**The Information as to Provision of Education (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended by The Information as to the Provision of Education (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011)**

**Guidance to local authorities on the submission of secondary school preference data**

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If you have any queries about this guidance please email: admissions.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk or call Alison Ellsworth on 01325 735632.

The technical specification for the data can be downloaded from the DfE website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datatransfers/coordinatedadmissions/a0072746/coordinated-admissions-2012>

**Section A: The Regulations**

The Information as to Provision of Education (England) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/4) (as amended by The Information as to the Provision of Education (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 require local authorities to submit data on secondary school applications made and offers met in relation to children resident in their area. Data should be provided for community, foundation, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools and for Academies.

Regulation 5 requires a local authority to provide the Secretary of State with a report containing the information specified in Schedule 2 to the Regulations on 1 March each year (or, in any year in which 1 March is not a working day, on the next working day) containing information correct as that date.

Regulation 5 provides that an authority ***may*** provide the Secretary of State with a report containing the information specified in Schedule 2 no later than 8 September (or in any year in which 8 September is not a working day, by no later than the next working day) containing information correct as at 1 September (or in any year in which 1 September is not a working day, the next working day).

In each case the information should relate to applications for admission to secondary school during the school year commencing in the August or September of that calendar year.

Schedule 2 specifies the information to be contained in each report.

The Regulations are available at [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk).

**Section B: Changes to this guidance**

**There has been one small change to this guidance since it was last issued in January 2011. This relates to the September collection (see FAQ section).**

**Section C: Guidance on the information to be included**

| **Regulations Schedule 2 paragraph** | **Field** | **Description**  | **Calculation checks** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | DFE Number | 3 digit number allocated to each local authority with education responsibilities |  |
| 2 | LA Name | Name of local authority |  |
| 3 | Report date | 1 March (or the next working day where 1 March is not a working day)  |  |
| n/a | National Curriculum year of admission | The National Curriculum year to which the data relates. This will be Year 7 for most local authorities, but will be different for local authorities with a 3 tier school system. Where there is more than one year of admission, e.g. to middle school and upper school, a separate report is required for each year.  |  |
| 4 | Total home applications | Total number of applications received in respect of children living in the local authority area, including applications for schools in other local authority areas. This is a count of the number of applications received in hard copy or online. Do not count each preference as a separate application. Duplicate applications, replacement applications, amended forms and forms from two different applicants in respect of one child should be resolved and counted as a single application. Applications that are withdrawn before an offer is made should not be counted. **Children with an SEN statement that names a school should not be included in this return.** **Do not count any applications which were treated as late applications. However, it is acceptable to include any applications which arrived after the closing date but which the local authority treated in the same way as on time applications.**   |  |
| 5 | Online applications | The number of applications in 4 above that were submitted online.  |  |
| 6 | Places available | Number of admission places available in home local authority secondary schools (i.e. the total of the published admission numbers for all secondary schools in the local authority area) for the admission year being reported upon.  |  |
| 7a-f | One preference, two preferences etc | Number of home applicants expressing one preference, two preferences etc. Where a local authority offers fewer than 6 preferences, N/A should be entered in the fields which are not relevant e.g. if an authority offers three preferences, N/A should be entered in the fields for 4, 5 and 6 preferences. Where no parent expressed a particular number of preferences, 0 should be entered in the relevant field e.g. if no parents expressed only one preference 0 should be entered in the field for one preference.  | The total number of preferences expressed must be the same as the total number of applications. 7 (a+b+c+d+e+f) = 4 |
| 8a-f | First preference offers | Number of applicants offered a place at their first preference school, second preference school etc. **Children with an SEN statement that names a school should not be included in this return.** As above, enter N/A as appropriate where authority offers fewer than 6 preferences and 0 where no parent was offered a particular preference.  | Where all applicants received an offer corresponding to one of their preferences, the total of 8 a-f will be the same as the total number of applications. 8 (a+b+c+d+e+f) = 4 Where not all applicants received an offer relating to one of their preferences, the total of 8a-f will be less than the total number of applications. 8 (a+b+c+d+e+f) < 4  |
| 9 | **Applicants without an offer corresponding to any preference** | Number of home applicants for whom offers could not be made for any preferences. This number should not include offers made to parents who did not submit an application. | The number of applicants without an offer corresponding to any preferences will be the same as the total number of applications minus the number of offers made which corresponded to parents’ preferences9 = 4 - 8 (a+b+c+d+e+f) |
| 10 | Alternative offers | Number of home applicants falling within paragraph 9 to whom an alternative offer has been communicated by the authority. **Do not include any offers made to parents who did not submit an application in this return.** If the response to question 9 is 0, N/A should be entered in this field. If the local authority does not make alternative offers on national offer day, this field should also be entered with N/A.  | The number of alternative offers must be the same as or less than the total number of applicants without an offer corresponding to any preference. 10< = 9.  |
| 11 | Vacant places | Number of admission places available in home authority secondary schools on report date. This is the number of places remaining in home authority schools that are NOT potentially filled through an offer to any pupils and should take account of offers made to applicants resident outside the home authority area. This number is not based on acceptance of the places or actual attendance.  | The number of vacant places will be the total number of places available minus the number of offers made to home applicants for a school in the home LA area minus any offers made to non-LA residents for home LA schools. 11 = (6-12) - offers to non-LA residents. (Offers to non-LA residents are not requested elsewhere in the data return.) |
| 12 | Total home LA offers | Number of home applicants for whom an offer was made in a school located in the home LA area. **Do not include offers made to parents who did not submit an application.**  | 12 + 13 <= 4 |
| 13 | Total other LA offers | Number of home applicants for whom an offer was made in a school located in another LA area. **Do not include offers made to parents who did not submit an application.** | The total number of home LA offers plus the total number of other LA offers must be the same as the total number of offers made which corresponded to parents’ preferences plus the total number of alternative offers. 12+13=8(a+b+c+d+e+f)+10 |

