email sent		
12. Co-ordinator (or Partnership admin) phones school a week after to check that the child is on roll.	Date check carried out		

13. Has the school reassured the Co-ordinator that the child is on roll	Yes – no further action No – go to 14.
14. Co-ordinator sends email to School Admissions and to Inclusion Team using the standard format (see below) (email 4)	Date email sent

Stage 6 Email 1. Invite to schools

To Head/Principal and to staff representative who works with the Partnership

Dear Colleague

Decision making authority at Partnership Meetings

The agenda for our next <Core Group/Panel> on <insert date> includes one or more Fair Access Cases. (Brief details are on the meeting agenda.) As you know the Fair Access protocol sets out the criteria for fair access and the process by which a school place is allocated. Because of the tight time frame laid down in the Protocol and in the DFE Regulations we will need to make a decision at the meeting.

I would therefore be grateful if you would ensure that the representative from <name of your school> is authorised to participate in and accept decisions taken to allocate a school place at the meeting.

Attachment

Stage 10 Email 2. Message to school at Stage 8

To Head/Principal and to staff representative who works with the Partnership

Dear

Fair Access Admission

Either:

At a meeting of the <name of your group that deals with FAP> colleagues across our partnerships discussed the case of <name of student>. The meeting was satisfied that this student meets the criteria that entitle him/her to be admitted to a school in our Partnership via the Fair Access process. The meeting took the decision that <name of student> should be allocated a place at <name of the school>.

As you know, the Partnership has a role in making Fair Access decisions. This is in order that local schools might work collectively to reach a decision about admission of often vulnerable students. Collectively we aim to balance the needs of the individual child with sharing between us the additional pressures on schools that arise from In-year admissions.

Please will you contact the Parent/Carer of the child and make arrangements to enroll the child in school as soon as you can.

(send contact details securely)

With thanks for your support

Or:

I know that you will be aware that a number of discussions have been held about the admission of <name of child> who is entitled to a school place in our locality under the criteria set out in the Fair Access Protocol. Schools collectively in the Partnership are grateful that <name of school> has

agreed to take <name of child> on roll. This email is intended to confirm this decision and to ask you to contact the parent/carer and enroll the child in school as soon as you can.

(send contact details securely)

We anticipate that this message is merely conformation of a decision that you are already aware of. An attachment sets out some of the background to our Fair Access process in case you need further information

With thanks for your support

This Guidance was agreed by Co-ordinators and issued in June 2020 and rechecked Aug 21.

Additional document to be fixed as an attachment to the email informing a school of a FA decision.

The Fair Access Protocol can be found at

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2019/6/6/fair-access-protocol.pdf>

The Partnership seeks to ensure that Fair Access decisions are taken carefully and fairly.

The Fair Access Protocol exists:

- to facilitate In Year admissions of vulnerable children
- to ensure that vulnerable “hard to place” children are able to access school places swiftly
- to share the additional pressures that are placed on schools by in year admissions of sometimes challenging children equitable across the locality
- and to balance that need for load sharing with our responsibility to find a “good fit” of child and school.

There is an expectation in our Partnership, set out in the Partnership Memorandum of Understanding, that school staff attending our decision making meetings will have the authority to act on behalf of their school in participating in decision making processes.

Children in Care – looked after children – are not covered by the Fair Access protocol. The interests of the child are paramount in admission decisions for Children in Care.

Fair Access protocols are local agreements between schools. The process by which they are formulated, and some key features, are set out by Regulation. Whilst schools can influence the shaping of the local FAP and can vote against it when it is reviewed, they cannot opt out of local implementation. In Leicestershire the five secondary partnerships have the responsibility to organise and administer the decision making process set out in the Protocol. Responsibility for enforcing decisions rests with the Local Authority and the ESFA.

Each local partnership has its own arrangements for recording Fair Access and other in year admissions to help ensure that additional pressure is shared as fairly as it can be. There are arrangements in place should a school in an alternative partnership area seem to be a viable alternative option for an individual child. The Partnerships collectively publish data about the number of Fair Access Cases across the county secondary sector in its termly report which is published on its web site at <https://www.leicsseips.org/links-to-public-documents>

Very occasionally there are circumstances that emerge that indicate that a place allocated via the FAP is not in the best interests of the child. Heads and Principals are asked to contact the local Chair of Partnership urgently should this be the case in order to minimise the delay to admission for the child.

Contact details for Chairs can be found at <https://www.leicsseips.org/chairs-of-partnership>

Email 3: Stage 11 Informing School Admissions:

Dear

You will have received a copy of the email that I have sent to <name of school> requesting that they place <name of student> on roll. This follows <name of Partnership's> Fair Access Decision.

I will check with the school in a week's time to see whether the child has been placed on roll as agreed in our Fair Access Process and let you know if that is not the case.

Email 4: Stage 14 School Admissions and to Inclusion Team

Dear

This is to let you know that <name of school> has not yet placed <name of student> on to the school roll. This email is being sent to the School Admissions team and the Inclusion Team.

I attach a note of the discussions and Fair Access decision.

I would be grateful if you would keep me informed of any actions that you take and would be happy to discuss any details with you if needed. Our guidance to schools makes it clear that the responsibility for enforcing the Fair Access Protocol falls to the Local Authority and the EDSA but we fully recognise the need to work with our schools in a way that builds partnerships.

Attachment