

## **HIGHLAND COUNCIL – POLICY ON CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

### **1. How Decisions on Admissions are Made**

- 1.1. A decision on admission takes into account the following issues in order of priority:
  - i. Pupils living within the geographical catchment of the school concerned, or pupils seeking Gaelic medium education living within the Gaelic Medium catchment of the school concerned.\*
  - ii. A local authority placement for any reason (e.g. certified medical reasons or recognised additional support needs which could best be served in that school; or because of capping of intake in the catchment school).
  - iii. Religious belief (denominational schools only).
- 1.2 School enrolments not covered by the above criteria will be subject to the placing request process. Decisions on precedence amongst placing requests takes into account the following issues in order of priority:
  - iv. Pupils living within the Highland area.
  - v. Certified medical reasons or recognised additional support needs which could best be served in that school.
  - vi. Siblings of pupils currently in attendance at the school.
  - vii. Pupils living within the catchment area of a school which is not the subject of the placing request where the intake is capped.
  - viii. Attendance at associated primary school. (S1 requests only)
  - ix. Proximity of home to school.
  - x. Road safety/ease of travel.

\*Pupils seeking Gaelic Medium education (GME), who are not yet within a defined GM catchment area, should contact their Area Office about enrolling in the appropriate school offering GME.

### **2. Additional Information**

- 2.1 Once a child from outwith the school catchment area has secured a place they will not be asked to move to allow a child into the school who has moved into the school's catchment area.
- 2.2 A place will be reserved in the catchment area school for children whose parents have requested a place in another school until the outcome of the request is known.
- 2.3 A placing request that is granted for the start of a new school session should be taken up within a month of the start of that session. Similarly a placing request for a transfer of schools within the school year should be taken up within one month of the date the request is granted. Any placing requests granted but not taken up within these periods will be deemed as no longer required. If the place is still wanted, a further placing request application must then be made.

2.4 A successful request for a placement in a primary school will not automatically place the child in its associated secondary school if this differs from the child's catchment secondary school. A further placing request will be required.

### **3. Reasons for refusing a Placing Request**

3.1 The Highland Council may refuse to allow a child to be admitted to the school requested by the parent in order to retain places for school age children of incoming families who reside in the school catchments area concerned, or for any one of the following reasons.

3.2 If placing the child in the school would:

- make it necessary for the authority to take an additional teacher into employment;
- give rise to significant expenditure on extending or otherwise altering accommodation or facilities provided in connection with the school;
- be seriously detrimental to the continuity of the child's education;
- be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school;
- likely to be seriously detrimental to the educational wellbeing of the pupils there;
- will result in the need for an additional class or the employment of an additional teacher at a future stage of the child's education in primary school even if pupil numbers remain constant;
- exceed the overall capacity of the school even if space in a class is available and additional resources are not required;

3.3 If the education normally provided at the school is not suited to the age, ability or aptitude of the child.

3.4 If the Education Authority has already required the child to discontinue his attendance at the school.

### **4. Timescale for Making Decisions**

The timescales for making decisions on placing requests are outlined below:

A placing request made for the beginning of the school year in August must be submitted by 15 March. A decision must be made by 30 April.

An application made after 15 March must be replied to within 2 months receipt of application.

An application for a child to move school during the school year will be replied to within two months of receipt of application.

Any failure to reply by the above timescales is a deemed refusal subject to appeal.

If a placing request is refused the decision letter will outline how to make an appeal.

### **5. Appeals**

Where a placing request is refused there is a right to appeal to an appeal committee. In the case of a refusal for a child or young person who has a co-ordinated support plan or a plan in

the process of being prepared, or if the school which is the subject of a placing request is a special school then the Appeal is made to the First Tier Tribunal:

<https://www.healthandeducationchamber.scot/contact-us>

If the appeal is refused there is a right to a further appeal to the Sheriff. Where a child has Additional Support Needs, if the Tribunal refuses an appeal, there is a right of appeal on a point of law to the Court of Session.