

# School Admission Arrangements 2019-20 and Education Transport Policy 2019-20

**Cabinet**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

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Author:	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Attainment Head of Education
Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

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## **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's agreement to put in place co-ordinated admission arrangements for the normal point of entry (Reception, Year 3, Year 7) and In-year admission arrangements for all Swindon Schools and Published Admission Numbers (PAN) for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Swindon for September 2019.
- 1.2 Cabinet is also invited to agree the Education Transport Policy for 2019-20.
- 1.3 This report particularly links to the Council's updated study of long-term school place planning. It also relates the Vision priority 2: "Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places."

## **2. Recommendations**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the co-ordinated scheme of admission arrangements for the normal point of entry (Reception Year, Year 3 and Year 7) for all primary schools and secondary schools in Swindon from September 2019;
- 2.2 Approve the coordinated In Year admission arrangements for all primary schools and secondary schools in Swindon from September 2018 and September 2019;
- 2.3 Approve the admission numbers and arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools from September;
- 2.4 Note that, if approved by Cabinet, these proposals are determined, and will be implemented by the Head of Education for Admissions from September 2018 for all applicants.
- 2.5 Approve the Education Transport Policy 2019-20.

## **3. Detail**

- 3.1 The admission arrangements and co-ordinated scheme are consulted upon annually. There have been no significant changes to the detail in the admission arrangements for point of entry or coordinated scheme for all schools within in

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Gareth Cheal, 01793 46 5802, gcheal@swindon.gov.uk.

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Swindon. However, there have been two main changes which have occurred which are:

- 3.1.1 The UTC (University Technical College) has opted out of the Local Authority's (LA) Coordinated Admission Arrangements. They first notified the LA that they would be doing this in September 2016 for the September 2017 allocation, and they wish to do so for all future admissions. This has meant that the LA no longer coordinates any of their applications and so parents have to apply directly to the college, and the college notify them of the result.
- 3.1.2 The LA quickly introduced a coordinated scheme for in year admissions for all Swindon Schools from September 2017. The scheme has been successful in managing the demand for school transfers, and therefore the In Year Admission Scheme is proposed for approval for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years to build on this success. The detail of this is covered later in this report (see section 3.35).
- 3.2 The school admission arrangements are used for the purpose of allocating school places at the point of entry for children at age 4 (Reception), 7 (Infant to Junior) and 11 (Secondary).
- 3.3 There are a number of different elements relating to arranging an overall admissions process, especially with the rapidly changing education landscape and greater autonomy granted to schools. It is the responsibility of all admission authorities to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with this Code.
- 3.4 The following table outlines where the responsibility lays for the different admissions processes.

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Admission Authority</b>
Academies (including Free Schools)	Academy Trust
Community Schools	Local Authority
Foundation Schools	Governing Body
Voluntary Aided Schools	Governing Body
Voluntary Controlled Schools	Local Authority

- 3.5 An admission authority is responsible for determining their admission policy, published admission number, oversubscription criteria including the determination of catchment areas. Individual admission authorities within Swindon are required to consult the Local Authority on their admission policy. However, the Local Authority is not responsible for the contents of their arrangements; this is the responsibility of the Academy Trust or Governing body as indicated in the above table.

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- 3.6 In addition to the responsibilities set out in paragraph 3.4, the Local Authority is required to formulate a co-ordinated scheme to manage the application process for all schools within the Local Authority area.
- 3.7 This report outlines those policies written and consulted on by the Local Authority with regard to the allocation of school places. The document contains the following sections:
- 3.7.1 Co-ordinated admissions scheme (applicable to all schools);
  - 3.7.2 In Year Admissions Scheme (applicable to all schools if they choose to opt in)
  - 3.7.3 Admission Arrangements and oversubscription criteria (Community and Voluntary Controlled School), which also includes: Published Admissions Numbers; and School Catchment Areas.

