

## DRAFT

# Wokingham School Admissions Task & Finish Group

## Terms of Reference

### 1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The Wokingham Schools Forum Education has agreed to have as a sub-group of the Schools Forum a Wokingham School Admission Task & Finish (hereinafter referred to as 'the Group'), to replace the School Admissions Forum previously held as a Forum of the Council.
- 1.2 These terms of reference of The Group maybe amended at any time to meet changes to primary legislation or the School Admissions Code.

### 2. ROLE OF THE GROUP

- 2.1 The Group shall provide a formal channel of communication between Wokingham Borough Council, its maintained schools, other admission authorities, other key interested parties to discuss the effectiveness of local admission arrangements, consider how to deal with difficult admission issues and advise admission authorities on ways on which their arrangements can be improved.
  - 2.1.1 In particular The Group must:
    - (a) Consider how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interests of children and parents within the area of the LA;
    - (b) Promote agreement on admission issues;
    - (c) Consider the comprehensiveness and accessibility of the area of The Group;
    - (d) Consider the effectiveness of the LA's proposed coordinated admission literature and information produced for parents by each admission authority within admission arrangements;
    - (e) Consider the means by which admissions processes might be improved and how actual admission arrangements relate to the admission numbers published;
    - (f) Monitor the admission of children who arrive in the LA'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 contained within the School Admissions Code.
    - (g) Promote the arrangements for children with special educational needs, children in care and children who have been excluded from school;
    - (h) Consider any other admissions issues that arise.

2.1.2 The Group should consider appropriate application and offer dates for vale primary and secondary school admissions within their area in consultation with neighboring authorities as appropriate.

### **3. ENSURING FAIR ACCESS**

3.1 In discharging the above responsibilities, the Group will:

- a) Review the comprehensiveness, effectiveness and accessibility of advice and guidance for parents by the LA and schools through the published composite prospectus;
- b) Agree procedures for ensuring that potentially vulnerable children and those who arrive in the area outside the normal admissions round are placed in a school as quickly as possible. Vulnerable children include those previously excluded from school, children in care, young offenders, children with SEND and/or disabilities, Gypsy and Traveller children, or those who are hard to place, or have challenging behaviour. Managed transfers of such children should be handled as quickly and sensitively as possible. The Group should ensure that all admission authorities in the area are aware of the agreed procedures and should monitor to ensure that they are working effectively.
- c) Monitor compliance with the School Admissions, and School Admission Appeals Codes and related legislation.

### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

#### **4.1 Size of the Group**

4.1.2 The Group needs to be kept to a manageable size in order to facilitate constructive discussions. In view of this, the Wokingham School Admissions Task & Finish Group shall comprise of 15 members.

4.1.3 Each representative of a school should be a head, or a governor (other than one appointed to the school by the LA who is also a member of the authority)

4.1.4 The membership of The Group shall comprise of 15 members as follows:

- **Wokingham Borough Council (7)**

- Service Manager – Schools Support Services
- School Admissions & Transport Manager
- School Admissions Lead Officer
- Senior Specialist (People and Place)
- SEND Team Manager
- Deputy Lead Member for Children’s Services
- Children’s Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee Member

- **Diocesan Boards (1)**

- 1 place nominated by the Diocesan Authority

- **Primary Schools (4)**

- 2x places for a headteacher of a Local Authority Maintained Primary school

2x places for a headteacher of a Primary Academy or Free school

Places nominated via Primary headteacher groups

- **Secondary Schools (3)**

1x place for Headteacher of a Local Authority Maintained Secondary School nominated via headteacher groups

2x places for Headteacher of a Secondary Academy or Free School

Places nominated via Secondary headteacher groups

## 4.2 **Chair and secretary of The Group**

4.2.1 The Group must appoint a Chair and Vice Chair, who may or may not be members of The Group, and should be nominated by The Group itself. At any meeting where both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent, The Group shall elect, from the core members present, a person to take the Chair for that meeting only.

4.2.2 The LA shall appoint a secretary, who is not a member, for The Group. The Secretary shall circulate the agenda and documents relevant to the meeting to members.

## 4.3 **Alternative Members**

4.3.1 Any member of The Group may nominate an alternative member to attend meetings of The Group in that member's absence. Prior notice must be given to the secretary if an alternative member is due to attend a meeting of The Group. An alternative member can only represent his/her alternative group.

## 4.4 **Term of Office**

4.4.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair shall serve for a period of two years and may be re-selected.

4.4.2 Each core and school members are appointed for a period not exceeding 4 years, after which they are eligible for reappointment.

## 4.5 **Removal of Members from The Group**

4.5.1 A member must vacate his/her office where the person appointed ceases to be an elected member or officer of the LA, or ceases to be a headteacher or governor from a school in the school group, or ceases to be a parent governor, or if the relevant Diocesan Board considers the nominated person should no longer be a member of The Group. Written notice of any resignation should be given to the secretary.

## 5. **MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE SCHOOLS ADMISSION TASK & FINISH GROUP**

### 5.1 **Frequency of Meetings**

5.1.1 Meetings of The Group will take place at least twice a year.

## 5.2 **Location of Meetings**

5.2.1 Meetings of The Group will be held either by virtual meeting, in the Council's Offices, or at an alternative location if one is put forward and agreed by The Group.

## 5.3 **Sub Committees**

5.3.1 The Group may establish sub-groups as it considers necessary to consider particular issues and is responsible for determining the sub-groups membership and terms of reference; procedures for convening and holding meetings; and promulgation of any advice and recommendations.

## 5.4 **Administration**

5.4.1 All administration for The Group will be carried out by the LA. This includes arranging meetings, issuing papers and recording meetings.

## 5.5 **Conflict of Interest**

5.5.1 Members of The Group will be required to make declarations of interest when relevant. The Group shall determine whether or not a member having declared an interest shall be permitted to participate in discussion of the matter concerned.

## 5.6 **Quorum**

5.6.1 The quorum shall be quorate if at least 5 members, 33% of its membership are present, including alternatives attending in place of core members. There is nothing to stop The Group from meeting if it is inquorate but it will be up to the LA whether it chooses to take into account any advice given by The Group in these circumstances.

## 6. **REPORTS ON EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

6.1 The Group must provide a summary annual report which should be made available to School Forum to include the following information;

- Membership of The Group;
- Dates of meetings held during the year;
- Number of attendees;
- Number of parental preferences that were met
- Number of admission appeals made for schools in the area (including information on how many were successful and unsuccessful)
- What admission arrangements have been put in place to serve the interests of vulnerable children;
- How well in-year agreed admission procedures are working and the number of children admitted to each school under the procedures; and
- A short summary of the key admission issues in the area and how The Group has addressed them.

6.1.1 The following methods will be used for the reporting of information:

- Reports to Schools Forum
- Circulation to all schools
- Briefings to the Head Teachers groups as and when relevant

## **7 ALTERATION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

7.1 These operational arrangements for The Group have been prepared locally by the LA and refer only to the activities of the Wokingham Schools Admission Task & Finish Group.

7.1.1 The arrangements may, from time to time, be subject to review and change. Since The Group is established to meet statutory requirements it may be necessary to amend the Terms of Reference from time to time to meet changes in statutory requirements.

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