



Admissions & Transfers School Preferences Data Collection 2019

Autumn 2018 release (3.67)

Release Note

CAPITA

Revision History

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01 | Introduction

These release notes accompany the School Preferences Data Collection 2019 utility, which generates the DfE's School Preferences Data Collection return.

English Local Authorities are required by the DfE to submit pupil-level information related to secondary admissions in XML format, based on the national offer date of Friday 1st March 2019. **The latest submission date for the Secondary return is close of business Thursday 7th March 2019.**

Local Authorities are also required to submit pupil-level information related to primary admissions entry year groups that have an intake NCY of either **0** or **R** in XML format, based on the national offer date of Tuesday 16th April 2019. **The latest submission date for the Primary return is close of business Wednesday 24th April 2019.**

The DfE's guidance to Local Authorities in relation to this return can be found on the DfE website via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-preference-data-collections>

Capita's stand-alone **School Preferences Data Collection** utility is based on the DfE's *School Preference (Child Level) Data Collection Business and Technical Specification 2019* document, which can be found on the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-preference-data-collections-2019-technical-specification>

This utility makes use of two Crystal reports.

What's New in this Release?

There are minimal changes to the utility for 2019. These changes include:

- minor updates to the interface and the file header's <Release> tag to reflect the 2019 return year.

Overview

The DfE requires each English LA to return a single XML file for each of their secondary and primary transfer groups.

'LAs should only return admissions data for a single entry year. The minority of LAs who have two admissions years at either primary or secondary level (e.g. because of middle deemed secondary schools) must submit only the year with the largest intake.'

(DfE Information for LAs on the school preference data collection, section C)

Capita's School Preferences Data Collection utility enables the user to select the transfer group upon which the return should be based.

The DfE requires the School Preferences Data Collection XML file to comprise of the following areas:

- **Header**– e.g. return type (**Secondary** or **Primary**), the **LA**, the **Reference Date**.
- **LA Admission Places Total** – a single total of the published admission numbers for all secondary or primary schools that are part of the LA's coordinated admissions process for the 2019 admission year.

Introduction

- **Pupil Level Information** - the following information is required for each child:
 - **Personal details** (UPN, surname, first name, middle names, date of birth and gender).
 - **Home postcode and address details** (either BS7666 or line address format).
 - The **LA** and **Estab** of each preference expressed, in preference order.
 - The **LA** and **Estab** of the school offered.
 - Whether the application was made online (True/False/blank).
 - Whether the record is for a child who did not make an application but to whom the local authority has decided to make an offer (True/False).
 - Whether any of the child's preferences could be met (True/False/blank).

(Source: DfE's Information for LAs on the school preference data collection, section C)

Capita's School Preferences Data Collection utility sources pupil-level application, preference and offer data from the snapshot of information captured for offer day that is processed by the Publish Offer Information Online routine.

All other information is taken from the transfer group's live information at the time of running the report. This includes the **LA Admission Places Total**, student personal and address information.

Once generated, XML files must be submitted via the DfE's COLLECT website. The DfE will then validate your file.

02 | Using the School Preferences Data Collection Utility

Preparing to Run the Utility

Before running the utility, you should ensure that your LA has:

- Run the Publish Offer Information Online routine.
- Checked the **Transfer Group System Generated Preferences Starting Number**.
- Run the reports on a test database first (if available).

Ensure That Your LA Has Run the Publish Offer Information Online Routine

The DfE states that the submitted data must be a snapshot of preference data on the relevant National Offer Day. In order for the Capita utility to report on this snapshot, the LAs must have run the Publish Offer Information Online routine. LAs already using Capita One's Admissions & Transfers (A&T) Online will be familiar with this routine, which takes a snapshot of the preference and offer data for the transfer group at the time of running and stores it in a separate table (AT_APPLICATION_TRANSFER).

IMPORTANT NOTE: All LAs intending to generate the School Preferences Data Collection return from Capita One data must run the Publish Offer Information Online routine. The Crystal reports used by the utility source their preference and offer information from the AT_APPLICATION_TRANSFER table, not the 'live preferences' area. This is because the live preferences may change in the period from offer day to the time your LA runs the report.

