

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 8 December 2015

Admissions to Mainstream Schools

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| Item number | 7.2 |
| Report number | |
| Executive | |
| Wards | All |

Executive summary

To seek members approval for the Admissions Policy for all mainstream schools. The purpose of the proposed policy is to ensure clarity and consistency in the management of admissions to mainstream schools at all stages. All admissions must comply with class size legislation and national agreements.

Links

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Coalition pledges | P5 |
| Council outcomes | C01,C03,C06 |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO3 |

Admissions to Mainstream Schools

Recommendations

- 1.1 To confirm approval of the Admissions to Mainstream Schools Policy.

Background

- 2.1 The Council manages the provision of school places using principles and practices that are in line with the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#), as amended and the [Gaelic Language \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#). Admissions for P1 and S1 each August are managed by the Grants, Awards and Placements team. The headteacher is responsible for all admissions at all other stages and for P1 and S1 after August.
- 2.2 Legislation on class sizes underpins the Admissions Policy.
- 2.3 A Member Officer Working Group was established in November 2015 to review the admissions and appeals process for session 2015/16.

Main report

- 3.1 The policies and procedures which underpin the admissions process for mainstream primary and secondary schools have been in place since the inception of Edinburgh City Council.
- 3.2 The main key messages in place in the policy are as follows:
 - 3.2.1 The pupil must be resident in the address before a place will be allocated. Proofs of address must be provided.
 - 3.2.2 Allocation of places in P1 and S1 for August of any year are based on residence before 28 February.
 - 3.2.3 Late catchment pupils P1 and S1 after 28 February are not guaranteed places in the catchment school.
 - 3.2.4 Siblings are not guaranteed out of catchment placements if their brother or sister is already in a school.

- 3.2.5 Priority will be given to catchment Baptised Roman Catholics (BRC) in certain RC schools in allocating places.
- 3.2.6 Reserved places will normally be retained throughout the year, where possible, for incoming catchment children, but where non catchment places are granted by an Appeal Committee or a Sheriff this may result in fewer reserved places being available.
- 3.3 Placement requests at other stages follow the same procedures as for P1 and S1.
- 3.4 At all stages in primary and secondary schools if a placement is refused a parent has the right to appeal in the first instance to an independent appeal panel and if that is unsuccessful to the Sheriff Court.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Overall progress will be measured using the following measures:
 - 4.1.1 compliance with all statutory deadlines;
 - 4.1.2 numbers of appeals not upheld in line with department policies and;
 - 4.1.3 class size regulations.

Financial impact

- 5.1 This policy will be delivered within existing budgets.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The risk in this area is that statutory deadlines are not met and that there is non compliance with legislation.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 All work within this area seeks to address inequalities both in terms of provision of resources and impact on outcomes for children and young people.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse economic, social or environmental impacts resulting from this policy.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 There are a variety of means of consultation with parents. These are at school and local authority level. Parents are consulted through Neighbourhood Groups and Consultative Committee with Parents. Parents are also part of the Rising Rolls working group and officers meet with individual parent councils where schools are affected by rising rolls. Headteachers meet with their own Parent Council to discuss placements in their own school. The recently formed Member Officer Group have also consulted with a variety of stakeholders.

Background reading/external references

[Education \[Scotland\] Act 1980](#)

[The Education \[Appeal Committee Procedures\] \[Scotland\] Amendment Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Lower Primary Class Sizes\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 1999](#)

[The Education \(Lower Primary Class Sizes\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2010](#)

[Team Teaching CEC](#)

[Composite Classes CEC](#)

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Links

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Coalition pledges | P5 - Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum |
| Council outcomes | CO1- Our children have the best start in life, are able to make and sustain relationships and are ready to succeed CO3 - Our children and young people at risk, or with a disability, have improved life chances CO6 - Our children's and young people's outcomes are not undermined by poverty and inequality |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO3 - Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential |
| Appendices | 1 – Admissions mainstream schools |

