

TITLE	Consultation On 2018/2019 Admission Arrangements For Voluntary Controlled And Community Schools And Co-ordinated Admission Schemes
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	School Admissions Forum on 2 November 2016
REPORT PREPARED BY	Piers Brunning
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR	Judith Ramsden, Director of Children's Services

SUMMARY

The School Admissions Forum is invited to comment on the proposal to consult on amendments to the local authority's annual admissions arrangements.

The School Admissions Code only requires consultation where there are changes proposed; where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every seven years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

Admissions authorities are required to make changes where the School Admissions Code and/or relevant legislation are changed.

It is understood that the government is expecting to consult on new Admissions Code although the timing has not yet been announced. Following consultation, once the draft becomes statute, any further statutory changes will be incorporated into our admission arrangements without consultation. Changes may also be required to the F1 Nursery policy when clarification is received on the proposed 30 hours free childcare available to working parents including resultant adjustment to the number of places available to support this change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Forum notes that the proposed changes to the previous year's arrangements below, and: a) comments on the proposed items to be included and b) advises the local authority of any other issues which it feels should be addressed within the admission arrangements for the 2018/2019 admission year

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following are proposed changes to the previous year's arrangements, all of which are subject to consultation:

List of Background Papers Current School Admissions Code, School Admissions Appeals Code, and relevant Regulations Approved co-ordinated admissions schemes for previous years.		
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DRAFT (FOR CONSIDERATION BY ADMISSIONS FORUM)
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**CONSULTATION ON ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR WOKINGHAM BOROUGH
COUNCIL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS AND THE
COUNCIL'S PROPOSED CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEMES FOR 2018/2019**

AN EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGES ON WHICH VIEWS ARE INVITED

Consultation is on the whole of the admission arrangements and draft schemes; the issues highlighted in this document are those where significant changes are proposed or on which further views are particularly sought. Responses are also welcome on any other aspect of the admission arrangements and coordinated schemes.

The consultation runs from 9 December 2016 to 3 February 2017. Responses should be returned by 3 February 2017 to:

Piers Brunning Service Manager Policy Strategy and Partnerships

Children's Services

Wokingham Borough Council

Shute End

Wokingham RG41 1WN

Email: admissions.review@wokingham.gov.uk

1. E APPLICATION process

Wokingham intends to move to a fully online admissions process, removing both paper applications forms and paper responses following a lean review of current processes. Online processes are commonplace and well used by the public. Where parents have difficulties filling in online forms or reading information online support will be available through the council's customer services team.

2. WAITING LISTS (APPLICABLE TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ADMISSIONS)

Waiting lists will be maintained by the local authority for all schools where necessary for children not offered a school place at their preferred school. However, waiting lists will be maintained for single academic years only and parents will need to re-apply each academic year if they wish their child to be on the waiting list for a particular school.

3. ADMISSION NUMBERS

The new School Admissions Code no longer requires consultation on increase to school admission numbers and comments are not invited on these proposals as part of this consultation. However, for information, the Council has adopted a Primary School Strategy setting out its aims to increase school places during the period 2013-2016, either by expanding existing schools or by commissioning new schools. Further information about individual proposals, with opportunity to comment on them, will be available through separate consultation processes. The planned admission numbers, to be set out in the draft co-ordinated scheme, will be updated in the light of any decision taken to consult on statutory proposals for implementation in 2017/18 or 2018/2019, or any changes determined and notified to the Local Authority by own-admission authority schools.

4. DESIGNATED AREAS

The Council is considering making changes to designated areas in view of admissions issues and capacity changes in the Earley area. In particular a number of children have been placed in schools outside the Earley cluster or neighbourhood, despite there being sufficient capacity for all Earley resident children across all Earley schools

During this initial phase of consultation proposals are invited from interested parties for inclusion in the formal consultation that will commence later in the year. The Forum is therefore invited to comments as they see fit on the current designated areas. These are set out as Appendix E Earley Neighbourhood Designated Areas.

Points to note:

Loddon Primary School is growing to offer 90 places each year.

Aldryngton Primary School has been oversubscribed in area and there is a scheme to expand that school in development. This scheme is not expected to be determined by the date by which 2018/19 admission arrangements must be determined.

The Neighbourhood map has been amended to show Earley St Peter CoE VA Primary School's as part of the Earley neighbourhood.

5. RESIDENCE CRITERIA

Concern has been expressed that a number of parents "game" the admissions system by making temporary accommodation arrangements with a view to securing offers at heavily oversubscribed schools (often at the expense of long term residents).

