

Online service development

Following discussion at the Schools Admissions Forum in October 2014 it was agreed that we would move from a mix of print and online versions of the parents' information booklet to an online only version for 2016. Given that 67% of parents who applied for places in 2015 applied online it made great sense to ensure that the booklet was linked and available to parents on our website.

The communications team developed a more interactive version of the booklet with links and changes to layout to make it a more online document rather than simply an electronic version of a print document. We have directed schools and parents to the booklet online and have printed out less than 20 hard copies on request. This has created a cost saving of £5000.

We will review levels of online annual applications after offers of school places are made this year, and develop further strategies to encourage online take up for the next annual process which will start in September.

In line with all council customer services we are looking at ways of ensuring that parents are supported to apply online, and the new customer services centre at Broadgate House is providing access for online applications. This means that we have also introduced online applications for in year admissions, late applications for entry in September 2016 and school transport.

As information technology develops we will need to keep pace with change and ensure we develop our services to make application processes as simple as possible for parents and to improve the access and connectivity for schools too. We will have an upgraded online admissions portal in place this year for applications for entry in September 2017 which will include improvements such as access via smartphones, and give parents the ability to reset their own passwords. We will also investigate options for creating more web based information on school transport applications to help parents to measure distances to school and understand when they will be entitled to support.

It is important that schools also maintain their websites ensuring that full and correct information regarding school admissions is easy to find. We will be working with schools to make sure that this is the case.

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Admissions and Benefits