Policy : Admissions to Mainstream Schools

Implementation date: December 2015

Control schedule

Approved by: Education Children and Families Committee

Approval date :

Senior Responsible Officer: Moyra Wilson Senior Education Manager

Author: Moyra Wilson

Scheduled for review: December 2017

Version control

| Version | Date | Author | Comment |
|---------|---------------|--------------|---------|
| 0.1 | December 2015 | Moyra Wilson | |

Committee decisions affecting this policy

| Date | Committee | Link to report | Link to minute |
|----------|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 08.12.15 | Education Children and Families | | |

Admissions to Mainstream Schools

Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy is required to ensure clarity and consistency in the management of admissions to mainstream schools at all stages. All admissions must comply with class size legislation and national agreements [see 4.1].

Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers the admission of pupils to P1 and S1 in mainstream schools in August of any school year and also admissions to all other stages of primary and secondary schools.

Definitions

- 3.1 Reserved places: Places retained for incoming catchment children and young people.
- 3.2 Proofs of residence: A copy of council tax and a utility bill.
- 3.3 R.C. school: Roman Catholic school.
- 3.4 School Catchment: An area from which children and young people are eligible to attend a local school.
- 3.5 Composite Class: A class in which there are pupils at more than one stage of the primary school
- 3.6 Team teaching: Team Teaching is where two teachers teach a class that has more than the maximum number of pupils for that particular stage

Policy content

- 4.1 The Council manages the provision of school places using principles and practices that are in line with the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#), as amended and the [Gaelic Language \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#). Further detail of how these principles are applied by the Council to the provision of school places are set out below:

- 4.1.1 Pupils living in the City of Edinburgh Council area have priority over incoming requests from outside the Council area;
- 4.1.2 The Council will endeavour to accommodate catchment pupils in P1 and S1 at their catchment school if resident by 28 February of any year;
- 4.1.3 At other stages in primary and secondary schools places will be allocated to catchment pupils if there are available spaces;
- 4.1.4 Placing requests for non-catchment pupils at P1, S1 and all other stages will be met, subject to available capacity;
- 4.1.5 Additional classes are not normally created specifically to cater for non-catchment placing requests in the primary sector. This includes the potential need to create additional classes in subsequent years beyond the P1 stage;
- 4.1.6 The legislation on class sizes; the Education (Lower Primary Class Sizes) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 (as amended) that introduced a class size maximum of 25 for P1 and 30 for P2 to P3 is implemented;
- 4.1.7 The most efficient arrangement of class size and provision of teaching staff in P1 and S1 for each new session is sought for each school after taking account of demand for catchment non denominational places.;
- 4.1.8 When considering an “additional teacher” for the present year, the Council takes into account the global number of teachers required across the estate and not the historic number of teachers required at individual schools;
- 4.1.9 First year intake limits, classroom size restrictions and limits on the overall pupil numbers will be applied where necessary to assist in managing school provision;
- 4.1.10 Separate catchment boundaries are drawn for denominational and non-denominational schools at both primary and secondary school level (pupils have the option of attending either catchment school, subject to availability of places);
- 4.1.11 In areas of the City falling outwith established catchment areas (for example, the new Waterfront development), the Council defines which establishment is an ‘appropriate school’ for pupils – normally judged on distance and geography;
- 4.1.12 Attendance at a school nursery does not guarantee a place in the school.

Reserved Places

- 4.2 One place per class will be reserved for incoming catchment pupils in each class in primary school and two reserved places for each team teaching class where possible. In secondary schools one reserved place for incoming catchment

pupils will be kept at each year stage where possible. In some areas of the city new housing developments mean that there is the potential for higher than normal movement into particular catchment areas. Where it is possible to do so, in these areas more than one place may be reserved in each class in order to try and ensure that pupils moving into the area can obtain a place at their catchment school.