**Section D: Providing information about the local context**

The Department would welcome any local contextual information that local authorities can provide alongside the data submission that they feel may add value and background information to the data.

**The Department carries out a number of verification checks on the data submitted by local authorities. As part of this, it checks the data submitted against the published data for the previous year. Therefore, it would be particularly helpful if local authorities could provide an explanation of any instances of where their data is significantly different from the previous year’s data e.g. if there is a significant change in the number of applications made or the percentage of preferences met.** **Section E: Submitting the data**

**We would be grateful if local authorities could check the accuracy of their data before submitting it by using the calculation checks in the final column of Section C. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, a very high proportion of the data submitted contained inaccuracies. DfE cannot publish the data until it has passed a range of verification checks, including some of those in Section C. Where local authorities submit data that contains discrepancies, the Department will contact them between 1 March and 9 March to ask for the data to be corrected.**

Local authorities are required to submit the data on National Offer Day. In 2012 this falls on **Thursday** **1 March**. For the majority of local authorities this will mean running a report from their system and emailing the data in a spreadsheet format to: admissions.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk It would be helpful if you could title your email Secondary School Preference Data followed by the name of the LA.

Authorities will also have the option to submit the data through an online web <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datatransfers/secondarypreferences> which may be of particular use to those authorities without the facility to submit the data in the specified format above.

For the March data collection, the online facility will be available from 23 February 2012 to allow local authorities to familiarise themselves with it. However, data should not be submitted before 1 March 2012.

Local authorities that submit data via the web form will be required to provide a contact name, email address **and telephone number. We would be grateful if local authorities that submit their data by emailing a spreadsheet could also provide a contact name and telephone number.**

**Section F: Frequently Asked Questions**

**Should applications which arrived after the closing date be included in the return?**

Only those applications which the local authority treated as if they were on time should be included.

**Should applications for schools outside the home authority be recorded?**

It is the responsibility of a local authority to record the details of applications by and offers to all applicants living in their area. This will include applications made by home applicants for schools in another authority area.

**If a parent withdraws their application, how should this be recorded?**

If a parent withdraws their application before an offer is made, their application should not be counted in the return.

**How should applications to middle schools be recorded?**

Local authorities are required to submit secondary preference data in respect of middle schools which are deemed to be secondary schools. Where there is more than one year of entry (e.g. to both middle and upper Schools) they must complete a separate return in relation to each year, stating which National Curriculum year the report relates to.

**If a local authority allows a small number of parents to express additional preferences, how should this be recorded?**

If, for example, a local authority allows most parents to express four preferences but allows a small number of parents to express five preferences owing to their particular circumstances, those parents who expressed five preferences should be counted as if they expressed four preferences. If they are offered a place at their fifth preference school, this should be counted as if they were offered a place at their fourth preference school.

The Department uses the data that local authorities submit on the number of preferences expressed to work out how many preferences each local authority offers. If the parents that expressed five preferences were not counted as if they had expressed four preferences, it may result in the published data stating that the authority offered five preferences when it would be more appropriate for it state that the authority offered four preferences.

**What about parents who turn down their preference? Should this be recorded as a preference met?**

Yes. The highest preference offer should be recorded in all cases, regardless of whether that offer was accepted.

**How should withdrawn offers be recorded e.g. when the family moves to another authority or a child is admitted to an independent school?**

The highest preference offer should be recorded in all cases, regardless of whether that offer was later withdrawn.

**Are local authorities required to submit data in September?**

Whilst the regulations permit a September collection, we did not get many last year and so will be phasing this out at the next possible opportunity. No LA should feel they need to make a further data submission in September. If this is likely to create problems, then they should contact to Alison Ellsworth at alison.ellsworth@education.gsi.gov.uk.

**How should the outcome of appeals be recorded?**

Outcomes of appeals should be recorded according to the highest preference offered against the application made. For example, if an appeal was successful for a lower preference school, only the higher offer of a place should be recorded. If, as a result of a successful appeal, another applicant is able to obtain a higher preference, this information should be recorded in the return.

**How should offers for places where parents are allowed to re-express preferences be recorded?**

Any offer that does not relate to a preference expressed on the original common application form should be recorded as an alternative offer.

**Where will the data be published?**

The Department will publish the data on the DfE Research and Statistics Gateway ([www.dfe.gov.uk/rsgateway](http://www.dfe.gov.uk/rsgateway)). Over time, the data will enable local authorities and Admission Forums to compare outcomes with previous years, or compare themselves with areas with similar characteristics, and will contribute to local discussion on how to improve the system and provision of places for parents.