

Procedures for in year admissions in Surrey - 2016/17

1. Introduction

- 1.1. These notes provide information and advice for headteachers and school staff regarding the processes for application and offer for in year admissions during 2016/17.

2. Requirements of the School Admissions Code

- 2.1. The School Admissions Code requires:
 - The local authority to publish how in year applications can be made and will be dealt with
 - The local authority to, on request, provide information about the places still available in schools within its area
 - The local authority to provide a suitable application form for applicants to complete when applying for any school for which it is not the admission authority
 - Admission authorities to notify the local authority of applications for their school as and when they are received
 - Admission authorities to notify the local authority of outcomes of applications for their school as and when decisions are made
 - Admission authorities to inform each applicant of their right of appeal against the refusal of a place
- 2.2. In-year applications will be considered to be those that are made to join an existing year group within a school. Applications that will not be considered to be in-year applications are those being made for entry to:
 - Reception for September 2017, if they are made prior to 1 September 2017
 - Year 7 for September 2017, if they are made prior to 1 September 2017
 - Year 3 for September 2017, if the school has a separate PAN for Year 3 and if they are made prior to 1 September 2017
- 2.3. All applications should be made in accordance with the procedures set out in Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- 2.4. Appendix 1 sets out a flow chart for how applications will be handled from September 2016 and Appendix 2 sets out a flow chart for how offers will be made from waiting lists.
- 2.5. Appendix 3 sets out some template letters which own admission authority schools might choose to use.

3. Who should make an in year application?

- 3.1. Applications for in year admission are usually made by parents/carers who:
 - have moved into the area and require a school place for their child
 - wish their child to transfer between schools
- 3.2. It is extremely important that a child has continuity in their education and the local authority strongly discourages unnecessary transfers between schools. Schools are

expected to work with children and their families to prevent unnecessary transfers between schools.

- 3.3. Under no circumstances should a school ask a family to withdraw their child from the school's roll. If a school continues to face difficulty with a child who is on their roll, such as through poor attendance or challenging behaviour, they should seek support from the Area Lead for Pupil Support in the first instance.
- 3.4. If information comes to light through the in year admissions process which indicates that a school has taken a child off roll inappropriately or has not sought appropriate support for a child whilst they were on roll, the Admissions team will refer that information to the Area Lead for Pupil Support who will liaise with the school as appropriate.

4. In year admissions process for community and voluntary controlled schools in 2016/17

- 4.1. The local authority will receive applications and coordinate admissions for community and voluntary controlled schools.
- 4.2. Every applicant wishing to apply for a place at a Surrey community or voluntary controlled school outside the normal starting school process or transfer to junior/secondary school process will need to complete Surrey's centrally managed in year application form (IYA-SCCCMA).
- 4.3. Surrey's centrally managed in year application form will ask applicants to name up to three preferences which applicants will be asked to rank in their order of preference.
- 4.4. Surrey's centrally managed in year application form will ask applicants to complete information relating to their child that is permitted under the School Admissions Code and that is relevant to determining admission (but schools should also see section 12 on Fair Access Protocol).
- 4.5. On receipt of Surrey's centrally managed in year application form, the Admissions team will check the form to ensure that it has been **fully completed**. An application form will not be treated as valid until it has been fully completed. The Admissions team will also validate the address and, from the information provided, identify whether the child:
 - is a looked after or previously looked after child (**see section 7**)
 - is currently missing education (**see section 9**)
 - meets the criteria for placement under the Fair Access Protocol (see section 12)
 - has a statement of special educational needs and disability or Education Health and Care Plan (in which case the application will be referred back to the applicant and advised to apply through the SEND team)
 - might be at risk (**see section 9**)
- 4.6. The Admissions team will input the details of the application onto their database within 5 working days of the form being received.
- 4.7. Once the Admissions team is satisfied that the form is fully completed, they will consider the preferences named on the form against the vacancies that might be available at the named community and voluntary controlled schools.

