

Cabinet

28 January 2020

Schools Admission Arrangements and Coordinated Scheme 2021-2022

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr A Parry, Children, Education and Early Help

Executive Director: Theresa Leavy, Interim Lead for Children's Services

Report Author: Ed Denham
Title: Manager
Tel: 01305221939
Email: ed.denham@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

- A) That the following policies that make up Dorset Council's School Admissions Arrangements and Coordinated Scheme for school place allocations from September 2021 be adopted:
1. Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Timetable 2021-2022
 2. Primary Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
 3. Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
 4. In Year Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
 5. Admissions Arrangements for Community & Voluntary Controlled Schools 2021-2022.
 6. Admissions to Maintained Nursery Units Policy 2021-2022
 7. Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2021-2022
 8. Guidance on Placement Outside of Normal/Chronological Age Group 2021-2022
 9. Armed Forces Policy 2021-2022
 10. Guidance on Consulting on Admissions Arrangements – November 2021
- B) That the reduction of Pupil Admissions Number be agreed for:
- St. Mary's First School, Charminster lowering its PAN from 42 places to 30 places from September 2021

- Manor Park First School, Dorchester lowering its PAN from 90 places to 60 places from September 2021
- Holy Trinity Primary School, Weymouth lowering its PAN from 90 to 60 places from September 2021.

Reason for Recommendation:

- To determine admissions arrangements in accordance with statutory requirements including the Schools Admissions Code December 2014.
- To ensure compliance with the latest legislation and subsequent regulation/statutory guidance.

1. Executive Summary

As a result of successive Acts and associated Regulations, admission authorities are required to consult on proposed admissions arrangements prior to determination. A consultation has to be carried out by the 31st January 2020, with the outcomes to be determined by the 1 March 2020, published by the LA by the 15 March 2020 for admissions into schools in September 2021.

Department for Education December 2014 Admissions Code requires admission authorities to consult for a minimum period of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January in any given year and to include relevant parents and other groups in that consultation.

The consultation on Dorset's Admissions Arrangements for September 2021 was completed on 22 November 2019 after a 6-week period. This report summarises the consultations that have taken place and invites members to approve the policies as a result of those consultations in order to meet the Local Authority's statutory duties.

All Admissions Authorities, of which Dorset Council is one, are required to 'determine' their admissions arrangements on an annual basis.

2. Financial Implications

None

3. Climate implications

The underlying premise of the School Admissions Arrangements and the criteria for the allocation of places focuses on local schools for local children, minimising where possible families having to undertake driven journeys to access a school place

4. Other Implications

None

5. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

A full EQIA has been undertaken and is attached.

7. Appendices

1. Admissions Arrangements for Community & Voluntary Controlled Schools 2021-2022.
2. Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Timetable 2021-2022
3. Primary Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
4. Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
5. In Year Co-ordinated Scheme 2021-2022
6. Admissions to Maintained Nursery Units Policy 2021-2022
7. Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2021-2022
8. Guidance on Placement Outside of Normal/Chronological Age Group 2021-2022
9. Armed Forces Policy 2021-2022
10. Guidance on Consulting on Admissions Arrangements – November 2021
11. Full EQIA for the Admissions Arrangements and Coordinated Scheme 2021-2022
12. Extract from minutes of People Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2020

8. Background Papers

DFE Schools Admissions Code - *December 2014*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

DFE Guidance on Summer Born Children - *December 2014*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission>

DFE Guidance on Admissions and The Armed Forces Covenant – *April 2013*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/admissions-to-schools-in-england-and-the-armed-forces-covenant>

9. Co-Ordinated Schemes – Primary, Secondary and In Year.

- 9.1 The new timetable for the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme meets with the requirements of the Schools Admissions Code of Practice and is attached in Appendix 1.
- 9.2 The scheme co-ordinates with neighbouring local authorities and the national offer dates as set out in the code of practice. There have been no responses to this consultation

Elected members are asked to support the adoption of the co-ordinated scheme in order to meet statutory requirements.

10. Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2021-2022 including The Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2021-2022 and the Nursery Admissions Policy 2021-2022

- 10.1 Admissions arrangements for all maintained schools are bound by the DFE Schools Admissions Code, which was revised and updated in December 2014.
- 10.2 Dorset Council (DC) has made no changes to the oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.
- 10.3 DC has made no changes to the Sixth Form Admissions Policy nor The Nursery Admissions Policy.
- 10.5 There were no responses to the consultation.

