

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Local Admissions Forum
2.	Date:	19th March 2015
3.	Title:	Admissions Consultation outcome in respect of entry in the 2016/17 academic year. (All wards)
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young Peoples Services

5. Summary

This report seeks approval of the proposed School Admission arrangements / Coordinated Scheme for the admission year 2016/17.

6. Recommendations

That Local Admissions Forum:

Approves the Admission arrangements for the 2016/17 Academic Year following the completion of the annual consultation.

7. Proposals and Details

All Admission Authorities must consult by 1st March, in the determination year, on the admission arrangements for those schools for which they are responsible. The consultation must take place for a minimum of 8 weeks between 1st November and 1st March and a final determination made by 15th April 2015.

Admission Criteria for Community Schools

The current Admissions Policy for community schools for 2016/17 is attached as (**Appendix 1**). No changes are proposed to the **admission criteria** for 2016/17. Agreed Published Admission Numbers are attached as (**Appendix 2**).

Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

The Authority currently co-ordinates admission arrangements during the normal admission round. The 2012 Code of Practice required this to be extended to cover in-year admissions for all year groups with effect from 2011/12, this is also the requirement under the 2014 Code of Practice. The co-ordination of schemes simplifies the admission process for parents which reduces the likelihood of a child being left without a school place

Waiting Lists

The Authority currently maintains waiting lists for children applying during the normal admission round. The Admissions Code of Practice requires that waiting lists are in place from September and continue for at least the first term of the academic year for both Primary and Secondary provision.

Catchment Areas

The Authority is required to consult on the details of any catchment areas to be used as part of the admission process. The current catchment areas are published on the RMBC website and available in hard-copy from the School Planning, Admissions and Appeals Service. No changes are proposed to the existing school catchment areas for 2016/17.

Fair Access Protocol (FAP)

The Admissions Code of Practice requires the Authority to have in place a Fair Access Protocol. The Fair Access Protocol exists to ensure that access to education is secured quickly for children who have no school place but for whom a place at a mainstream school is appropriate. It is also to ensure that all schools in an area admit their fair share of pupils with challenging behaviour, including children excluded from school. **This includes admitting children above the admission number to schools that are already full.** All Schools and Academies in the authority must participate in the scheme. The scheme must be monitored, include timescales and be included in the annual report to the School's Adjudicator. The Authority consulted on a revised FAP in March 2013 and this was adopted from September 2013 onwards and is published in both the Primary and Secondary

School's Booklets. The Code of Practice also requires the Fair Access Protocol to include timescales, and also must include at a minimum the following categories:

- Children attending PRUs who need to be reintegrated back into mainstream education;
- Children who have been out of education for longer than one school term;
- Children whose parents have been unable to find them a place after moving to the area, because of a shortage of places;
- Children withdrawn from schools by their family, following fixed term exclusions and unable to find another place;
- Children of refugees and asylum seekers;
- Homeless children;
- Children with unsupportive family backgrounds, where a place has not been sought;
- Children known to the police or other agencies;
- Children without a school place and with a history of serious attendance problems;
- Traveller children;
- Children who are carers;
- Children with special educational needs (but without a statement);
- Children with disabilities or medical conditions;
- Children returning from the criminal justice system; and
- Children of UK service personnel and other Crown Servants.

Statutory Closing Dates

The Code of Practice imposes national closing dates for both Primary and Secondary applications for the admission round in 2016/17. The date for Secondary is 30th November 2015 and the date for Primary is 15th January 2016.

Report to the Schools Adjudicator

The Admissions Authority is required to submit on an annual basis a report to the Schools Adjudicator by the 30th June on how the admissions arrangements have operated in the previous year. A template has been provided by the Schools Adjudicator for this purpose and reports submitted by the Authority meet this deadline annually.

8. Finance

The proposed changes are unlikely to have any significant effect in terms of the allocation of places to individual children. Some children may, under a Fair Access Protocol gain a place at a school which they otherwise would not have. Any implications for Schools would be subject to discussion between Schools, Schools Forum and the Local Authority. Where schools are expanded, there is often a need to support additional staffing resources until the school census generates funding for the additional pupils.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

As in all admissions matters, there is always a risk of challenge. The School Admissions Code has a strong statutory basis and all admission authorities are now required **to act in accordance with** rather than simply **having regard to** the provisions, as was the case with earlier versions. The Code seeks to promote equity and fair access and the setting of fair oversubscription criteria.

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers are based on estimations. Over provision at one school could influence pupil numbers at other schools. Local Authorities are obliged, however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental preference.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The major theme supported by the proposal is 'to ensure that everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play their part in society'. Any changes to admissions criteria / co-ordinated schemes could have consequences for individual pupils. However, the proposed changes to admission numbers detailed seek to provide a fair, equitable and sustainable solution to the admissions process. It is unlikely that the proposed changes will have any significant impact on published performance indicators.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The School Admission Arrangements Regulations 2008. The DfE Admissions Code of Practice (December 2014). The Authority's current admissions criteria for community schools is shown in Appendix 1. There is annual consultation on admissions arrangements, which takes place with school governing bodies and other LAs each Autumn Term and up to 1st March. The Authority's website contains detailed information on admission arrangements.

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