## Consultation

- 3.8 The School Admissions Code places a duty on the Local Authority and all admission authorities to consult upon its admission arrangements above for a minimum of 6 weeks, which must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. The consultation ran between the 6<sup>th</sup> December and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.
- 3.9 The School Admissions Code outlines the list of relevant bodies that must be consulted. These are outlined in section 6 below.
- 3.10 The Local Authority publicised the consultation on its website and through all local schools, nurseries and pre-schools. The consultation was also sent directly to Governing Bodies, neighbouring Local Authorities, pre-schools, children centres, nurseries, and the Diocesan Boards of Education. The Local Authority notified all ward councillor and parish councillors and Locality Teams.
- 3.11 Schools were also asked to advertise the consultation on their websites, publish information in their school newsletters, and by displaying posters.
- 3.12 Survey responses could be made in writing or by using an online survey tool. The survey tool allowed responses to all the arrangements. The LA received a total of 20 responses to the consultation.

## Admissions Consultation responses:

- 3.13 In terms of the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, 80% of respondents agreed with the proposals and the remaining 20% had no response. The main comments on these proposals are below along with the LA's responses:

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<b>Comment</b>	<b>LA response</b>
Children of Staff – could this be included in the Oversubscription criteria for Community School as it is for Academy schools	The LA consulted upon this option in 2016 and the overwhelming response was not in agreement with this. However, the LA will review this given the growing number of Academies and could consult again on this option in the next consultation for 2020 admissions.
Maintained nurseries – could this be included in the oversubscription criteria for Community Schools	The LA's oversubscription criteria are established to apply for all community schools, therefore, it would be difficult and confusing for parents to have oversubscription criteria relating to individual community schools. It would also be very difficult for the Admissions Team to manage this.
Primary Offer date is too late for schools that need to know how many teachers they require.	This is a national offer date and therefore unfortunately this cannot be changed. The LA do communicate with all schools as soon as possible the number of children they are allocated, however, this is subject to change due to the number of late applications and changes of preferences received. The LA visit schools to discuss pupil forecasts.

3.14 In response to the Coordinated Scheme for 2019 for all schools, 70% of all respondents agreed with this, with 15% disagreed and 15% with no response.

3.15 For the proposed In Year Coordinated Schemes, 50% agreed with the proposal, 30% disagreed and 20% had no response. We received the following overall comments and the responses are included below:

<b>Comment</b>	<b>LA response</b>
Offer dates – some of these are in school holidays	The LA will review the proposed in year calendar of dates, however it may not be possible to change all of these
Schools would like copies of application	The new in year process is a fully

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forms and more clarification on the information sent to schools regarding offers of placements.	electronic process and the LA no longer has the capacity to photocopy application forms to send to schools due to the volume received – this was slowing down the process previously. The LA can review the information sent to schools with the view to include more information.
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## Education Transport Policy 2019/20

- 3.16 For the Education Transport Policy, 73% were in agreement, 20% had no response and only 7% disagreed. The Education Transport Policy is attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 3.17 At its meeting in July 2017 Cabinet considered changes to the Education Transport Policy, primarily in relation to post 16 transport (Cabinet Minute 21 2017/2018 refers). The Local Authority has a legal duty, following consultation, to publish by September of each year its transport policy which will apply 12 months later, but no further changes have been proposed following the previous review.
- 3.18 Free home to school transport is set out within the Education Act 1996, which was extended in and provides for free home to school transport to be offered to all pupils who meet the following criteria:
- 3.18.1 Are of statutory school age (5-16);
  - 3.18.2 Attend their designated appropriate area school (or another school at which the Local Authority has offered a place); and
  - 3.18.3 Live more than three miles from their catchment area school (or two miles if under eight years of age) or do not have a safe walking route when accompanied by an adult to their catchment area school.
- 3.19 In addition, the Education & Inspections Act 2006 widened statutory home to school transport for pupils from low-income families, in certain circumstances. Low-income families are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals or are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit. These provisions are therefore, as follows:
- 3.19.1 Primary – to the nearest suitable school if more than two miles from home;