- 4.8. If any of the schools have a vacancy the Admissions team will **ensure the child has been assessed against each school's oversubscription criteria and placed in the correct order on each school's waiting list (if one exists) before determining which school the child might be eligible for.**
- 4.9. Once all preferences have been considered the Admissions team will eliminate all but the highest preference offer for the child. This will be the outcome sent to the applicant **(but see paragraph 9.2 if no vacancy exists).**
- 4.10. Only the Admissions team will issue the outcome letter to an applicant, and no community or voluntary controlled school should indicate the outcome to the applicant until the Admissions team has issued the outcome letter. The outcome letter issued by the Admissions team will advise the applicant of their right to appeal for any school for which they are unsuccessful.
- 4.11. Only once the Admissions team has confirmed to a school that an offer of a place has been made can a community or voluntary controlled school make contact with an applicant, although they are not required to make contact at that stage. However it is recognised that to do so might eliminate delays in admitting children to school. Applicants will still be required to notify the local authority of whether they wish to accept or decline an offer.
- 4.12. Applicants will be given two calendar weeks to accept or decline an offer of a place, and if an applicant fails to respond the Admissions team will make every reasonable effort to contact the applicant. The Admissions team will not withdraw a place without first liaising with the appropriate school.
- 4.13. Once an applicant has accepted or declined a place, the Admissions team will notify the school and, if the place has been accepted, the school should make contact with the family to arrange admission if they have not already done so. Community and voluntary controlled schools will normally be expected to arrange admission **within no more than 10 school days** of the offer being accepted.
- 4.14. Where a place is offered, the Admissions team will track each application until a child has been placed on roll.
- 4.15. Children's names will not be automatically placed on the waiting list for any community or voluntary controlled school unless the applicant has applied for more than one child and not all children can be offered a place at the same school. In all other cases applicants will be advised that if they wish to go on the waiting list for a school they should **indicate this on their reply slip or** write in to request it.
- 4.16. Waiting lists for community and voluntary controlled schools will be maintained by the Admissions team in rank order in accordance with each school's oversubscription criteria.
- 4.17. The Admissions team will confirm to the school once a waiting list offer has been made.
- 4.18. The Admissions team will audit the waiting lists for community and voluntary controlled schools. All waiting lists will be cancelled at the end of the summer term 2017.

5. In year admissions process for own admission authority schools in 2016/17

- 5.1. Schools which are their own admission authority can choose to be part of Surrey's centrally managed in year application form (IYA-SCCCMA) or to use a separate application form (IYA-SMA).
- 5.2. Own admission authority schools are encouraged to use Surrey's centrally managed in year application form to ensure that:
 - children who are out of school are suitably supported
 - fair access cases can be identified quickly
 - safeguarding responsibilities of schools and the local authority are met
- 5.3. Applicants must not be told that they cannot apply for a place because there are no vacancies at the school.

Application process for own admission authority schools which use Surrey's centrally managed in year application form

- 5.4. Schools which choose to use Surrey's centrally managed in year application form can refer applicants to Surrey's website to access the application form (IYA-SCCCMA).
- 5.5. Applicants will be asked to include the school in the list of schools on Surrey's centrally managed in year application form.
- 5.6. On receipt of any application form which names an own admission authority school, Surrey's Admissions team will carry out the actions set out in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6. They will then refer the details of the application to the school within **5 working** days of the date the application is received or **within 5 working days of** the date it is deemed to be fully completed, **if later**. This referral will include any details which might be relevant to the child's admission should the school be able to offer a place.

Application process for own admission authority schools which use a separate application form

- 5.7. Schools will be provided with a template form for in year admission which they may personalise with their own school logos and return address.
- 5.8. The template form for in year admission will also be made available on Surrey's website as a school managed application (IYA-SMA) and schools must accept an application made by an applicant using Surrey's template form. Applicants who approach Surrey's Admissions team to apply for a school which uses its own application form will be directed to Surrey's website or to the school.
- 5.9. Whether the applicant completes Surrey's template form or the school's personalised form, in each case the form must be returned directly to the school.
- 5.10. The separate application form will only ask applicants to name one preference. If applicants wish to apply for other schools they will need to complete either Surrey's central in year application form or the individual form for the school, whichever is appropriate.

