

LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Venue: Virtual

Date: Thursday 24 June 2021

Time: 10.00 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 18th February 2021 (Pages 2 - 6)
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes
4. The Local Authority Report to the School Adjudicator (Pages 7 - 15)
5. Academies Update
6. Admissions Update
7. School Admission Appeals Update (Page 16)
8. Fair Access Update
9. School Organisation Update
10. Update on Term dates for 2021/22 and 2022/23
11. Date of Future Meetings
Thursday, 18th November, 2021
17th February, 2022

Both commencing at 10.00 a.m.

**Date of Next Meeting:-
Thursday 18 November 2021**

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2021**

Present:- Carol Cockayne (Community Representative), Mrs. M. Gambles (Community Representative), Mrs. I. Hartley (Community Representative), Mr. G. Lancashire (Community Representative), Mrs. K. Peart (Community Schools), Mrs. R. Scutt (Academies) and Councillor Watson.

Officers:- Ms. M. Jordan, Mr. C. Stones, Mrs. J. Unwin, Access to Education.

Apologies for absence were submitted by Mr. D. Fenton, Access to Education, Mrs. A. Gyte (Community Representative) and Mr. D. Shenton (Community Representative).

53. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Due to technological difficulties, the Vice-Chair, Carol Cockayne, assumed the Chair.

(Carole Cockayne in the Chair)

54. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19TH NOVEMBER, 2020

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th November, 2020.

Arising from Minute No. 48 (School Admissions Consultation for Entry in the 2022/23 Academic Year) Page 4, fourth paragraph should read "The DfE issued updated Summer Born Guidance in September and, when the opportunity arises, is committed to making a legislative change to enable children to remain with the cohort with which they were admitted throughout their education."

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th November, 2020, subject to the above clerical correction, be approved as a correct record.

55. SCHOOLS ADMISSION CONSULTATION - OUTCOME FOR THE 2022/23 ACADEMIC YEAR

Further to Minute No. 486 of the previous meeting of the Local Admissions Forum consideration was given to the report which detailed the admission arrangements (criteria and admission number) following the consultation outcome, which would apply for admission in 2022/23.

The timetable for the year was:-

Autumn Term 2020	Governing Bodies consider the arrangements which will apply
By 20th November, 2020	All relevant details to be forwarded to the Local Authority
7 th December 2020-24 th January, 2021	Period of consultation via the Local Authority's website
By mid-February	Local Authority and the Local Admissions Forum consider any changes and forward any comments to appropriate Admission Authority(ies)
By 19th February, 2021	All admission authorities to determine their arrangements and notify those consulted

The report included information relating to:-

- Admission numbers and criteria for Community and Controlled Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools/Academies/Trust Schools
- admission of children outside their normal age group and summer born children
- Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements
- Waiting List
- Local Authority 'Admission to School' Booklets
- Consideration of the 'relevant area'
- In Year Admissions Policy

It was also noted that the DfE was currently consulting on changes to the School Admissions Code. Proposed changes included the introduction of timescales for processing In Year applications, and definitions regarding what was considered to be challenging behaviour, revisions to categories and timescales for Fair Access protocol cases, consideration of applications for previously Looked After Children from overseas and those from Service families.

The DfE had indicated the intention was to introduce the new Code during the Spring Term 2021 subject to consultation

The admission arrangements for all Rotherham schools would be published on the Council's website.

Agreed:- That the information be supported.

56. UPDATE ON ADMISSIONS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

It was reported that the final checks were being undertaken before notification was sent to parents as to which secondary school their child had been allocated. The expectation is that the usual schools will be oversubscribed, however, there will be availability in other schools.

There had been a slight increase in the number of online applications with the vast majority of parents having applied via that method. They would receive an email informing them of the place allocated unless they had opted not to do so. The remainder would receive a letter through the post. The online decisions would be received early on 1st March with the postal decisions due to arrive the same day subject to postal delivery.

Despite 4 reminder letters and emails from schools, there were still 41 parents who had not submitted applications.