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- 3.19.2 Secondary – to any of the three nearest suitable schools if between two and six miles from home (which, in practice, applies to all Swindon pupils who travel beyond two miles);
- 3.19.3 Primary/Secondary – to the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (as defined by the Equality Act 2006) if between two and fifteen miles from home.
- 3.20 As mentioned above in paragraph 3.2, children must currently be attending the ‘designated appropriate area school’ and live over the 2 or 3 mile statutory distances, in order to qualify for assistance with transport.
- 3.21 The Education Transport Policy 2014 introduced “designated transport areas” which defined the designated transport area for a school
- 3.22 If a parent chooses to send their child to a school other than the designated appropriate area school, then (apart from the provisions of the Education & Inspections Act 2006) free school transport is not normally provided and the parent is responsible for any travel costs.
- 3.23 The Education Transport Policy applicable for the 2019/2020 academic year is attached as **Appendix 5** to the report
- 3.24 The Education Policy is an amalgamation of the separate transport policies which were in place in prior to 2012 and, therefore, includes Mainstream Home to School Transport, Post-16 and Special Educational Needs Transport Policies.
- Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for the Point of Entry
- 3.25 The Local Authority is legally required to consult on the co-ordinated admission arrangements that all the schools and admissions authorities in their area must comply with.
- 3.26 The Education Act 2002 introduced the statutory requirement for every Local Authority to draw up a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements to cover every maintained school in its area. The regulations also require Local Authorities to co-ordinate arrangements across Local Authority boundaries. Therefore, the scheme sets out the admissions timetable and the responsibility to exchange information between schools and Local Authorities to ensure Swindon makes one fair offer to all residents of the Borough.
- 3.27 The purpose of the co-ordinated scheme is to ensure that every parent of a child living in Swindon who has applied for a school place receives the offer of one school place on the same day.
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- 3.28 This applies to admission for the point of entry for Reception, Year 3 and Year 7 for all categories of schools including Community, Voluntary Controlled, Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academies. The proposed co-ordinated scheme and timescales for the 2018/19 academic year is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## Admission Arrangements

- 3.29 All schools are required to set fair and transparent arrangements for assessing priority for admission.
- 3.30 The key part of the admission arrangements is to set criteria used to determine admission where more parents have expressed a preference for a particular school than it has places available in a particular year. The published oversubscription criteria must be applied to decide which preferences should be met.
- 3.31 The oversubscription criteria must be set out clearly and unambiguously, making clear not only what the criteria are but also the way and order in which they will be applied.
- 3.32 The proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools are set out in **Appendix 2**. There was 1 response to the proposed admission numbers. A full analysis of the response is set out within **Appendix 3**.

## In Year Coordinated Admissions

- 3.33 Following a number of complaints during the 2016/2017 academic year on delays in dealing with in year applications, the Local Authority consulted and implemented a scheme to co-ordinate applications for schools outside of the normal admissions round in July 2017.
- 3.34 The in-year co-ordinated scheme operates a shorter version of the co-ordinated scheme from paragraph 3.20 by opening and closing 12 admissions rounds during the course of the year.
- 3.35 The new scheme has been in operation for the start of the 2017/2018 academic year and has helped the school admissions team deal with the high demand for applications to change schools during the year and assisted schools with managing the induction of new pupils through a controlled process.
- 3.36 In the initial six admissions rounds during the 2017/18 academic year the school admissions team have managed to process 2500 requests to move into Swindon or to change school during the first part of the year.

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3.37 Therefore, the proposal is to set the in year co-ordinated admissions schemes for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years. The schemes are set out in Appendix 4

3.38 The proposed In Year Coordinated Scheme is included as Appendix 4.

## Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

3.39 All schools must have an admission number for each age group. The admission number is the upper limit of pupils that will be offered places in the particular year. Admission numbers should be set with regard to the capacity assessment for the school.

3.40 Once an admission number has been set, the Admission Authority must respect that number. Pupils should not be admitted above the published admission number unless exceptional circumstances apply.