- 5.11. Each school's in year application form must only ask applicants to complete information relating to the child that is permitted under the School Admissions Code and that is relevant to determining admission.
- 5.12. All applications made on a separate application form must be shared by the school with Surrey's Admissions team within 5 **school** days of receiving fully completed information. This should include the outcome if it has already been decided. If it has not been decided, see paragraph 5.17 for details of sharing the outcome with Surrey's Admissions team.

Decision making process for all own admission authority schools

- 5.13. Schools which require additional information in order to apply their admission criteria may use supplementary forms but these must be included as part of the school's annually determined admission arrangements which must be displayed on the school's website.
- 5.14. Schools must consider each application in accordance with their admission criteria. If there is no vacancy in the year group the decision is likely to be a straightforward one. However, if the school has a vacancy, the only reasons why a school might not be able to indicate an offer are if the child:
- a. has been permanently excluded from two or more schools. In this case the requirement to comply with a preference is removed for a period of two years following the latest exclusion; or
 - b. has a statement of special educational needs and disability or education, health and care plan that specifies another school as the placement school; or
 - c. meets the relevant criteria under the Fair Access Protocol **and the school can demonstrate that it meets the circumstances described in the Protocol for refusing admission** (see section 12).
- 5.15. If an own admission authority school has a vacancy and has applicants on a waiting list that have not yet been ranked, they must ensure that all applicants are ranked before they give the outcome of an application.
- 5.16. Once the school has made their decision they must notify the applicant in writing. Where a place cannot be offered the outcome letter issued by the school must advise the applicant of their right to appeal. See Appendix 3 for template letters which own admission authority schools might choose to use.
- 5.17. As soon as a decision has been made the school must also notify Surrey's Admissions team. Own admission authority schools are asked to notify the Admissions team of the outcome of each application within 10 school days of the application being received, but where no vacancy exists the expectation is that schools will notify the Admissions team as soon as possible after they receive the application.
- 5.18. Own admission authorities must give applicants at least two calendar weeks to respond to an offer. If no response has been received within two calendar weeks the admission authority should make all reasonable effort to contact the applicant before deciding to withdraw the place.

- 5.19. Waiting lists for own admission authority schools will be maintained by each school. Applicants should not be placed on the waiting list until an application has been considered for the school and an outcome provided in writing.
- 5.20. If a waiting list position is provided to an applicant, the school must not give any indication of the likelihood of being offered a place.
- 5.21. Where ranked waiting lists are held, they must be ranked in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria. Schools must not give priority to children based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list.
- 5.22. No one individual is permitted to make an admission decision. Own admission authority schools are advised to take this into account when considering how admission decisions will be made.
- 5.23. If an own admission authority school allocates a place from the waiting list they must notify the Admissions team of the child who is to receive the offer.

6. Applications to out of county schools and sharing details of out of county applicants with other local authorities

- 6.1. If an applicant wishes to apply for an out of county school they must enquire with either the school or the local authority as to how an application should be made. Applications for out of county schools should not be named on Surrey's central in year application form.
- 6.2. Where the local authority receives details of an application from an out of county child, either on the central in year application form or from an own admission authority school, the Admissions team will share details of the application and outcome with the home local authority as soon as the outcome is known, to ensure they can meet their duties with regard to tracking and safeguarding of children.

7. Children in care

- 7.1. There is a separate form for the admission of children in care which must be returned by the relevant social worker to the Admissions team who will then liaise with the first preference school and so on. This is to ensure that applications for children in care can continue to be tracked and their admission monitored by the Admissions team.
- 7.2. Schools are reminded that local authorities must secure a school placement for a looked after child within 20 school days. As such, applications for looked after children must be considered quickly to prevent any delay in their admission. Schools should refer to Surrey's 'Protocol for the admission of children in care' for further information.

