

**ADMISSIONS UPDATE 2006 / YEAR 7 CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL**

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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**1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1. To update the Admissions Forum on the admissions to nursery, primary, junior and secondary schools within Hertfordshire and to provide the Forum with information relating to the number of Year 7 children who did not attend school at the start of the autumn term in September 2006.

**2. Summary**

	Percentage of Hertfordshire parents/carers being offered one of their ranked schools on allocation day	Percentage of Hertfordshire parents/carers who applied on time being offered one of their ranked schools on allocation day
<b>Nursery</b>	98.44%	98.86%
<b>Primary</b>	97.92%	98.33%
<b>Junior</b>	99.28%	99.49%
<b>Secondary</b>	93.73%	94.42%

- 2.1 Excellent progress is being made with regard to the follow up on non-attenders and the figure is 13 for this year.

**3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 The Admissions Forum is asked to note the information in this report.

#### **4. Background information**

- 4.1. At the start of the Autumn Term, every school in Hertfordshire will have a list of the Year 7 children who are expected to start at that school. Every child in Hertfordshire, whose parents have not indicated that they will be sending their child to a non-state school or a school outside Hertfordshire, or indicated elective home education, will be on the list of one of the maintained schools.
- 4.2. On the first day of term, a number of children do not arrive at the school to which they have been allocated a place. Other than illness and holidays, there will be three main reasons for this:
  - a) The parents have decided to send their children to another school, often in the private sector, and have not informed the admissions team or the school. Occasionally the other school might be a foundation or voluntary aided school and the admissions team has not been informed.
  - b) The parents have decided that they will not send their child to the school where they have been offered a place because they have not been offered the school that they want. Parents have the right to decline such an offer of a place however they are also under a duty to ensure that their child receives full-time efficient education.
  - c) The parents have decided to educate their children otherwise than at school i.e. elective home education.
- 4.3. A brief summary of the procedures used this year for tracking Year 7 children to find out whether or not they are attending school and, if they do not attend on the first day, to follow up their circumstances is as follows:
  - March 1st 2006 - allocation letters sent out to parents. The letters advised that if parents did not accept a place within 15 days, then the place may be withdrawn.
  - May 2006 – Schools sent letter to parents who had not returned their response form, asking them to do so.
  - June 2006 – Local admission teams wrote to parents of children who had not accepted their allocated school or indicated what alternative education was planned, warning that the place could be withdrawn if no reply had been received within 14 days.
  - July 2006 - If no reply had been received from parents within 14 days, the local teams wrote again asking for information. The place was withdrawn if any other pupils were on the continuing interest list. A place at an alternative school was allocated in these cases.

- July 2006 - The teams also contacted primary schools in order that the schools could help in the process of finding out the destination of pupils or other planned education provision.
- July 2006 - Secondary schools were contacted after the day visit of Year 7s, to determine whether they had been visited by any of those pupils whose parents had not responded. In addition, an attempt was made to contact parents by telephone.
- September 2006 - If no response had been received from parents then local admission teams made enquires of the allocated secondary school to find out whether the child has attended on the first day.
- September 2006 - If there was still no information about the educational provision for a pupil, then local admission teams wrote again to parents advising that in 15 days of the date of the letter, a formal letter warning them of impending notice of Section 437 would be sent.
- 15 days after the date of the letter if no reply had been received a School Attendance Order was sent.

## 5. Outcomes of the notification and follow up process

5.1 The numbers of children not attending school on the first day of term over a 6 year period are as follows :-

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>EAST 1</b>	<b>EAST 2</b>	<b>WEST 1</b>	<b>WEST 2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
September 2000 (as at Oct 2000)	12	26	131	17	<b>186</b>
September 2001 (as at Oct 2001)	16	6	19	3	<b>44</b>
September 2002 (as at Oct 2002)	3	5	64	14	<b>86</b>
September 2003 (as at Sept 2003)	8	0	29	4	<b>41</b>
September 2004 (as at Sept 2004)	12	12	73	8	<b>105</b>
September 2005 (as at Sept 2005)	8	7	11	17	<b>43</b>
September 2006 (as at Sept 2006)	0	1	9	3	<b>13</b>

5.2 The admissions teams follow every case to ensure the LA is fulfilling its duty to ensure that all children of statutory school age are in education. There will be a small number of cases where the LA must prosecute for non-attendance, but the procedures ensure that the names of all of these children are known and that appropriate action is taken.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 This report has no financial implications

## **7. Access to Service Implications**

7.1 The LA has a general duty to secure an appropriate place at a school for those children of compulsory school age whose parents request it. This was achieved in Hertfordshire for September 2006 insofar as an offer of a place was made for all children seeking one.

7.2 The LA has a mechanism in place for ensuring that all parents are aware of the offer made to them and this is followed up if there is no response from the parent or there is a refusal to accept the place. There are a number of reasons why a child does not attend his or her new secondary school in September. This could include dissatisfaction with the offer, moving away from the area, moving into the independent sector in addition to non-attendance.

*Background material referred to by the author while compiling this report.*

None