- 4.3 Reserved places will normally be retained throughout the year, where possible, for incoming catchment children. Where non catchment places are granted by an Appeal Committee or a Sheriff this may result in fewer reserved places being available.

Team Teaching

- 4.4 Team teaching arrangements in primary schools may be implemented where catchment numbers are expected to exceed capacity based on P1 class sizes of 25. This normally involves raising the P1 intake to multiples of 30 as the maximum number of pupils per teacher rises to 30 in P2 so the additional teacher for the class will only be required for P1. Team teaching classes may be organised at other stages in primary schools.

Composite Classes

- 4.5 Composite classes, including at P1/2, are part of the normal organisation in many primary schools, and are generally formed according to the following principles:
- 4.5.1 Age is the main criterion for selecting pupils for composite classes;
 - 4.5.2 A composite class would not normally be formed if there were fewer than five pupils coming from a particular year stage;
 - 4.5.3 It is not policy to composite over three year stages except where there are very low numbers of pupils at particular stages;
 - 4.5.4 Reorganising and recompositing a class structure is sometimes allowed to make additional places available for pupils in an individual school; but significant reorganising or recompositing will not be used where to do so would give rise to a potential detriment to the existing pupils at the school;
 - 4.5.5 Exceptional circumstances will be looked at on a case by case basis.
- 4.6 Positive Action schools receive additional funding which can at times be used to create additional classes by individual headteachers. Non catchment pupils would not be restricted in these cases as they would not generate the need for the Department to employ an additional teacher
- 4.7 There are six key points for parents to consider when applying for school places:

- 4.7.1 Places are allocated to children based on their residence and all parents must provide proof of residence for a catchment place when they register their child for school;
- 4.7.2 All schools have two catchment schools, non-denominational and Roman Catholic. Parents must choose which of these is their preferred school;
- 4.7.3 A child is only entitled to a place in the primary school where they attend nursery if they live in the catchment area of the primary school;
- 4.7.4 Catchment places for P1 and S1 will only be guaranteed in a non denominational school to children living in the school catchment by 28 February of the year they begin primary or secondary school;
- 4.7.5 Where a denominational Roman Catholic school is oversubscribed with catchment children, priority will be given to catchment baptised Roman Catholics;
- 4.7.6 If a placing request is successful for one child, it does not guarantee that requests for younger siblings will be successful. This could mean that siblings would attend different schools.

Oversubscribed Roman Catholic Schools

- 4.8 Where catchment applications for denominational schools exceed the available school capacity, or would cause accommodation issues at a future stage, priority will be given to baptised Roman Catholic pupils. Furthermore, an additional member of staff would not, as standard practice, be applied to a Roman Catholic school to provide places beyond that necessary to support a P1 intake from its baptised RC catchment population. The exception to this may be where the creation of a higher intake at a Roman Catholic school with sufficient capacity may resolve potential accommodation issues at another school.
- 4.9 Accordingly, where a Roman Catholic school is oversubscribed the following actions will be taken:
 - 4.9.1 Priority will be given to catchment Baptised Roman Catholics (BRC) in allocating places;
 - 4.9.2 In the event that there are insufficient places for all catchment BRC then BRC may be prioritised into other RC schools;
 - 4.9.3 Non BRC, or BRC who choose not to be prioritised into another RC school, who do not obtain a place at their catchment RC school will not be prioritised out to other schools. Such children would be expected to first revert to their non-denominational catchment school.
- 4.10 None of the above affects a parent's statutory right to make a placing request to any school.

Oversubscribed Schools

- 4.11 At times when there are oversubscribed non denominational schools the decision may be made to prioritise placing requests out of the school.