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

57. SCHOOL APPEALS - STATISTICS REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which provided a snapshot of the numbers of school admission appeals received and the appeal hearings taking place and provided statistics for the full academic years 2019/20 and to date 2020/21 school year.

It was noted that not as many virtual appeals a day were scheduled as physical appeals had been to allow for any technological problems that may arise. There was always a spare slot at the end of the day in case the technology had failed to enable a second opportunity to hear a case. Not all panellists were taking part in virtual appeals due to them not feeling comfortable with the technology.

Marina Jordan, Access to Education, also reported that the temporary regulations (The School Admissions (England) (Coronavirus) (Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2020) issued by the DfE in April, 2020, had now been extended until 30th September, 2021. This gave the flexibility to hear appeals either by telephone, video or on the basis of the written submission.

This also meant that the deadlines for the submission of appeals, hearing of appeals and the deadline for the Clerk's decision letters to be issued, had been extended. The Council's website was being updated to reflect the new Regulations.

Both Carol Cockayne and Marilyn Gambles felt that the virtual appeals worked very well with no negative comments made by parents.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

(Irene Hartley joined the meeting and assumed the role as Chair.)

58. SCHOOL ORGANISATION - UPDATE

The following updates was provided:-

- Aston Academy – a 2 year expansion programme in progress
- Rawmarsh Academy – expansion programme currently at the tendering stage
- Consultation underway on a new Social, Emotional and Mental Health school on the former Dinnington College Campus including the seeking of a sponsor

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

59. SCHOOL TERM DATES CONSULTATION FOR 2022/23 - UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 51 of the previous meeting held on 19th November, 2020, feedback was provided on the proposed term dates for 2022/23.

The Rotherham consultation would shortly come to an end as would Sheffield City Council's. Barnsley's consultation had now ended. It was anticipated that Rotherham, Barnsley and Sheffield's term calendar would match but Doncaster was still consulting on a 2 week October half term.

Agreed:- That the information be noted and a further update submitted to the next meeting

60. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL - UPDATE

The Fair Access process had continued as applications/appeals had been progressing in the usual way, despite lockdown. Schools/parents/children and LA staff did their best as well to try and make sure everything that could be done had been done.

The Strategic Fair Access Panel met remotely the last secondary meeting having taken place on 28th January with a further planned for 11th March. There had been 12 secondary cases between 1st December-31st December, 2020, which was an increase of one for the same period last year.

There had been no Primary Fair Access cases within the Autumn term a similar position as to that of last year.

Agreed:- That the update be noted.

61. ACADEMY CONVERSIONS AND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST UPDATES

The Forum noted the updated list of Rotherham schools which had converted/about to convert to academies as at February 2021.

62. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Thursday, 17th June, 2021, commencing at 10.00 a.m.



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

Rotherham Local Authority

to be provided by

30 June 2021

Report Cleared by: Name Dean Fenton

Title Head of Service – Access to Education

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Date submitted: June 2021

By: Name Christopher Stones

Title Principal Officer – Access to Education

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www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator

**Please email your completed report to: osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk
by 30 June 2021 and earlier if possible**

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Introduction and guidance on completing the report

1, Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) requires every local authority to make an annual report to the adjudicator. The Chief Adjudicator then includes a summary of these reports in her annual report to the Secretary for State for Education. The School Admissions Code (the Code) sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities in paragraph 6. Paragraph 3.23 specifies what must be included as a minimum in the report to the adjudicator and makes provision for the local authority to include any other matters.

2. This template requests the same information as that set out in the revised template we sent on 15 April 2020:

- a) information about how admission arrangements in the local authority serve the interests of looked after children and previously looked after children, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, including any details of where problems have arisen;
- b) an assessment of the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols and co-ordination in their area, including how many children were admitted to each school under them.

3. We should be grateful if local authorities would follow the approach used in statutory provisions and in the Department for Education Statistical First Release¹ and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002².