The Admissions Forum is invited to comment on the current proposed arrangements:

“Residency Requirements

Home address

Applications are processed on the basis of the child’s single permanent home address living with parent(s) or a carer/legal guardian at the closing date for applications. An address will not be accepted where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a private fostering or formal care arrangement.

Checks will be made to determine whether an address declared on the application form is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, evidence will be required as to which is the main home showing that the other property is either let out on a long term rental (6 months plus), that the property is uninhabitable, or that the address is in the process of being sold and the family live permanently in the declared property. This evidence is required to prove where an applicant was living at the time of making the application.

Reference to council tax records will be made to determine a single address for consideration of a place under criteria C or D. It is for the applicant to satisfy the local authority that they live at the address stated.

After allocation, if an applicant moves from the property they have used in their application to another property which is within or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school; the address of the property they originally owned and declared on application will be the address used for determining their designated area, unless this house has been sold or rented out for 12 months prior to the closing date for applications.

Applicants will be asked to declare that the address used is expected to be their place of residence beyond the date of the pupil starting school. Applicants are required to advise of any change of circumstance at any time prior to the child starting school. If you do not declare such arrangements, or a different address is used on the application where the child does not usually live; it will be considered that a false declaration has been made and it may be decided to decline to offer a place at a particular school, or to withdraw the offer of a place. In deciding whether a place was allocated on the basis of a misleading or fraudulent application, an admissions panel will consider any supporting evidence giving reasons why the move was necessary prior to the child starting school.

It is important to declare if there is to be a change of address prior to the child starting school. If the applicant already own a property which is in the process of being sold, we are able to accept the address of the new property only on submission of the appropriate evidence in support e.g. exchange of contracts letter on both the new property and, where possible, disposal of their current property. The deadline for submission of evidence to support a move is January 15, 2018. If the move takes place later or evidence is submitted later, the local authority will only be able to consider this information after the initial allocation of places has taken place and treat the new address for waiting list purposes.

A temporary address cannot be used to obtain a school place. Temporary addresses will only be considered where evidence is provided of a genuine reason for the move e.g. flooding or subsidence.

The local authority reserves its right to carry out further investigation and require additional evidence and to reject applications or withdraw offers of places, if it believes it has the grounds to do so. In such cases, the applicant will have recourse to putting their application through the independent appeals process.”

The 2016/17 arrangements included the following specific measures:

“Temporary address cannot be used to obtain school places. Where an applicant has two or more properties, evidence will be required showing the rental or disposal of the previous property. Temporary addresses will only be considered where evidence is provided of a genuine reason for the move e.g. flooding or subsidence.

If an applicant owns a property which they do not occupy and/or rent out and then move into another property within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school; the address of the property they own will be the address used for determining their designated area, unless the owned house has been rented out for 12 months prior to the closing date for applications.”

Does the Forum consider that the proposed measures give sufficient protection against “gaming” by local residents?

Does the Forum have a view on the 2016/17 arrangements?

Are there other measures the Forum would recommend?

6. CO-ORDINATED SCHEMES

There are no major changes to the timetable for the co-ordinated schemes. Proposed elements of the scheme are set out below for comment.

January 15, 2018*	National closing date for evidence to be provided to meet Wokingham Borough Council criteria for those transferring to secondary school; transferring to junior school; or starting school.
January 15, 2018	Ranked lists to be submitted to the local authority by own admission authority schools for secondary transfer
February 10, 2018	Entry to primary and junior transfer applications to be forwarded to Wokingham Borough own admission authority schools for consideration
February 16, 2018	SEN Team to inform parents of pupils transferring to secondary school or to junior school with statements of special education need of their allocated school
By February 28, 2018	Appeals timetable published to website (own admission authority schools will publish details on the school's website)
March 1, 2018	National secondary offer day
March 15, 2018	Secondary transfer: Deadline for accepting the offer of a place Late applications to be processed Waiting list information available
March 15, 2018	Ranked lists to be submitted to the local authority by own admission authority schools for the entry to primary and junior transfer
March 30, 2018	Closing date for notification of a secondary appeal to be heard together
March 31, 2018	Final co-ordination with other local authorities for entry to primary and junior school transfer
April 18, 2018(next working day)	National offer day for primary applications for those starting school and transfer to junior school offer day
May 3, 2018	Waiting list information available
May 18, 2018	Closing date for notification of an entry to primary or junior transfer appeal to be heard together
End May/early Jun-18	Local authority to advise schools of final allocation details
May/June 2018	Secondary appeals to be heard in accordance with published timetable
June/July 2018	Starting school and junior transfer appeals to be heard in accordance with published timetable

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