Catchment Registration and Placing Requests for P1 and S1

- 4.12 Catchment registration and the handling of placing requests across the city is a major but routine organisational procedure undertaken by the Department on an annual basis. This process commences in November with schools being asked to register their catchment children, and parents being asked to make their placing requests by mid-December. Head Teachers are involved throughout the process and are asked to consult with parents in early February where necessary to share with them plans for P1 intakes and class organisations for August. Schools have been made aware that class organisations can change between now and the start of the session.
- 4.13 It is important to note that numbers of pupils do change, sometimes on a daily basis, as a result of parents making late registrations often requiring changes to class organisations. The initial figures are analysed during January to establish class organisations and identify any accommodation issues and identify where catchment pupil numbers might exceed school capacity. Proposed intakes are based on these figures. The process continues to be managed by the Department through to the start of session in August when the waiting list is returned to the school to manage. However, consideration will be given to whether in the future this process would also be best managed by the department centrally rather than by schools.
- 4.14 The process is characterised by complex patterns of pupil flow across the city and a constantly evolving picture as late applications are made and pupils are withdrawn. Nearly all schools experience a drop between the number of catchment P1 pupils registered in January and the number taking up a place in August. In many schools this drop can be significant and is explained by parents successfully making a placing request to another school, deciding to defer entry, choosing the private sector or moving house within the intervening period.
- 4.15 These changes make it difficult not to over-plan for placements and many schools which initially appear to have more catchment pupils than can be accommodated are likely to have no difficulty in ultimately accommodating their catchment intake in August it also means that some placing requests refused in April will be successful by August. There can, however, be no guarantees and some schools require careful monitoring of their numbers throughout the process. For some schools the final organisation of the P1 classes may not be known until late in the process because of complex cross catchment movement of pupils.

4.16 Those children who are refused a placement will be placed on a waiting list. The priority order for the waiting list in P1 and S1 is determined by the Committee on Pupil Student support in February each year. The usual priority order is:

- a) Siblings;
- b) Edinburgh children;
- c) Out of Edinburgh Children.

4.17 In each category distance is then used to determine the place on the waiting list.

Catchment Registration and Placing Requests for Other Stages

4.18 Placement requests at other stages follow the same procedures as for P1 and S1. These requests are managed by Headteachers. If there are no available places the headteacher will refuse the place and add the names to the waiting list.

4.19 At all stages in primary and secondary schools if a placement is refused a parent has the right to appeal in the first instance to an independent appeal panel and if that is unsuccessful to the Sheriff Court.

Parental Preference

4.20 Many schools across the city are experiencing increased demand from their own catchment population for P1 places. This has had the effect of reducing the number of places available for non-catchment pupils. Accordingly, the percentage of non-catchment placing requests being refused has risen. It is anticipated that the percentage of requests being refused will be maintained at a high level as demand from catchment populations continues to grow.

4.21 Parents are encouraged to learn more about their catchment school by arranging a visit and talking to staff and other parents. Open days during the registration period given parents the opportunity to visit their local school without prior arrangement.

Implementation

5.1 The implementation of this policy will be 2015 – 2017.

Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1 The Senior Education Manager Inclusion, Parent and Pupil Support has overall responsibility for this policy.
- 6.2 The Grants Awards and Placements Team are responsible for the day to day administration of the procedure and advising parents of policy.
- 6.3 Headteachers are responsible for collecting information on catchment children and advising parents of the policy.

Related documents

- 7.1 [Education \[Scotland\] Act 1980](#)
[The Education\[Appeal Committee Procedures\] \[Scotland\] Amendment Regulations 2006](#)
[The Education\[Lower Primary Class Sizes\] \[Scotland\] Regulations 1999](#)
[The Education \(Lower Primary Class Sizes\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2010](#)
[Team Teaching CEC](#)
[Composite Classes CEC](#)

Equalities impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse equalities issues arising from this policy.

Sustainability impact

- 9.1 There are no adverse economic, social or environmental impacts resulting from this area of activity.

Risk assessment

- 10.1 The risk of not having a consistent, clear and published policy means that parents /carers are not kept informed about the placements process.

Review

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 2 year cycle with the next review being December 2017.