

SCHOOL & ACADEMY ADMISSIONS (PRIMARY & SECONDARY)

PROPOSED FIRST DAY OF TERM TRANSFER PROTOCOL

Individual admission authorities are able to operate a first day of term transfer protocol.

This is for parents and carers who request an In Year transfer for reasons of convenience rather than necessity. Admission authorities may operate such a protocol under the Education Act 1996.

This states that:-

(Part 433) - Time for admission of pupils:

(1) Section 14 (which requires a local education authority to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available for their area) shall not be construed as imposing any obligation on the proprietor of a school to admit children as pupils otherwise than at the beginning of a school term.

(2) Where, however, a child was prevented from entering a school at the beginning of a term—

(a) By his being ill or by other circumstances beyond his parent's control, or

(b) By his parent's having been then resident at a place from which the school was not accessible with reasonable facility,

The school's proprietor is not entitled by virtue of subsection (1) to refuse to admit him as a pupil during the currency of the term.

Schools / academies may find that the application of this protocol will help to prevent unnecessary ad hoc mid term transfers and to maintain educational stability for pupils. It may also reduce the additional work which transfers generate for staff by discouraging some transfers and concentrating others at term starts.

The protocol allows transfers only at the three term starts in September, January and April or May.

Where parents or carers request an In Year transfer they should be informed that the transfer date is the beginning of the next school term and that the pupil should continue to access his / her existing place until that date.

Clearly there will be exceptions, for example:-

- New to area children without a school / academy place must be admitted immediately if there is room in the required year group.

- Where a family has relocated within Blackpool and the existing school / academy is too far away for easy (or affordable) access.
- Where an Education Health Care Plan names a particular school / academy.
- Managed Moves and In Year Fair Access placements which are agreed mid-term via these respective processes (including any pupils who are returning to mainstream from Education Diversity).

There will also be occasions where schools will wish to liaise with each other to consider early transfers because of particular circumstances. Local liaison and flexibility is encouraged. The protocol does however allow time for schools and academies to have a dialogue with families where there has been a breakdown in relationships in order to retain pupils at their existing school and maintain their educational stability. On those occasions where discussion with the original school has been exhausted and it is clear that the child will not be returning it is possible to jointly agree to an early transfer. This will prevent a pupil remaining out of education until the beginning of the next term.

The essential factor to the successful operation of the protocol is that schools liaise with each other about enquiries for mid term admissions where pupils already have places at other nearby Blackpool or Lancashire schools / academies.

Transfer requests are sometimes for convenience or spur of the moment (sometimes parents may react to a resolvable situation at the existing school / academy). Schools and academies should try to retain these children on roll, and this is facilitated by having the additional time afforded by the first of term protocol.

Where parents withdraw pupils with the intention of educating them at home (Elective Home Education - EHE) this will not be accepted as a strategy to bypass the first day of term transfer protocol. Parents who declare an intention undertake EHE would be expected to return to the original school or academy if they requested a mainstream place within 2 school terms. If after going back on roll at the same establishment they made enquiries about an alternative placement this would be looked at within the agreed first day of term transfer protocol.

In order to ensure consistency of practice across Blackpool it would ideally be necessary for individual admission authorities to agree to adopt a first day of term transfer protocol. This would allow the first day of term arrangements to be reciprocal across the area and also to be applied to transfer requests from nearby Lancashire schools and academies (unless those parents had relocated away from the pupil's existing school - or there were other exceptional reasons for an earlier transfer date).