8. The role of the local authority in identifying multiple offers

- 8.1. If the Admissions team is made aware of an offer by an own admission authority school where an alternative offer has already been made, the Admissions team will track the application to ensure that the multiple offer is resolved.

9. Safeguarding and the role of the admissions team in making arrangements for children who are without a school place

- 9.1. **If the Admissions team is made aware of information that suggests that a child might be at risk, the team will make a referral to Surrey's Children's Services team. This will include cases where the child is declared to be living with someone who does not have parental responsibility or where the child is living with someone other than their natural parent who has declared themselves to have parental responsibility but has not provided evidence.**
- 9.2. If the Admissions team is made aware of a Surrey child who is out of school or who requires a change of school and there are no vacancies at any of the schools applied for, the Admissions team will offer a suitable alternative place at a school with a vacancy, regardless of the type of school. However where a vacancy is identified at an academy or foundation, trust or voluntary aided school, the Admissions team will liaise with the school in the first instance.
- 9.3. If there are no suitable alternative schools with a vacancy when considering travelling distance and journey time, the Admissions team will seek to resolve a placement for a Surrey child by asking a school to admit above their admission number in line with the Fair Access Protocol.
- 9.4. If a child lives in Surrey and, for whatever reason, remains out of school the Admissions team will notify the tracking officer for children missing education (CME) who will continue to monitor and liaise with the family.
- 9.5. If a child is a Surrey resident who is currently in a school and does not require a change of school and there are no vacancies at any of the schools applied for, the Admissions team will take no further action.
- 9.6. If the child is not a Surrey resident and none of the Surrey schools named as a preference are able to offer, the Admissions team will refer the applicant to the home local authority to resolve a placement if the child is not on the roll at any school.
- 9.7. Where a family is moving into Surrey, either from abroad or from elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and we are unable to allocate a place at one of the preferred schools, no alternative school place will be allocated until the child has moved and is living within the area. Instead, any such family will be notified of alternative schools with vacancies with the freedom to add additional preferences as required. An exception to this is children from Armed Services families or Crown Servants where evidence of a new posting can be provided. In such cases, the Admissions team will seek to identify an alternative school place if no preferred school is able to offer **(for further information see Surrey's 'Guidance on admission of children from overseas')**.

10. Enquiries from applicants

- 10.1. The centrally managed in year application form (IYA-SCCCMA) and the separate in year application form for own admission authority schools (IYA-SMA) will be available from Surrey's Schools and Childcare Service, on Surrey County Council's website and from each school in Surrey.

- 10.2. Any applicant who makes an enquiry with a school regarding the availability of places should be informed if there are any places available within the relevant year-group of the school, but schools must always take account of any children on the waiting list.
- 10.3. Even if there are no vacancies, enquirers must be advised of their right to make a formal application for a place and their right to go on the waiting list for a school.
- 10.4. No applicant should be required to disclose the details of the child when making a general enquiry regarding vacancies.
- 10.5. If a request is received from an applicant to view the school, arrangements should be made, as this will help the applicant to decide if it is the right school for their child. A visit should not be refused on the grounds that there is no vacancy at the school as an applicant still has the right to state a preference for the school and if it is not possible to offer a place the applicant can appeal against the admission decision.
- 10.6. If an applicant currently lives out of area but wishes to apply for a Surrey school they may do so, but the address to be used when processing the application should be the address the child is currently living at. The only exception is for children from Armed Services families or Crown Servants where evidence of a new posting can be provided and in those cases it is reasonable to use the new posting address prior to a move, or in the cases of a member of the Armed Services, a unit address if a posting address is not yet known (**for further information see Surrey's 'Guidance on admission of children from overseas'**).
- 10.7. There will be some families who are vulnerable or who are unable to navigate the admissions system easily, such as families with English as an additional language, travellers, families returning from abroad or armed service families. The Admissions team will continue to offer support to families who need additional help throughout the process.
- 10.8. Please also see Surrey's '**Guidance on admission of children from overseas**' if the applicant and/or child currently lives overseas.