It is important that your LA has carried out its usual checks to ensure that an appropriate offer has been made for all on-time applications before running the Publish Offer Information Online routine. For example, you should check all home students with an offer for the **No Offer** base to ensure that they are offered an alternative place.

The Publish Offer Information Online routine can only be run once for a selected transfer group, so all usual checks need to be carried out before the routine is run. Any preference related issues in the XML file cannot be corrected within A&T v4 Back Office after the routine has been run. However, it is possible to edit the actual XML file itself (using a text editor such as Notepad).

The Publish Offer Information Online routine is accessed in A&T v4 Back Office via **Process | Transfer Groups | Students | Offer Processing**. This option is only available once the Resolve Offers routine has been run for the transfer group.

For more information on running the Publish Offer Information Online routine, see the *Publish Offer Information Online* topic of the A&T Back Office Help file.

Check your Transfer Group System Generated Preferences Starting Number

The main report needs to identify parental preferences and assess whether offers are for a parental preference or are alternative offers. One uses the **Transfer Group System Generated Preferences Starting Number** setting to do this:

- Any preference with a preference number less than this number is considered to be a parental preference and is output in the **Preferences** section of the report.

- Any preference with a preference number equal to or greater than the **Transfer Group System Generated Preferences Number** which has an offer status of **Allocated**, **Accepted**, **Offered** or **Provisional** is considered to be an alternative offer.

For example, your LA may normally set this value to 20 in order to generate catchment 'system-generated preferences' as well as using a lower number, e.g. 10, to indicate an alternative offer preference. In this example, the transfer group's **System Generated Preferences Number** should be set to 10 before generating the report, since 10 is not a parental preference.

You should check your transfer group's **System Generated Preferences Number** carefully before generating the main report. In A&T v4 Back Office this number is set via **Process | Transfer Groups** in the **Transfer Group** area. For more information on configuring the **System Generated Preferences Number**, see the *Transfer Group Details* topic of the A&T Back Office Help.

Consider Running the Reports on a Test Database First

If available, you should consider running the utility on a test database first, ensuring that you generate both the error report and the main report. This is particularly useful if your test data is as close to your live data as possible.

One particular benefit of running the reports on a test database is that the error report draws attention to any issues with students without an offer, or with multiple offers. The process also reports on any preferences or offers for receivers for which an **LA Number** or four-digit **School Number** has not been identified. These preferences and offers error messages relate to snapshot data from the Publish Offer Information Online routine, which cannot be refreshed once this routine has been run for the transfer group. Running the routine on a test database that has the same or similar data to the live database first, can help you to identify issues to be corrected before Publish Offer Information Online is run in the live database.

Before National Offer Day, you should also consider running the utility in the live database on last year's transfer groups in order to check that you can connect to the live database. Please note that you can only select last year's transfer groups from the utility if they are marked as active.

Running the School Preferences Data Collection Utility

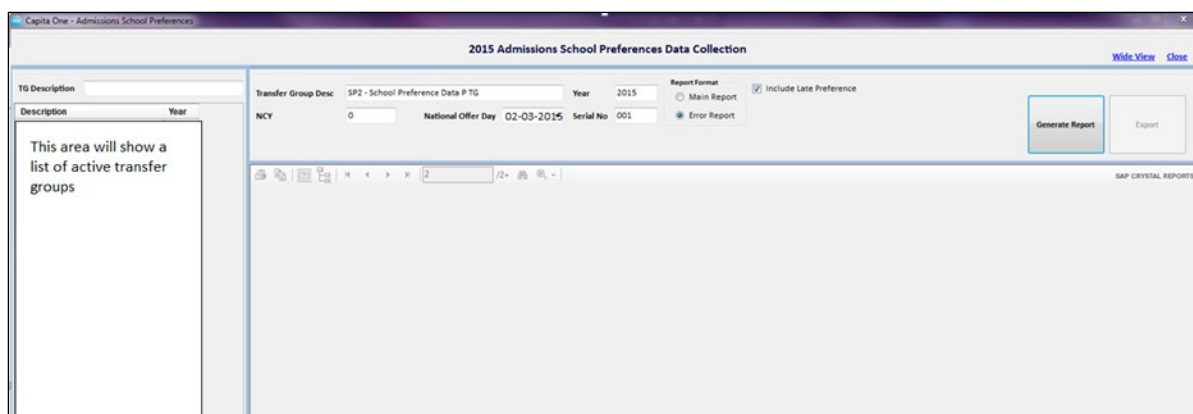
- Open the directory in which the files have been downloaded and double-click on CapitaOnePreferencesReport2019.exe to open the utility. The **CapitaOne Database Login** dialog is displayed



- Enter your **Server Name**, **User ID** and **Password** to display the utility home screen.