3.41 As above Governing bodies of Academies and Voluntary Aided Schools are responsible for setting their own PAN and the Local Authority is a stakeholder in their consultation. This section relates to the PANs set by the Local Authority in consultation with schools as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

3.42 The proposed published admission numbers have been included as part of **Appendix 2**. Under the School Admissions Code 2014, the Local Authority, as the Admitting Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, is not required to consult on the admissions number as part of the consultation on admission arrangements if they are requesting the school to increase or keep the same PAN. However, they must consult the Governing Body of the school. Consultation would be required where it is intended to reduce the published admission number.

3.43 The responses to the admissions numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools are shown in **Appendix 3**.

## Catchment Areas

3.44 There have been no changes to the catchment area this time. The existing catchment areas were available on the Council's website for comments.

## **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 The School Admissions Arrangements and Education Transport Policy must be determined annually for parents applying for school places in the following year. In relation to the arrangements proposed there are no alternatives proposed that differ from the arrangements for 2018/19.

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- 4.2 The main alternative option to the proposed arrangements is the in-year co-ordinated admissions scheme that is set out from paragraph 3.35.

## 5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The admission budget is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2018-19 and therefore no corporate funding is required to support this service. However, changes to the admissions policy may have direct impact on the number of pupils in each school, which will affect the level of funding which they receive from the DSG. There are also implications more generally for the DSG of creating additional school places in terms of both set up funding and on-going revenue funding.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 The Council is required to comply with the statutory provisions referred to in the report. All other legal and human rights implications have been considered in the preparation of this report. The recommendations are considered compatible with Convention Rights.
- 5.3 Under Section 89b of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and associated regulations, and the Education Bill 2011 the Council, in its role as a Local Authority, has to determine the co-ordinated scheme and other admission arrangements.

### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 The proposals for additional school places comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to develop school policy to maximise school attendance.

### Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment was undertaken and a copy can be obtained from the report author.
- 5.6 The admission arrangements in the report are used for the purposes of prioritising individual applications for admission to school based on family arrangements and the distance they reside from a school. The admission criteria set out in the report are based on published guidance from the Department for Education to ensure that they are arranged and operated in a clear, fair and transparent way according to a nationally imposed timescale.

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- 5.7 It is considered that the admission arrangements set out in the report do not discriminate against disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership status or pregnancy/maternity

## Risk Management

- 5.8 The co-ordinated admissions scheme, including in year admissions, has strengthened the measures in place for safeguarding children as the Admissions Team are aware of every child in Swindon and are aware of transfers coming into or out of the Borough. This will continue if the proposals for in year admissions made by the Admissions working party are agreed.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

- 6.2 In relation to the consultation carried out with Admission Authorities, etc. the following were consulted:

6.2.1 Head Teachers of all maintained schools in Swindon application procedures;

6.2.2 Chairs of Governors of all maintained schools in Swindon

6.2.3 Secondary Admission Authorities within 8 km of the Borough Boundary

6.2.4 Primary Admission Authorities within 3.2 km of the Borough Boundary

6.2.5 Diocese of Bristol Board of Education

6.2.6 Catholic Diocese of Clifton

6.2.7 Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire Local Authorities

6.2.8 Ward members

6.2.9 Parish Councils within Swindon Borough

6.2.10 Appeal Clerks

6.2.11 Relevant parents and local interest groups as set out in the School Admissions Code

6.2.12 School Admissions Forum.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None
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## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Proposed Co-ordinated Scheme 2019-20
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Proposed Admission Arrangements for all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2019-20
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Consultation responses (*This appendix is available online at the Council's website or on request from Committee and Member Services*).
- 8.4 Appendix 4 – Proposed In Year Coordination Scheme (*This appendix is available online at the Council's website or on request from Committee and Member Services*).
- 8.5 Appendix 5 – Proposed Education Transport Policy. (*This appendix is available online at the Council's website or on request from Committee and Member Services*).

## **9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme**

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme for March 2018.