11. Guidelines for considering applications

- 11.1. No applicant or child should be interviewed as any part of the application or admission process unless it is to assess suitability for boarding. If schools meet applicants before admission, for example at an open evening, it should be made clear that the meeting forms no part of the admission process, and cannot be used to select between applicants on a waiting list. **Schools cannot require a family to visit the school before an offer is made.**
- 11.2. A school must not refuse to admit a child on the basis of their behaviour elsewhere (see 5.14a) for limited exception), nor should they refuse to admit a child thought to be potentially disruptive, or who has exhibited challenging behaviour, on the grounds that the child ought first to be assessed for special educational needs (but see also section 12 on Fair Access Protocol).
- 11.3. Neither should admission be delayed for a child who has English as an additional language. All applicants must be considered in accordance with the school's admission

criteria, and if a place is subsequently offered, arrangements should be made to admit the child.

- 11.4. In some cases after offer, it may be appropriate for school staff to request further information (verbal or written) from a previous school. However, this is not part of the admission process and must not delay the child's admission. The information obtained should only be used to help the school identify specific areas of support. Exceptions may be necessary if an admission authority school is seeking evidence in support of a social/medical placement, but this should only apply if the school has a waiting list, in which case the school should liaise with the local authority.
- 11.5. If the child is attending another school, the earliest start date should be negotiated that takes into account any exceptional circumstances of the child, e.g. where a child is due to take exams at their original school. A reasonable maximum length of time that a place should be held open is 4 calendar weeks from the date of offer. However, where there are no exceptional circumstances it is reasonable to expect the child to start as soon as possible. Awaiting a house move, where there is no completion date, should not be treated as exceptional circumstances.
- 11.6. **In other cases, where a child is out of school, arrangements should be made to enable the child to start as quickly as possible. Schools should not wait until the start of the following half-term to effect admission.**

12. Fair Access Protocol

- 12.1. Schools should refer to Surrey's primary and secondary Fair Access Protocols which set out the criteria for placement under the protocol and the process for admission.
- 12.2. Additional 'fair access' questions will be asked of applicants applying for primary and secondary school. This information will be used to establish whether the child should be categorised as a fair access placement and to identify if there are any issues with a placement at a particular school.
- 12.3. The fair access questions should be checked to identify if there might be any issues regarding placement (fixed term exclusions, very poor attendance, out of school), if there is data that needs to be shared with other services (privately fostered, at risk) or if the child should be categorised as a fair access placement.
- 12.4. It is only appropriate for own admission authority schools to **refuse** admission where the situation is provided for under the protocol, **such as where the school has no vacancies; the school is in special measures, has recently come out of them or is otherwise assessed by the local authority as needing support; or where there are compelling reasons why a school would not be an appropriate placement for the child.** In these cases the school should refer the case to the Admissions team using the fair access referral form. **However in each case the admission authority must still write to the parent with the outcome and advise them of their right of appeal.** In other cases the school should admit the child but refer the details to the Admissions team so the placement might be logged as a fair access admission.
- 12.5. If a child lives out of county the Admissions team **will act in accordance with the section on 'Out of area applications' in the Fair Access Protocol.**

