

People and Health Overview Committee

31 January 2023

School Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordinated Scheme 2024-2025

For Recommendation to Cabinet

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

Local Councillor(s): All

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Report Status: Public

Brief 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 2023, with the outcomes to be determined by the 1 March 2023, published by the Local Authority by the 15 March 2023 for admissions into schools in September 2024.

The Department for Education September 2021 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 2024 was completed on 19 December 2022 after a 6-week period. This report summarises the consultations that have taken place and invites members to recommend the policies to Cabinet 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.

Parents and Carers are directed to the School Prospectus (Or [Parents Guide](#)) where the key elements of all the policies are detailed along with:

- Step by step instructions for parents and carers to follow for making an application
- Key dates for applications and receiving outcomes
- Details of what parents and carers need to think about when making an application
- How the Local Authority will allocate places, including how places will be allocated if there are too many applications for a school
- How Dorset Council support families with members in the armed forces and summer born children
- What parents and carers can do if they are unhappy with the outcome of their application for a school place
- How the Local Authority will deal with In-Year applications
- Details of all the schools in Dorset

Recommendation:

The People and Health Overview Committee recommends to Cabinet that the following policies that make up Dorset Council's School Admissions Arrangements and Coordinated Scheme for school place allocations from September 2024 be approved and adopted:

1. Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Timetable 2024-2025
2. Primary Co-ordinated Scheme 2024-2025
3. Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme 2024-2025
4. In Year Co-ordinated Scheme 2024-2025
5. Admissions Arrangements for Community & Voluntary Controlled Schools 2024-2025.
6. Admissions to Maintained Nursery Units Policy 2024-2025
7. Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2024-2025
8. Guidance on Placement Outside of Normal/Chronological Age Group 2024-2025
9. Armed Forces Policy 2024-2025

Reason for Recommendation:

To determine admissions arrangements in accordance with statutory requirements including the Schools Admissions Code September 2021.

To ensure compliance with the latest legislation and any subsequent regulation/statutory guidance.

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

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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 recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the co-ordinated scheme in order to meet statutory requirements.

2. Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2024-2025 including The Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2024-2025 and the Nursery Admissions Policy 2024-2025

- 2.1 Admissions arrangements for all maintained schools are bound by the DFE Schools Admissions Code, which was revised and updated in December 2021.
- 2.2 Dorset Council (DC) has made no changes to the oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.
- 2.3 DC has made no changes to the Sixth Form Admissions Policy nor The Nursery Admissions Policy.
- 2.5 There were no responses to the consultation.

Elected Members are asked to recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset 2024-2025 and note that Local Authority Sixth Form Admissions Policy, Local Authority Nursery Admissions Policy are unchanged.

3. Dorset Admissions of Armed Forces Community Children Policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all schools where DC 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.

- 3.2 This policy recognises the Armed Forces Covenant and reflects the spirit of DFE Guidance issued in April 2013 that has been withdrawn but Dorset continues to maintain the principles.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 There have been no responses to the consultation including the Ministry of Defence who were consulted.

Elected members are asked to recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the Dorset Admissions for Armed Forces Community Policy in order to support military families and to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant.

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

- 4.1 This policy applies to all schools where DC 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 other than wording to reflect changes in September 2020 DFE guidance. This policy will go live from the 1st July 2022.
- 4.2 There were no external responses to the consultation, though through discussions with the Office of the Schools (OSA) and the DFE, further clarification was required on this policy around how families manage

transition applications if their current school has agreed to place the child in a year group other than their chronological year group. The policy has thus been updated with the appropriate advice detailing steps families and parties need to take and when these need to be taken. Section 7 has been added.

Elected members are asked to recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the Guidance on the Placement of a Pupil Outside His or Her Normal Age Group in order to comply with existing DFE Guidance on the admissions of Summer Born children and where children are placed outside of their chronological year group.

General Responses to the Consultation:

1. Member of the Public

One respondent noticed that there was missing information in a paragraph in the Primary and Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme.

Dorset Council Response: This paragraph merely detailed where information could be found within the suit of policies. The information was indeed incorrect and has been corrected. This has not changed the policy itself.

5. Financial Implications

None

6. Environmental 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

7. Well-being and Health Implications

The admissions arrangements and pupil place planning strategy for Dorset is focused on ensuring sufficiency and easy access to local school places, generating close local attachments and promoting the walking to school agenda where applicable.

8. Other Implications

None

9. Risk Assessment

- a. HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

10. Equalities Impact Assessment

A full EQIA has been undertaken and is attached.

11. Appendices

1. Admissions Arrangements for Community & Voluntary Controlled Schools 2024-2025.
2. Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Timetable 2024-2025
3. Primary Co-ordinated Scheme 2024-2025
4. Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme 2024-2025
5. In Year Co-ordinated Scheme 2024-2025
6. Admissions to Maintained Nursery Units Policy 2024-2025
7. Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2024-2025
8. Guidance on Placement Outside of Normal/Chronological Age Group 2024-2025
9. Armed Forces Policy 2024-2025
10. Full EQIA for the Admissions Arrangements and Coordinated Scheme

12. Background Papers

Dorset Council Parents Guide (2023-2024 - Example). 2024-2025 Parents Guide is published on the 1st September 2023.

[Parents' guide - Dorset Council](#)

DFE Schools Admissions Code - *September 2021*

[School admissions code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

DFE Guidance on Summer Born Children - *September 2020*

[Summer-born children: school admission - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

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

[Armed Forces Covenant: guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[\[Withdrawn\] Armed forces covenant: admissions to schools in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)