These are the database connection details usually required in order to run Crystal reports. Please liaise with your system administrator to understand the connection details you require.

NOTE: These database connection details are not the same as the Capita One user name and password that you use to log in to A&T Back Office.



Note that this screenshot shows the year 2015, but the 2019 utility includes 2019 in its title.

3. On the left-side of the screen, select the transfer group for which you wish to generate the return from the list of active transfer groups. The **Transfer Group Description**, **Year** and **NCY** are displayed on the right hand side.
4. Check the configuration of the **National Offer Day**, **Serial Number** and **Include Late Preferences** fields:

- The **National Offer Day** defaults to **01-03-2019**. The DfE expects and will validate that the offer day for secondary transfer groups is 1st March 2019. However, the DfE expects and will validate that the offer day for primary transfer group with an intake NCY of either **0** or **R** is 16th April 2019. Therefore, you must change this date to **16-04-2019** when generating the primary return.
- The **Serial Number** is included as part of the return's filename. The default value of 001 is appropriate for the first return of each type (either secondary or primary) that your LA submits. If, for any reason, you submit a return to the DfE, but then find you need to submit a new version to correct some errors, then you should change the **Serial Number** to 002, and so on.

For example, suppose that your LA submits one **Secondary** return to the DfE and then submits a second return to correct some errors. In this case, the new return should be sent with a serial number of 002. However, in this circumstance it is important that the **Serial Number** field is re-set to 001 for the first submission of the **Primary** return.

- The **Include Late Preferences** check box is selected by default. If it is not appropriate for your LA to include late preferences, deselect this check box.

For more information on the inclusion of late applications, see the *Selection Criteria for Pupil Level Information* topic.

Generating the Error Report

Once you have checked your set-up, you should generate the error report.

In the **Report Format** field, select the **Error Report** radio button and then click the **Generate Report** button to run the report. Any errors or warnings identified are displayed in the main area of the screen below the summary information.

Select the **Wide view** option to toggle between a wide view (which hides the transfer group information) and the standard view. If multiple pages of data are generated, it is possible to navigate between the pages.

Click the **Print** button to print the error report. There is no facility at this time to export the error report, due to development time constraints.

Managing Errors

As detailed in the *Preparing to Run the Utility* section, any errors related to preference or offer data cannot be corrected via A&T v4 Back Office in order to be included in the return. However, it is possible to edit the XML file itself by using Notepad or a similar program.

Any errors related to student personal or address information can be corrected via A&T v4 Back Office before generating the main report. You can also regenerate the error report to check that the errors you have already corrected are no longer referenced. Error message examples are given in the following sections.

Many of the errors raised follow the DfE's own validation errors, including the DfE reference numbers. However, due to time constraints and other factors, not all errors validated by the DfE are raised within the One error report. For example, the utility does not check the format of a pupil's UPN.

Also, the DfE has introduced new validations on its COLLECT website this year to compare the number of school places provided to last year's submission and display a warning if there is a significant percentage difference. This validation is not present in the Capita utility because some schools' PANs are likely to be amended after offer day within One.

Generating the Main Report

Once any errors have been reviewed and actioned, you should generate the main report. To run the report, select the **Main Report** radio button from the **Report Format** field and then click the **Generate Report** button.

The information that will be used to populate the final XML file is displayed.

The screenshot displays the '2015 Admissions School Preferences Data Collection' utility. The main report shows a list of schools and their PANs for the year 2015. Below this, a table lists student preferences with columns for Forename, Surname, Date of Birth, Student ID, Gender, UPN, DA, NPM, NAD, Address1, Address2, Address3, Address4, and Postcode.

| Rank | LA No | School No | Base Name | Offer Status |
|------|-------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 820 | 999 | Risley School (p40) | Allocated |
| 2 | 820 | 2041 | Pinchmill School (p40) | No Longer Required |
| 3 | 820 | 2043 | Primary Primary School (p40) | No Longer Required |

Note that this screenshot shows the year and data from 2015, but the 2019 utility includes 2019 in its title.