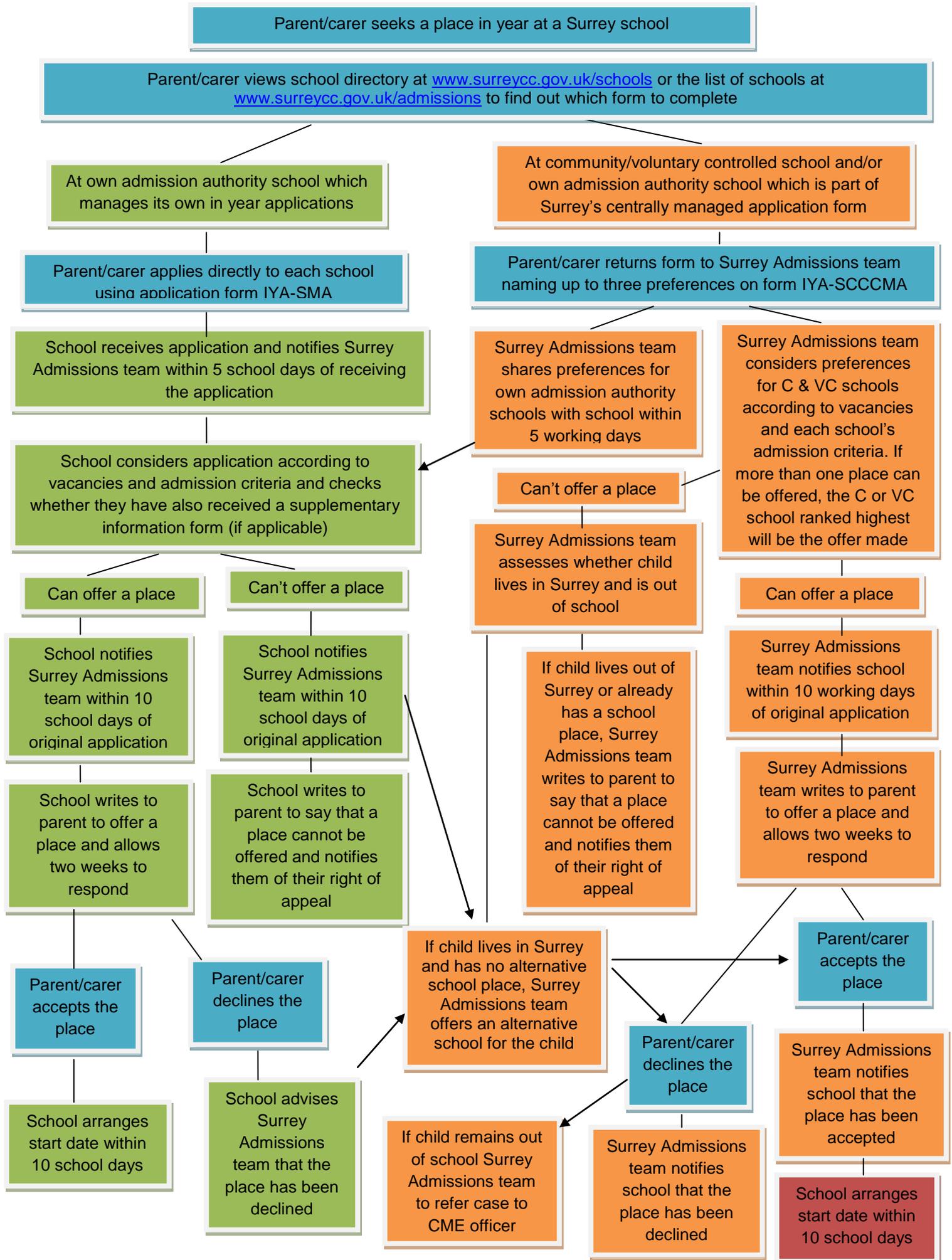
13. Data returns to the admissions team

- 13.1. Section 30(3) of the Education Act 2002 says: "The governing body of a maintained school shall provide the local authority with such reports in connection with the discharge of the functions of the governing body as the authority may require (either on a regular basis or from time to time) for the purposes of the exercise of any of their functions".
- 13.2. Clearly, the local authority has a responsibility for identifying and maintaining contact with children missing or at risk of going missing from education. As such, under this section of the Education Act, the local authority asks that schools notify the Admissions team of any leavers, including where those pupils are going, as and when they occur, to enable the Admissions team and the local authority to track pupils.
- 13.3. As required by the School Admissions Code 2014, the local authority also has a duty to communicate the availability of places to applicants, on request. As such, to ensure the vacancy information remains up to date, schools **must** provide the Admissions team with details of the vacancy position within each school and in each year group **on request, generally** a week before the end of each term and after the start of the autumn term.
- 13.4. In accordance with these procedure notes for in year admissions, own admission authority schools must notify the Admissions team of each in year application within 5 school days of it being received and the outcome of that application within 10 school days of it being received. In each case the information to be provided to the Admissions team is as follows:
- Child surname
 - Child first name
 - Child date of birth
 - Child gender
 - Child address
 - Current/Previous schools
 - Applicant's name
 - Applicant's address (if different)
 - Applicant's telephone and email address
 - Relationship to child
 - Offer/decline
 - Date of offer/decline
 - If decline, reason for decline

