

# School Admission Arrangements 2018-19

**Cabinet**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

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Author: Cabinet Member for Children's Services  
Head of Education

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

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## **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 To agree and put in place co-ordinated admission arrangements for the normal point of entry (Reception, Year 3, Year 7 and Year 10 (UTC) and In-year admission arrangements for all Swindon Schools and Published Admission Numbers (PAN) for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Swindon for September 2018.
- 1.2 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 Note the responses received to the consultation carried out, as referred to in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.16 of the report;
- 2.2 Approve the co-ordinated scheme of admission arrangements for the normal point of entry (Reception Year, Year 3 and Year 7 and Year 10 (University Technical College)) and In Year admissions for all primary schools and secondary schools in Swindon from September 2018;
- 2.3 Approve the admission numbers and arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools from September 2018;
- 2.4 Note that, if approved by Cabinet, these proposals will have been determined by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017, in line with the School Admissions Code of Practice 2014, and will be implemented by the Head of Education for Admissions from September 2018 for all applicants.

## **3. Detail**

- 3.1 The admission arrangements and co-ordinated scheme are consulted upon annually, the changes which have been made to the policies since last determined are;

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- 3.1.1 Clarification concerning the definition when measuring the home to school distance.
- 3.1.2 Information on the admission of 'summer born children'. This is in line with the letter from Nick Gibb MP, Minister for Schools on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015. This set out the Government's view that summer born children between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August can be admitted to the reception year at the age of 5 if it is the parent's wishes, and that those children can remain with that cohort throughout their school life.
- 3.1.3 Clarification on the definition of sibling in relation to children that have an Education, Health, Care Plan (EHCP). This is to try and ensure that a child that has an EHCP that names a school can be treated as a sibling even if they have not yet started at the school.
- 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) and 14 (University Technical College (UTC)).
- 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.

Type of School	Admission Authority
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.
- 3.6 In addition to 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.

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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 Admission Arrangements and oversubscription criteria (Community and Voluntary Controlled School), this also includes:

- Published Admissions Numbers;
- School Catchment Areas.

3.8 The arrangements must be determined by the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and published on the Local Authority's website by the 15<sup>th</sup> March in the determination year.

## Consultation

3.9 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 2017. The consultation ran between the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and 18<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

3.10 In February 2014, the Cabinet adopted a Consultation Policy to restate clearly the Council's commitment to effective and efficient public consultation and set the expectation that this commitment will be consistently applied, particularly in relation to the Council's key decisions (Cabinet Minute 89, 2013/14 refers)

3.11 The Policy shows how consultations meet the Council's legal requirements and adhere to a local standard of ten principles that will help ensure that consultation is undertaken effectively, in a timely manner, at an appropriate stage in the decision making process and that results are used to inform policy development and service delivery.

3.12 The School Admissions Code outlines the list of relevant bodies that must be consulted. These are outlined in section 6 below.

3.13 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.

3.14 Schools were also asked to advertise the consultation on their websites, publish information in their school newsletters, and by displaying posters.

3.15 Survey responses could be made in writing or by using an online survey tool. The survey tool allowed responses to all the arrangements. However, we received no

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responses to the consultation on the proposed co-ordinated scheme and admission arrangements.

- 3.16 There were 19 responses to the proposed admission numbers and all of these were in agreement. A full analysis of the response is set out within **Appendix 3**.

## Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme

- 3.17 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.
- 3.18 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.
- 3.19 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.
- 3.20 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. It also includes entry into Year 10 for the University Technical College (UTC). The proposed co-ordinated scheme and timescales for the 2018/19 academic year is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## Admission Arrangements

- 3.21 All schools are required to set fair and transparent arrangements for assessing priority for admission.
- 3.22 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.
- 3.23 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.
- 3.24 The proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools are set out in **Appendix 2**.
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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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## Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

- 3.25 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.
- 3.26 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.
- 3.27 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.
- 3.28 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.
- 3.29 The responses to the admissions numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools are shown in **Appendix 3**.

## Catchment Areas

- 3.30 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 If the admission arrangements and co-ordinated scheme for 2018-19 are not determined by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017 the Secretary of State will impose one.

## **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

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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 that are to apply in their area for September 2018-19 and notify the Secretary of State by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Failure to do so will lead to a scheme being imposed.

## 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.
- 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.

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## 6. Consultees

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

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

- Head Teachers of all maintained schools in Swindon application procedures;
- Chairs of Governors of all maintained schools in Swindon
- Secondary Admission Authorities within 8 km of the Borough Boundary
- Primary Admission Authorities within 3.2 km of the Borough Boundary
- Diocese of Bristol Board of Education
- Catholic Diocese of Clifton
- Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire Local Authorities
- Ward members
- Parish Councils within Swindon Borough
- Appeal Clerks
- Relevant parents and local interest groups as set out in the School Admissions Code
- School Admissions Forum.

## 7. Background Papers

- 7.1 The School Admissions Code 2014
- 7.2 The School Admissions Appeals Code 2012

## 8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Proposed Co-ordinated Scheme 2018-19
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Proposed Admission Arrangements for all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2018-19
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Consultation responses

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## **9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan**

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme / Forward Plan for February 2017.