4. In the template last year we did not ask about the determination of admission arrangements because of continued constraints on local authorities. Again, we have not asked for that information this year, but we intend to return to this area in future years given the importance of determination and checking compliance of all admission authorities. It is a key role for the local authority's leadership to encourage schools to determine arrangements in line with the provisions in the Code.

5. We welcome all comments that local authorities make in the comment boxes and we aim to reflect those comments in the Annual Report, but we ask for the comments to be entered under the right headings. Section 3 invites comment on any other matters not specifically addressed in this template if local authorities wish to do so. The views expressed in previous years also remain a matter of public record.

6. We ask that where possible, you return the template in Word instead of PDF formatting. A number of you have commented on the formatting of the template and we have tried to make it as accessible as possible, but we are aware that some local authorities use different versions of Word.

7. The report **must** be returned to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by **30 June 2021**.

¹ [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

² [The Education Middle School \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

Information requested

Section 1 - Normal point of admission

A. Co-ordination

i. How well did co-ordination of the main admissions round work?	Not well	A large number of small problems or a major problem	Well with few small problems	Very well
Reception				X
Year 7				X
Other relevant years of entry				X

ii. Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

B. Looked after and previously looked after children

i. How well does the admissions system in your local authority area serve the interests of looked after children at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

ii. How well do the admissions systems in other local authority areas serve the interests of children looked after by your local authority at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

iii. How well does your admissions system serve the interests of children who are looked after by other local authorities but educated in your area at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

iv. How well does the admissions system in your local authority area serve the interests of previously looked after children at **normal points of admission**?

³ 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

v. Priority in admission arrangements for 2022 for adopted children previously in care abroad. Please comment on the use of a priority in admission arrangements for a child adopted who was previously in care abroad if you wish:

No comments from Virtual School – no challenges have arisen to date.

vi. If you wish, please give any examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which exemplify your answers about the admission to schools of looked after and previously looked after children at **normal points of admission**:

In the vast majority of cases, Looked After Children receive a place in their first preference school. When there have been issues, which are related to late applications (eg child becomes 'looked after' after closing date etc), the Admissions team and Virtual School work with schools to secure suitable placement.

C. Special educational needs and/or disabilities

Please provide any comments you wish to make on the admission of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities at normal points of admission:

On the rare occasion where there are concerns raised by a School or Academy at the point of admission regarding the ability to meet a child's unassessed SEN needs, this is pro-actively managed via an admissions planning meeting and the issues are resolved with support offered from Inclusion Services and other stakeholders where required.

Section 2 - In-year⁴ admissions

A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions

⁴ By 'in-year' we mean admission at the start of any school year which is not a normal point of entry for the school concerned (for example at the beginning of Year 2 for a five to eleven primary school) and admission during the course of any school year after the end of the statutory waiting list period (31 December) in normal years of admission.

Please provide any comments on the co-ordination of **in-year admissions** if you wish:

Rotherham parents are asked to submit their applications via Rotherham authority to be logged and passed on to the relevant admission authority however, we currently only have cross border co-ordination with Sheffield which is maintained due to regular movement between the two authorities from certain areas.

Rotherham's admissions team co-ordinate all applications internally for our schools and respond to parents with the outcome on behalf of our schools/academies with the exception of two secondary academies where applications are received and logged but the academies respond direct to parents as they administer their own admissions.

Schools/academies are asked to respond to the request for a place within a set timescale of receipt of the application from the admissions team which for the most part works very well, applications can sometimes exceed this timescale but only on rare occasions and usually linked to wider concerns linked to ability to meet needs and a wider multi agency meeting is needed to support admission.