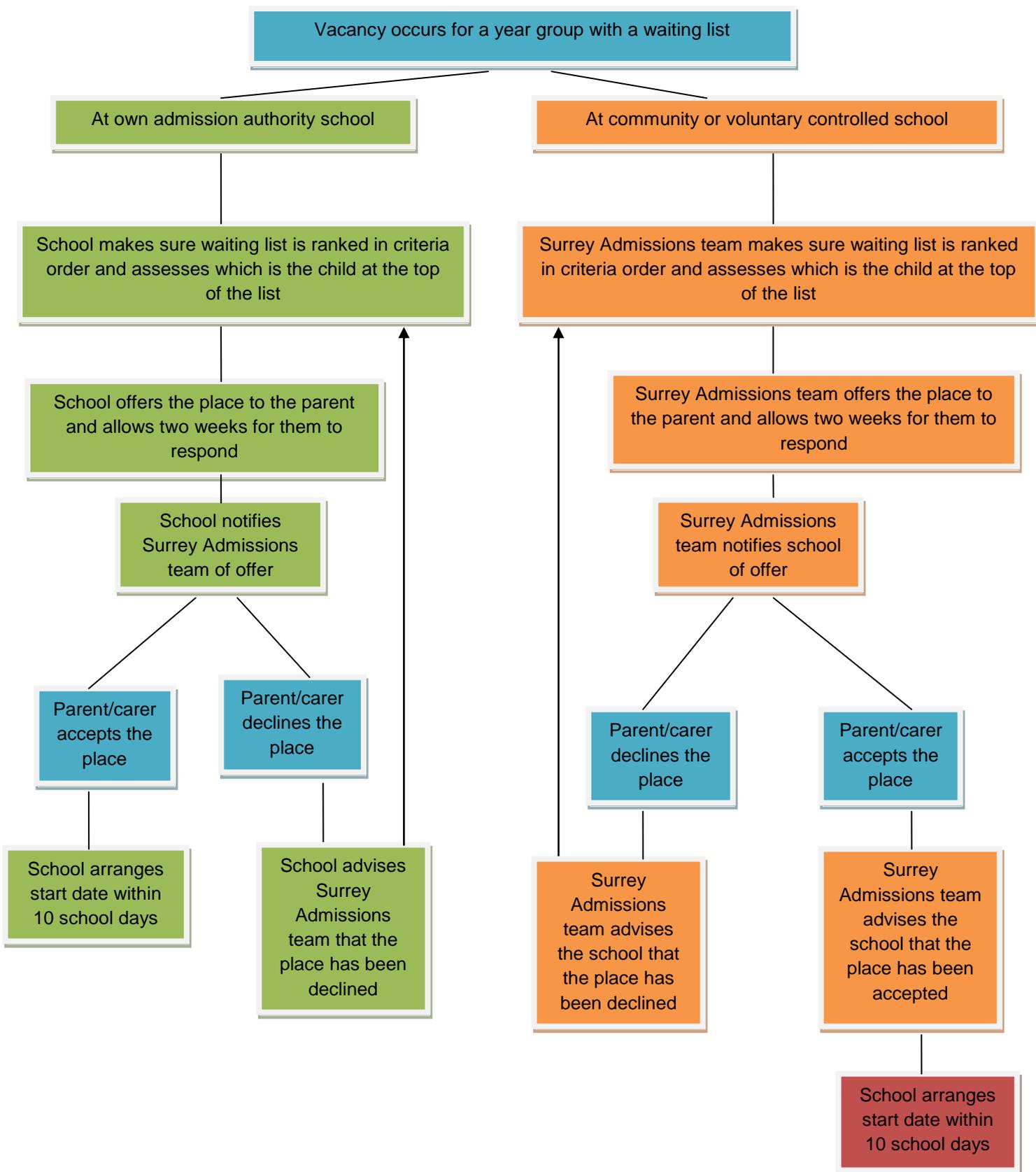
14. Data sharing between the admissions team and schools

