

INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION REPORT

Published on 20 February 2019

School Admission Arrangements and Scheme 2020

Dates between which decision will be taken	Earliest date: 28 th February 2019 Latest date: 28 th February 2019
Economy, Skills and Growth	Cllr Lynden Stowe
Key Decision	Yes
Background Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- School Admission Code 2014 and associated Regulations- DfE Guidance Notes- Determined Coordinated Scheme and Admission Arrangements for 2019 and previous years- Equality Due Regard Statement
Location/Contact for inspection of Background Documents	<p>Government documents are available from the DfE: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2</p> <p>The council's current 2019 admission policies are available on its website: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-admissions-scheme-criteria-and-protocol/determined-admission-criteria-and-scheme-for-2019/</p> <p>The council's proposed 2020 admission policies are available on its website: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-admissions-scheme-criteria-and-protocol/proposed-admission-criteria-and-scheme-for-2020/</p> <p>Alternatively, all documents are available from Amanda Johns, Fair Access Manager, Access to Education Team</p>

Planned Dates	<p>In line with school admission legislation, consultation has not been required as the council is not proposing any change to its admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools.</p> <p>However, all admission authorities (including the council for community and voluntary controlled schools) must determine their arrangements annually. This is required by 28th February 2019 for the 2020 arrangements.</p> <p>The council has until 15th May 2019 to refer any admission arrangements for foundation/voluntary aided or trust schools and academies it deems to be unlawful to the Office of the School's Adjudicator for investigation.</p>
Divisional Councillor	All
Officer	<p>Any representations should be sent to:</p> <p>Sam Roberts, Senior Access to Education Manager Tel: 01452 425529 Email address: Sam.roberts@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>By 5.00pm on Wednesday 27 February 2019</p>
Purpose of Report	To determine the council's School Admissions Scheme and Arrangements for 2020.
Recommendations	<p>That the School Co-ordination and Admission Arrangements as set out in the documents referred to below are approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2020 for all Primary/Infant/Junior/Secondary Schools and Academies – Appendix 1 - The Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary/Infant/Junior and Secondary Schools for 2020 (Including Published Admission Numbers) - Appendix 2 - Protocol for pupil admittance over published admission number for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2020 – Appendix 3
Reasons for Recommendations	The proposed school co-ordination and admission arrangements meet legal requirements and national best practice whilst providing consistency with previous admissions practice across the county.
Resource Implications	<p>This work will be undertaken by officers within the Access to Education Team to ensure consistency and continuity of advice and guidance for parents and schools/academies who are required to adhere to the scheme.</p> <p>Therefore there are no additional resources required if the recommendation is implemented.</p>

MAIN REPORT CONTENTS

1. Background:

- 1.1 School admissions are an important part of the council's work; there needs to be a transparent, consistent system that parents and carers can have confidence in. The Government regulates admissions through its statutory School Admissions Code 2014.
- 1.2 The council has to determine the admission arrangements for entry to school in the following academic year (i.e. for September 2020) every year. The council is the admissions authority for community and voluntary controlled schools and determines their admission arrangements. Academies, foundation schools, trust schools, free schools and voluntary aided schools are their own admissions authority; they must consult on and then determine their own admissions arrangements. Arrangements for any school or academy must be clear, objective and fair and the council has a statutory role in monitoring this closely.
- 1.3 The council must also prepare a co-ordinated admissions scheme for all maintained schools and academies so that parents only need to apply once, and that a fair and transparent process is upheld – this includes applications for infant/primary schools for the reception year, transfer from infant to junior school and secondary schools at year 7. This scheme ensures that processes and timescales meet statutory requirements and that all schools and academies are aware of their role in achieving these. The council has already shared its proposed arrangements for school admissions for 2020 with relevant stakeholders and this report recommends that these arrangements are approved.
- 1.4 As the School Admissions Code 2014 continues to permit a degree of flexibility to allow admission authorities to exceed their published admission number (the number of pupils usually admitted to the school) in order to meet parental demand, the council must publish how it intends to use this flexibility for community and voluntary controlled schools. This additional detail is contained within the protocol for pupil admittance over published admission number.
- 1.5 There are no major changes to the admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled schools required this year.
- 1.6 The policy sets out the process used to allocate school places, the over subscription criteria prioritises Children in Care, siblings, and then straight line distance between home and school.