Elected Members are asked to adopt the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2021-2022 and note that Local Authority Sixth Form Admissions Policy, Local Authority Nursery Admissions Policy are unchanged.

11. Dorset Admissions of Armed Forces Community Children Policy

- 11.1 This policy applies to all schools where Dorset is the admissions authority (community and voluntary controlled schools) – it is also promoted for adoption with Dorset Schools which are their own admissions authorities (academies, foundation, voluntary aided, studio and free schools). A copy of the policy is found in Appendix 1.
- 11.2 This policy recognises the Armed Forces Covenant and reflects the DFE Guidance issued in April 2013.

- 11.3 The Guidance from the DFE and DC's policy is designed to ensure that admissions arrangements do not disadvantage service families, and the policy provides the admissions authority flexibility in how they may process applications from service families.
- 11.4 The policy ensures that an admission authority has flexibility in determining main residence when managing place allocations using base and future addresses where a family is subject to a new posting/rotation.
- 11.5 There is flexibility in the application of the Infant Class Size (ICS) legislation, which allows admissions authorities to place over number as an 'exception', though it is still incumbent on the admissions authority to respect the philosophy of ICS and not to necessarily make an 'exception' of every service family.
- 11.6 The policy also allows and requires an admission authority to act flexibly when an allocated school place through a future service or base address is then not appropriate to the residential address that the service family has, once they are finally settled.
- 11.7 There have been no responses to the consultation including the Ministry of Defence who were consulted.

Elected members are asked to adopt the attached policy in order to support military families and to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant.

12. Guidance on the Placement of a Pupil Outside His or Her Normal Age Group

12.1 This policy applies to all schools where Dorset is the admissions authority (community and voluntary controlled schools) – it is also promoted for adoption with Dorset Schools which are their own admissions authorities (academies, foundation, voluntary aided, studio and fee schools). A copy of the policy is found in Appendix 1. There have been no changes to this policy.

12.2 There have been no responses to the consultation

Elected Members are asked to adopt the policy that relates to the placement of children outside of their normal age group, thus ensuring that DC is adhering to DFE statutory guidance.

13. Guidance on Consultations for Admissions Arrangements.

- 13.1 DC are required to consult on how it determines the scope of any consultation. This guidance details the duties of various admission authorities when consulting on their admissions arrangements.
- 13.2 This Guidance also includes further detail on how the Local Authority will fulfil its duty to engage with families of 2-18 year olds when consulting on Admissions Arrangements and Home to School Transport.
- 13.3 Schools and Admissions Authorities were consulted on the document in September/ October 2016. The principles agreed were then used to guide the formal consultation on the LA Admissions Arrangements for September 2021.
- 13.4 The Guidance was also published as one of the documents that the wider public could comment on during this consultation. No responses were received.

Elected members are asked to agree the adoption of the ‘Guidance on Consultation for Admissions Arrangements’.

14. Reduction in Pupil Admission Number

- 14.1 Admission Authorities are required to consult on a reduction of Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN). Pupil Admission Numbers are set and determine how many places a school will offer at their point of entry as part of the coordinated admissions arrangements.
- 14.2 A school is required to hold the number of places in the PAN for the duration of the academic year for which it applies and in the case of Primary, Firsts and Infant schools, must maintain a staffing structure that should they admit children up to the PAN, they do not breach ICS.
- 14.3 Three reductions in PAN are proposed:
 - St. Mary’s First School, Charminster lowering its PAN from 42 places to 30 places from September 2021
 - Manor Park First School, Dorchester lowering its PAN from 90 places to 60 places from September 2021
 - Holy Trinity Primary School, Weymouth lowering its PAN from 90 to 60 places from September 2021.
- 14.4 The appropriate notices and consultation have been published and undertaken.
- 14.5 There were two responses to the consultation raising concerns that these reductions will limit choice and not allow all local families to access their local school.

- 14.6 As part of the proposals all schools were written to advising that the Local Authority will expect any of the schools to revert to their original PAN should local demand rise and where there would be insufficient places for local children.
- 14.7 All three schools are committing to this by way of a letter to Dorset Council from the Governing Body.
- 14.8 While the schools remain as schools maintained by the Local Authority, the setting of the PAN remains with the Local Authority as the Admissions Authority.

15. Consideration of report by People Scrutiny Committee

- 15.1 The People Scrutiny Committee considered this report at their meeting on 7 January 2020. The committee supported the recommendations to be presented to Cabinet on 28 January 2020 and an extract of the minutes from their meeting, is included at appendix 12.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.