At the top of the report is a list of all Home LA Receivers and their PANs, along with the LA admission places total. Underneath is a list of each student included in the report, along with their personal and address information and a list of the preferences included.

If required, select the **Wide view** option to toggle between a wide view which hides the transfer group information and the standard view. You can also navigate between the pages and print the report from this screen.

To search for text within the report, click the **Find** button. This function could be used to search for a **Student Identifier**, for example.

Exporting the Main Report to XML Format

When you are ready to export the main report to XML format, click the **Export** button. One creates a sub-directory named **Export** in the directory that your utility files are located in and places the exported file within this sub-directory, with a filename in the format LEA_PREFSEC_NNN.XML, where:

- **LEA** is the LA number
- **PREFSEC** indicates a secondary transfer group (where Intake NCY is greater than **6**) and **PREFPRI** indicates primary transfer group (where Intake NCY is either **0** or **R**)
- **NNN** is the serial number.

For example, a file with the name 820_PREFPRI_001.XML would indicate a primary transfer group return with a serial number of 001 from an LA with an LA number of 820.

NOTE: Transfer groups with no students cannot be exported. If you attempt to export a transfer group with no students then the utility displays the following message when you click the **Export** button.

Unable to export - No students present in this transfer group.

Indicative times to Run the Utility

As part of Capita's testing for this utility, we have used a dataset with the following numbers of records in key tables:

- Transfer group selected had 18,000 applications and 76,500 preferences.
- The dataset included:
 - 377,393 applications
 - 1,550,424 preferences
 - 91,800 inactive preferences
 - 43,442 street addresses
 - 4,094 dwelling addresses

The following table provides a summary of the time taken to run the three parts of this utility on that dataset. This will help to give your LA an indication of the time each part of the utility may take to run on your dataset:

| Activity | Late preferences included | Time taken |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Generate Error Report | No | 24 mins |
| Generate Error Report | Yes | 21 mins |
| Generate Main Report | No | 35 mins |
| Generate Main Report | Yes | 28 mins |
| Export Main Report to XML File | No | 1 hour |
| Export Main Report to XML File | Yes | 28 mins |

03 | Exported Data

Header Details

The file header includes the following information:

- **Collection** – can take the following values:
 - **PREFSEC** for secondary transfer groups where the selected transfer group's **Intake NCY** is greater than 6.
 - **PREFPRI** for primary transfer groups where the **Intake NCY** is either 0 or R.
- **Year** – taken from the **Transfer Group Year** and should be 2019 at this time.
- **Reference Date** – taken from the **National Offer Day** parameter on the initial screen of the utility. This must be set to '01-03-2019' for the **Secondary** return and '16-04-2019' for the **Primary** return.
- **LA Number** – this is the Home LA Number. It can be specified in two locations:
 - In the v3 Client via **System Administration | LA Defaults**.
 - In v4 Online via **Administration | System Admin | System Administration | System Defaults**, using the **LEANO** parameter code.
- **Supplier ID** – this is exported as 'Capita One'.
- **Release** – for 2019 this is exported as '3.67 2019-03' to reflect that this version of the utility is released to coincide with the Autumn 2018 main release (3.67) and should be first run in March 2019.
- **Date/Time** of generating the XML return.

There are some other pre-seeded tags that are not configurable but are designed as per DfE requirements.

The header details are not visible from within the School Preferences Data Collection utility.

LA Admission Places Total

The **Admission Places** section comprises a single tag, labelled either `<SecondaryPlaces>` or `<PrimaryPlaces>` (depending on the return generated), which contains the total number of places for the year.

Secondary - "It will show the number of admission places in home Local Authority (secondary/primary) schools (that is the total of the published admission numbers for all secondary schools part of the Local Authority coordinated admissions process) for the 2019 admission year."

Primary - "It will show the number of admission places in home local authority primary schools (that is the total of the published admission numbers for all primary schools part of the local authority's coordinated admissions process) for the 2019 admission year: This will normally be reception year."

This figure should include places retained for children with a special educational need (SEN) statement or education health care (EHC) plan. This figure should include places retained for children with a SEN statement or and education health care (EHC) plan"

"Data should be provided in relation to all schools forming part of the LA's coordinated admissions process (including community, foundation, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools, and academies and free schools).."

(DfE's School Preference (Child Level) Data Collection Business and Technical Specification 2019 v1.0)

To calculate this value, One identifies all receivers in the transfer group whose **LA Number** matches the **Home LA Number**. One then totals the Published Admission Numbers (PANs) for the selected transfer group year's Intake NCY across these receivers.

To help you to understand this calculation, a list showing each Home LA receiver and its associated PAN is displayed within the School Preferences Data Collection utility, on the first page of the main report.

You should check this list to see if there are any PANs that do not currently reflect the correct number of places available, or if there are any schools whose current PANs should be excluded for a particular reason. If so, edit the PANs in A&T v4 Back Office (via **Bases | All Bases | PAN and Vacancies**) and then regenerate the report. You may need to make a note of the original PAN values in order to restore them once you have exported the return for this transfer group.

Selection Criteria for Pupil Level Information

In section 4.1 'Guidance Section – Child Level: Overall Description and Scope', the DfE's 'School Preference (Child Level) Data Collection Business and Technical Specification 2019 v1.0 document states that:

'A single child level record should be provided relating to:

- *any child to which the Local Authority made an offer of a school place on National Offer Day (NOD) regardless of whether an application was made on their behalf, and*
- *any child where an application was made on their behalf with at least one preference expressed, regardless of whether the Local Authority made an offer of a school place on National Offer Day (NOD). This should include late applications if treated as 'on time', but should not include late applications that were dealt with on NOD, but not in the first round of applications (these should be removed). Applications which were late but which one or more of the schools named as a preference were prepared to consider as on time, and therefore the applicant was considered for that school (those schools) in the first round on NOD, should be included.*

*A child level record should be **not** be provided for:*

- *any child with a SEN statement or EHC plan, and where the destination school has been determined in the statement or plan rather than through the coordinated admissions process.*
- *any child where an application was not made, and that child was not offered a place by the Local Authority making the return.*
- *any applications made to neighbouring LAs even where the schools requested and/or offered are in your LA.'*

Capita has received confirmation from the DfE that only pupils resident in the Home LA should be returned.

The Capita utility enables you to either include or exclude late preferences.

Please consider the DfE's requirements in relation to the inclusion of late applications carefully. If your LA wishes to exclude some late applications, you should ensure that the relevant preferences are flagged as late and that you deselect the **Include Late Preferences** check box before you generate reports for 2019.

NOTE: *If an application has some late and some non-late preferences, then the utility will process only the non-late preferences for that application if the LA chooses to exclude late preferences.*

If your LA chooses to include late preferences, remember that any such preferences are only included if they were published to the AT_APPLICATION_TRANSFER table by the Publish Offer Information Online routine, and are not included in the return if they were added after that routine had been run. If your LA subsequently deletes the late preferences, then they are included in both late and non-late preference checks. The NAO and NPM status is shown accordingly.

Pupils are included in the **Pupil level details** section of the report if either of the following scenarios apply (where, if the LA has chosen to exclude late preferences, then only non-late preferences are processed):

Scenario 1 – Place Offered

- The student's home LA matches the **Home LA** setting.
- There is at least one preference in the selected transfer group that is published to the AT_APPLICATION_TRANSFERS table where:
 - the **Offer Status** is **Allocated, Accepted, Offer** or **Provisional**.
 - the 'Named School' **Preference LA Reason** is not ticked.
 - the **Preference Base** is neither the **No Offer** base nor the **No Application** base.

Scenario 2 – Parental preferences received

- The student's home LA matches the **Home LA** setting.
- There is at least one preference in the selected transfer group that is published to the AT_APPLICATION_TRANSFERS online table where:
 - the **Preference Number** is less than the **Transfer Group System Generated Preferences Starting Number**.
 - there are no preferences for the student in the selected transfer group for which the 'Named School' **Preference LA Reason** is selected.

Pupil Identifiers and Address

The **Pupil Identifiers** exported are as follows:

- **UPN** – taken from the student's **Unique Pupil Number**. The pupil is still exported if there is no UPN stored, although the DfE expects this field to be populated for the Secondary return. For the Secondary return only, if there is no UPN stored then the following error message is listed when running the error report:
'1500Q - Error: UPN missing. Please provide a return level explanation note to DfE'
This reference number corresponds with the appropriate validation message from the DfE's COLLECT system. No such warning message is logged for the **Primary** return.
- **Surname** – this is the **Legal Surname** rather than the **Chosen Surname**
- **Forename** – this is the **Legal Forename** rather than the **Chosen Forename**
- **Middle Name**
- **Date of Birth** – exported as required in the format YYYY-MM-DD
- **Gender** – exported as F or M
- **Address**

The DfE specification requests the "current home address of the child". Note that the current home address may be different from the admissions address that is associated with the application.

The main report looks for an address associated with the child which meets the all of the following criteria:

- Has an address type of **H – Home**.
- Has a **Start Date** which is empty or on/before the National Offer Day.
- Has an **End Date** which is empty or after the National Offer Day.

If no such address is found, or if more than one such address is found, then the main report exports the admissions address associated with the application instead. The correspondence flag is not used to determine whether to export the address.

We are aware that for some LAs, looked after children may not have a current address of type **H – Home**. In this scenario, the admissions address is exported instead.

If the admissions address is exported, then a warning message is listed when generating the error report.

The address is exported in BS7666 format if possible, in a similar way to the export of addresses in the ADT file as per DfE requirements. Otherwise, the address is exported in address line format.

If neither a home nor admissions address can be identified then the pupil is exported in the return without an address and an error is raised in the error report.

Admissions applications indicators

For each pupil, the **Admissions** section of the report may include the following:

- **Entry Year Group** – this is taken from the transfer group's intake NCY, so is the same for each pupil included in the return.
- **Online Application** – The DfE requires *“a flag showing ‘True or 1’ if the coordinated admissions application was made online. This field should be left blank if no application was made.”*

If there is at least one parental preference published for this pupil (where the preference number is less than the **Transfer Group System Generated Preferences Starting Number**) then this preference is exported as **True** if the home LA application reference number's **method of entry** indicator is **E** (for E-application).

Otherwise, if there is at least one parental preference and the home LA application reference number's **method of entry** indicator is not set to **E** then a value of **False** is exported in this field.

If there are no parental preferences then this tag is omitted for the pupil.

If the **Home Application Reference** number cannot be found for the application then this tag is omitted and the following error is identified in the error report:

'No Home Application Reference No. - unable to determine <OnLineApplication> value'

- **Non Applicant Offer (NAO)** - The DfE requires *“a flag showing ‘True or 1’ where an application on behalf of a child was not received but the child was subsequently offered a place by the LA.”*

If there are no parental preferences published and there is a system-generated preference (i.e. a preference where the preference number is equal to or greater than the transfer group's **System Generated Preferences Starting Number**) that has an offer status of **Allocated, Accepted, Offered** or **Provisional** for a receiver other than the **No Offer** and **No Application** bases then this tag is exported as **True**.

Otherwise, this tag is exported as **False**.

- **No Preference Met (NPM)** - The DfE requires *“a flag showing ‘True or 1’ where an application on behalf of a child was received but no preferences could be met. Note the child would normally be offered an alternative, non-preference, place by the LA but ‘True or 1’ should be entered whether this is the case or not. The field should be left blank if no application was made or no preferences declared.”*

Exported Data

If there is at least one parental preference and none of the parental preferences published have an offer status of **Allocated**, **Accepted**, **Offered** or **Provisional** then this tag is exported as **True**.

If there is at least one parental preference, at least one of which has an offer status of **Allocated**, **Accepted**, **Offered** or **Provisional** then this tag is exported as **False**.

If there are no parental preferences published then this tag is omitted.

Preferences and Offers

The next section for each pupil is the **Preference Details**. The DfE requirements state that *“This module contains details about the different schools named as preferences on the application made on behalf of the child – including the ranking of those preferences – and details of the school offered on National Offer Day (where an offer was made)... For each preference made (as allowed by specific LA but up to a maximum of six) the rank of the preference and the LA number and Establishment Number should be provided”*

For each pupil exported, the receiver’s **LA Number** and **School Number** are exported for published parental preferences (where the preference number is less than the transfer group’s **System Generated Preferences Starting Number**) up to a maximum of 6.

For each pupil exported, where a single preference published has an offer status of **Allocated**, **Accepted**, **Offered** or **Provisional** and the receiver is neither the **No Offer** base nor the **No Application** base, then the receiver’s **LA Number** and **School Number** are exported in the **Offer** section, underneath the parental preference details. This happens regardless of whether the offered base is a parental preference or an alternative offer.

New Schools that do not yet have an official DfE School Number

For any new schools that do not yet have an official DfE School Number, you should use a dummy **School Number** for the purpose of the collection. This ensures that the preference and offer information is still exported successfully. LAs should then include a note with the XML file providing details of the dummy key and the actual **School Name** when submitting this to the DfE.

In its technical specification document, the DfE indicates that the validation rules that check for the **School Number** of the preference school or offer school in the `<Estab>` tag have been updated. Here is the DfE text in relation to this issue:

“Where `<PreferenceRank>` (100300) is present `<Estab>` (200636) must come from a range of current schools in the LA.”

The DfE’s Validation Message for this is “064 DfE Establishment Number missing or invalid for preferences. If a dummy code has been used (e.g. for new provision, 2nd site of a 2-site school, or aptitude place) please add a note giving the school name and (as needed) entry route for each dummy code.”

Capita’s business rule in relation to this is that as long as the **School Number** has some value and is not empty, then this information is exported in the XML file. The Capita validation is as follows:

- If the preference / offer base **School Number** is not null and is a value other than 4 digits in the range of $1000 \leq \text{School Number} \leq 7999$, then include the `<Estab>` tag and export the **School Number** as its value within the `<Preference>` container.

In this scenario, an error is raised that identifies the student with the message e.g. *‘064E Preference n Base School Number value is: x and has been exported. Include note for DfE if a dummy code has been used.’*

- If the preference / offer base **School Number** is null then it is not exported.
- If the preference / offer base **School Number** is a value of 4 digits within the range of $1000 \leq \text{School Number} \leq 7999$ then this number is exported with no validation message

When generating the error report, errors are also raised in the following scenarios:

- The preference / offer base **LA Number** is not 3 digits – in this case the <LA> tag is omitted from the return for the preference.
- There are parental preference numbers that are not consecutive. The DfE expects all exported parental preferences to have consecutive preference ranks, e.g. 1, 2, 3... However, the parental preferences are still exported if this is not the case.
- There are multiple offers for a pupil for bases which are not either the **No Offer** base or the **No Application** base.
- A *No Offer made* warning message is generated if there is no offer for a pupil. Note that it may be appropriate for a pupil to have no offer in the case of a late application.

Notes on preferences for Independent Schools

The DfE has included a new guidance note in its technical specification stating that *“Independent schools should not be included in this collection”*.

The One stand-alone utility does not specifically exclude the export of preferences for independent schools at this time. When an LA uploads School Preferences Data Collection XML files to the DfE’s COLLECT website, the DfE validates that the school establishment numbers returned for preference and offer schools match a list of expected schools. This list does not include independent schools.

If an unexpected school establishment number is included in the file, then a validation message with an error number of either 064 or 066 is raised. The following is an example error message:

‘DfE establishment number missing or invalid for preferences. If a dummy code has been used (e.g. for new provision, 2nd site of a 2-site school, or aptitude place) please add a note giving the school name and (as needed) entry route for each dummy code. NB: Independent schools should not be included in this collection.’

We understand that any corrections required can be made via the COLLECT site itself without needing to upload a new file.

The DfE also has a requirement that preference numbers returned should be consecutive. If your LA has a policy of recording independent school preferences in One in time for offer day, then you may need to update your return on the COLLECT site to remove these preferences.

In a scenario where preferences 1, 2, 3 and 4 have been recorded and preference 3 is for an independent school, the DfE would expect preference 3 to be removed from the return and what was preference 4 to be reported as preference 3.