2 Feedback:

- 2.1 Unless there are major changes to policies, admission authorities are only required to complete a full public consultation once every seven years. The council undertook this consultation in 2016 and therefore the next full consultation is not due until 2023; unless changes are made.
- 2.2 The council is not proposing any significant change to its admission policies and therefore did not undertake a full public consultation exercise. Minor points of clarification have been made to the admissions scheme which have arisen following feedback from interested parties using the 2019 documents throughout

the last year. These are predominantly to explain the use of 'relevant areas' in the consultation process and how applications for summer born children are processed and the definition of a Child in Care; to reduce the potential for parental and school confusion and to ensure transparent decision making in line with legislation.

- 2.3 All proposed documents have been shared with all schools and academies and were made available on the council's website. There has been no feedback or comments received from any interested parties.

3 Options:

- 3.1 Option 1- to adopt proposed policies. The council has to determine its admissions arrangements by law by 28th February 2019 and publish them for interested parties. The recommended policies (see appendices) are well established and understood by all schools and parents and were subject to full consultation in 2016.
- 3.2 Option 2 – to make further changes to the proposed policies. However, this would require a public consultation and the timing of this would result in failure to comply with the statutory deadlines. The Department for Education is obliged to impose its own admission arrangements on any council which fails to determine their admission policies in time.

4 Officer Advice:

- 4.1 The attached documents have been devised, taking into account the requirements of the School Admission Code and feedback to ensure that the process is both lawful and minimises delays to children accessing education. It is therefore the officer's advice that all admission arrangements in the attached documents are approved in their entirety.

5 Equalities considerations:

- 5.1 The admission scheme arrangements ensure that all schools and academies follow a fair and transparent admissions process which is objective and does not discriminate against a child, or their family, due to any protected characteristic. This ensures that all children, particularly the most vulnerable, have fair access to education – including children who have been, or are, in care and those of service personnel.
- 5.2 The due regards statement provides evidence of the considerations made.

6 Risk Assessment:

- 6.1 The main risk for the council is for its school admission arrangements or practice to be challenged because it does not promote a fair, lawful and transparent admissions process for all children.

- 6.2 Mitigation: The proposed policies and documentation comply with the School Admissions Code to meet these statutory requirements and mitigate risk.

The council is not responsible for the admissions practice of voluntary aided, trust, free schools or academies but will continue to monitor and promote best practice across the county to secure the best outcomes for children and young people.

7. Performance Management/Follow-up:

- 7.1 The council must report annually on the effectiveness of the admission arrangements in their area and how well the co-ordinated schemes meet the needs of children, particularly those from vulnerable families.
- 7.2 The council must provide copies of its admission arrangement documentation to the Department for Education for their scrutiny after 28th February 2019 and make all information accessible for any interested party. The council must also report to the Department for Education on secondary school and primary school admissions data each year to confirm the effectiveness of the co-ordinated scheme.
- 7.3 Other admission authorities must provide the council with their own admission policies by 15th March 2019 and after review, the council will have 15th May 2019 to refer policies deemed to be unlawful to the Office of the School's Adjudicator.

Report Title	School Admission Arrangements and Scheme 2020
Statutory Authority	The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014
Relevant County Council policy	School Admission Arrangements 2020 for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools
Resource Implications	<p>This work will be undertaken by officers within the Access to Education Team to ensure consistency and continuity of advice and guidance for parents and schools/academies who are required to adhere to the scheme.</p> <p>Therefore there are no additional resources required if the recommendation is implemented.</p>
Sustainability checklist:	
Partnerships	Working with schools and academies throughout the county, the scheme is fully co-ordinated to ensure the timetable for allocations can be met. Once agreed the scheme will ensure that the council works closely with schools and academies whilst maintaining impartiality to ensure that the statutory duty of allocating school places can be met.
Decision Making and Involvement	The council act as the impartial party between parent/carer and the school/academy and makes the offer of school places within its statutory duties.
Economy and Employment	No impact
Caring for people	No impact
Built Environment	No impact
Natural Environment' including Ecology (Biodiversity)	No impact
Education and Information	A clear and comprehensive admissions scheme will enable consistency for all pupils to access education.
Tackling Climate Change	<p>Carbon Emissions Implications? Neutral</p> <p>Vulnerable to climate change? No</p>
Due Regard Statement	Has a Due Regard Statement been completed? Yes

	Alternatively a hard copy is available for inspection from Democratic Services Unit, e-mail democraticservices@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Human rights Implications	None identified