B. Looked after children and previously looked after children

- i. How well does the **in-year admission** system serve children who are looked after by your local authority and who are being educated in your area?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁵

- ii. How well do the **in-year admission** systems in other local authority areas serve the interests of your looked after children?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁵

- iii. How well does your **in-year admission** system serve the interests of children who are looked after by other local authorities but educated in your area?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁵

- iv. How well does your **in-year admission** system serve the interests of previously looked after children?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁵

- v. If you wish, please give examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which support or exemplify your answers about **in-year admissions**

⁵ 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

for looked after and previously looked after children:

LAC who move often have more complex needs. We have found that when seeking placements in out of area schools, there is significant drift and delay to the normal admissions process. Frequently, schools take longer to respond to the application, often declining to offer a place. The process of challenging decisions and alongside seeking an appropriate alternative school is drawn out, meaning that LAC are left with no formal education offer for longer than the outlined number of days. This is more prevalent for those with SEMH needs outlined both in SEN support plans and, in some cases, in an EHCP.

C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

- i. How well served are children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have an education, health and care plan that names a school when they need to be **admitted in-year**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁵

- ii. How well served are children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an education, health and care plan when they need to be **admitted in-year**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Don't know

- iii. Please give examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which support or exemplify your answers about **in-year admissions** for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities:

We have examples of good practice in relation to admissions planning meetings which occasionally require a multi-agency approach to ensure that support is available for the child and the school at the point of admission. This can however sometimes lead to a delay in the admission of a child.

- iv. If you wish, please provide any comments about **in-year admissions** in respect of other children:

D. Fair access protocol

i. Has your fair access protocol been agreed⁶ with the majority of state-funded mainstream schools in your area?

- Yes for primary
- Yes for secondary

ii. If you have not been able to tick both boxes above, please explain why:

iii. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	0	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	6 to academies 8 to AP
Total	0	14

iv. How well do you consider hard to place children are served by the fair access protocol in your area?

- Not at all
 Not well
 Well
 Very well
 Not applicable⁷

v. Please make any relevant comment on the protocol not covered above if you wish:

The schools/academies all take part in the Primary and Secondary Fair Access Protocols.

For secondary, schools/academies work collaboratively together to try to offer places for young people via partnership working which has continued this year, despite the lockdowns. The protocol works on a 2 tier system, whereby cases are referred to the respective partnership and where placement cannot be offered cases are escalated to a strategic panel to direct placement. As the FAP has become more established, more cases are placed at a partnership level with only the most complex cases being escalated to the strategic level panel.

Many of the cases referred to Fair Access continue to have had significant levels of support required for the youngster e.g. social care, transient families, SEMH needs, etc. The LA has worked with schools/academies and offered alternative

⁶ An existing protocol remains binding on all schools up until the point at which a new one is adopted.

⁷ 'Not applicable' would mean that there were no hard to place children for which the protocol was required.

provision (AP) for some youngsters where this was felt the most appropriate educational provision for them. Placements to AP are kept under review by the strategic panel and referred to partnerships where a transition to mainstream is appropriate.

For primary there have been no Fair Access cases this year as parents have been able to secure school places for their children via the admission and appeals routes.

E. If you wish, any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised:

The challenges around limited resources in schools to meet the needs of pupils has become more prevalent for a number of schools/academies, in relation to the possible allocation of places under the Fair Access Protocol.

Section 3 - Other matters

Are there any other matters that the local authority would like to raise that have not been covered by the questions above?

We welcome the revisions to the admissions code effective from 1st September 2021.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2022.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk by 30 June 2021

Schedule/School	Number of Appeals	No of Days (6 per day)	Dates
St. Pius RC (Church)	5	1	5 th May
Wickersley SSC	15	3	11 th -13 th May
Oakwood	17	3	10 th -12 th May
St. Bernard's RC (Church)	21	4	14 th , 17 th -19 th May
Wingfield	28	5	7 th -11 th June
Maltby	9	1	13 th May
Wales High	10	3 (10 still went ahead with 9 being allocated/withdrawn prior to the appeals taking place)	18 th – 20 th May
Primary (FS2/Reception)	48	11	
Primary (FS2/Reception) Church	21	3	
In-Year Primary Outstanding Transfers (including Church)	27	5	
In-Year Secondary Outstanding	11	2	