

ROTHERHAM LOCAL ADMISSION FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Role of the Forum

The Local Admission Forum provides a vehicle for admission authorities and other key interested parties to discuss the effectiveness of local admission arrangements and to consider how to deal with difficult admission issues as well as advising admission authorities on ways in which their arrangements can be improved.

The Forum has a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that promotes social equality and must, under Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, act in accordance with the School Admissions Code “the Code” issued by the Department for Education.

Admission authorities of all maintained schools and Academies when exercising their functions must have regard to any advice offered by the Forum.

The Forum shall receive, consider and share advice and recommendations upon:-

: the extent to which current admission arrangements in the area serve the interests of looked after children, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs;

: the effectiveness of the published fair access protocol in place in the area;

: the effectiveness of any scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements where relevant with any adjoining local authority area;

: details of any other matters which affect the fair operation of admission arrangements for relevant schools in the area:

: to all Admission Authorities, Maintained Schools and Academies, City Technology Colleges or City Colleges of the arts within the area of the Local Authority (“the Authority”), and make available such advice and recommendation to any other person with an interest.

Specifically the Local Admissions Forum must:

(a) consider how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interests of children and parents within the area of the Authority

(b) promote agreement on admission issues

(c) review the comprehensiveness, effectiveness within the local context, and accessibility of advice and guidance for parents by the authority through the published annual Admissions to Primary and Secondary School Booklets. The Forum must consider what if any action is needed to raise the standard to ensure it is the best that can possibly be achieved

(d) consider the effectiveness of the Authority's proposed co-ordinated admission arrangements and advise on whether they differ substantially from the previous year

(e) advise the Authority and governing bodies of all voluntary aided and foundation schools in the area by 30 November each year which persons or bodies in the area the Forum considers have an interest in proposed admission arrangements to ensure that the Local Authority includes them in the consultation process

(f) consider and advise on any proposed qualifying scheme for the co-ordination of admission arrangements referred to it by the Authority pursuant to regulation 5 of the School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements Regulations (obligation on Local Authority to refer qualifying scheme which they propose to be adopted to the Forum)

(g) consider the means by which admissions processes might be improved, and how actual admissions relate to the admission numbers published

(h) monitor the admission of children who arrive in the Authority's area outside a normal admission round with a view to promoting arrangements for the fair distribution of such children among local schools, taking account of any preference expressed in accordance with arrangements made under Section 86(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and in accordance with the relevant Admissions Code

(i) promote the arrangements for children with special educational needs, children in care and children who have been excluded from school

(j) monitor the effectiveness of Local Authority Fair Access Protocols and together with the Local Authority ensure that no school including those with places is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools or who have challenging behaviour or who are known to have a history of behavioural problems

(k) to produce an annual report

(l) consider any other admissions issues that arise

In discharging the responsibility for ensuring fair access the Forum should:

(m) refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator where it identifies admission policy, practice or oversubscription criteria of a school that may be unfair, unlawful or contravene the mandatory provisions of the Code or where Forum advice has been disregarded by admission authorities

(n) review the impact of local admission policies on achieving fair access

2. Declaration of Interests

Members of the Forum shall declare a personal interest in any proposal which directly affects them for example if the proposal concerns the school at which they are a Governor or which their children attend. If the personal interest is pecuniary or could be viewed as prejudicial the member should withdraw from the discussion and take no part in the decision. Where it is clear that a decision in which a member of the Forum has such an interest or it is likely to arise at a particular meeting, the member concerned may wish to invite an alternative member to attend that meeting.

3. Annual Report

Under Section 85A (1A) of the SSFA the Forum may publish an annual report for all maintained schools. Where the Forum chooses to do so, the report must include Academies. The report will be on such matters as the Forum consider appropriate and of local interest and provide input to the Authority's report to the School's Adjudicator.

4. Indemnification

The Authority shall indemnify members of the Forum against reasonable legal costs and expenses arising from decisions or recommendations of the Forum made in good faith.

5. Chair and Vice Chair

(a) The members of the Forum shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the Forum and at the next meeting which falls after the date which is a year after the meeting at which the Chair and Vice Chair was elected.

(b) The Chair and Vice Chair shall hold office until the next meeting which falls after the date which is a year after the meeting at which they were elected.

(c) The Chair or Vice Chair shall cease to hold office if they resign their office by giving written notice to the Secretary.

(d) On ceasing to hold office the former Chair and Vice Chair shall be eligible for re-election.

(e) In the event of a casual vacancy occurring in the office of Chair or Vice Chair the members shall at the next meeting elect one of their members to fill that vacancy and the member so elected shall hold office until the date of the meeting at which the Chair or Vice Chair would have held office had the vacancy not occurred.

6. Secretary to the Forum

Members of the Forum shall appoint a person, nominated by the Authority, who is not a member of the Forum to act as Secretary to the Forum. The Secretary to the Forum will keep a record of each meeting of the Forum

7. Sub Committees

The Authority is responsible for establishing the Forum sub-committees pursuant to Section 85A (2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The Forum shall be responsible for determining a sub-committee's:

- membership and constitution
- procedure for convening and holding meetings
- communication of advice and recommendations

8. Meetings of the Forum

The members of the Forum may regulate the procedure of the Forum subject to The School Admissions (Local Authority Reports and Admission Forms) (England) Regulations 2008 ("the Regulations")

9. Venue and Times of Meetings

(a) The Secretary will convene a meeting of the Forum, by giving a minimum of seven (7) working days notice of the time and place of each meeting.

(b) The date of the meeting will be given to the Secretary by the Forum at a previous meeting, or on the direction of the Chair or in their absence the Vice Chair.

(c) The Agenda shall be set by the previous meeting of the Forum, or if appropriate by the Secretary in consultation with the Chair, or in their absence, the Vice Chair.

(d) The Forum shall meet at least twice (2) each year.

(e) Proceedings and meetings of the Forum shall be open to the public, except in such limited circumstances as decided by the Forum as may be prejudicial to the Forum's work. The Secretary shall arrange for meetings to be advertised to the public.

(f) Members may invite interested parties to a meeting of the Forum if they consider it appropriate to do so having regard to the matters arising for discussion.

10. Quorum

The quorum for any meeting of the Forum shall be one third of the Forum's membership.

11. Minutes of the Meeting

The minutes of the meeting, after approval by the Chair or Vice Chair, may be made available for public inspection.

12. Voting Arrangements

Decisions on matters including the exercise of the Forum's power to refer an objection to the adjudicator shall be taken by a simple majority vote of all members present. In the case of equality of votes the Chair or in his/her absence the Vice Chair, shall have a second or casting vote.

13. Public Statements

Public Statements on behalf of the Forum may only be made by the Chair or Vice Chair either with the approval of the Forum, or without such approval having regard to the importance or expediency. Any such action taken by the Chair or Vice Chair shall be reported to the next meeting of the Forum.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum is:-

Community Schools representative: - minimum of 2 members (1 Primary & 1 Secondary)

Voluntary Aided / Controlled Schools representative: - minimum of 2 members

Academy representative: - minimum of 2 members, (1 Primary & 1 Secondary)

Church Dioceses representative: - minimum of 2 members

Parent/Carer representative: - minimum of 1 member

Community representatives: - minimum of 3 members