- 14.1. Where possible, pupil related data will be shared between the admissions team and schools through **Surrey's School Admissions Module (SAM)** or the secure London Grid for Learning (LGfL) support site.
- 14.2. Where it is necessary to send data within an email, pupil related data will be kept to a minimum and emails will be encrypted/marked restricted.
- 14.3. Where hard copies of documents need to be shared with schools, the school will be notified by email and the documents will be sent **to a named contact within a school** by post.

Flow chart for processing in year applications from September 2016



Flow chart for making offers from the waiting lists from September 2016



IN YEAR OFFER LETTER - template wording and reply slip for own admission authority schools to use when offering a school place to an in year applicant

Dear

Application for admission to [School Name](#)

Child's name: **DOB:**

Following your in-year application for a school place for [Child's Name](#) I am now pleased to be able to offer [Child's Name](#) a place at this school.

You must accept or decline this offer of a school place by completing the enclosed reply slip and returning it to the school at the above address by [Date](#).

If you wish to accept the place, please contact us for all details concerning admission and associated matters. It is anticipated that [Child's Name](#) will be ready to take up this place within at least four academic weeks although we would normally expect to place a child on roll within 10 school days of a place being accepted. If [Child's Name](#) is not yet ready to take up this place please contact us to discuss a start date.

This offer has been made on the basis that [Child's Name](#) is still living at the above address. If you have moved house you must inform us. Failure to do so may result in this offer being withdrawn if it subsequently becomes apparent that it was made in error.

If you wish to enquire about eligibility for free home to school transport, please see Surrey's home to school transport policy which is available on the Surrey County Council website at www.surreycc.gov.uk or by telephoning Surrey's Schools and Childcare Service on 0300 200 1004.

I can confirm that details of your application and the outcome have been shared with Surrey's admissions team.

If you have further queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc Surrey Admissions Team
 Quadrant Court
 35 Guildford Road
 Woking
 GU22 7QQ

REPLY SLIP

Please return to:

School Name and address

If you do not return this form by [Date](#) we may withdraw this offer of a school place.

Child's Name:

DOB:

Child's Address:

School:

Please tick the appropriate boxes below:

1. I wish to accept the offer of a place at your school.

or

2. I do not wish to accept the offer of a place at your school and my child will be attending

Signature of Parent/Carer.....

Date.....

IN YEAR - UNABLE TO OFFER LETTER - template wording and reply slip for own admission authority schools to use when unable to offer a school place to an in year applicant

Dear

Application for admission to [School Name](#)

Child's name: **DOB:**

Following your in-year application for a school place for [Child's Name](#) I am sorry to tell you that I am not able to offer [Name](#) a place at this school. This is because the year group is currently full.

If you would like your child's name added to the waiting list, please [write to/telephone](#) the school to let us know.

[OR](#)

Your child's name has automatically been added to our waiting list. *[Delete as applicable]*

Waiting lists will be cancelled at the end of [each term/July each year](#) *[Delete as applicable]*. If you wish your child's name to remain on the waiting list after that time you should [write to us and let us know/submit a new application](#). *[Delete as applicable]*

As you have been refused a place at this school you have the right to appeal under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998.

For more information and to request an appeal form please telephone us on the above number. Appeal forms should be returned as quickly as possible.

[OR](#)

For more information on appeals please telephone us on the above number. To submit your appeal online please go to www.surreycc.gov.uk/schoolappeals.

I can confirm that details of your application and the outcome have been shared with Surrey's admissions team. For more information on applying for other schools please see Surrey's website www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions or telephone the Surrey Schools and Childcare Service on 0300 200 1004.

If you have further queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher