

# Education Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 7 March 2017

## Strategic Management of School Places

Item number 7.2

Report number

Executive/routine

Wards

### Executive Summary

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This report provides an update on the expected P1 and S1 admissions for August 2017 and notes any specific management policies which need to be applied. The report also provides an update on the recommendations made by the Short Life Member Officer Group: School Admissions/ Appeals and includes data relating to the number of out of catchment requests; the number of appeals lodged, the number of cases granted and individual cases won on appeal.

### Links

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Coalition Pledges [P2, P4](#)

Council Priorities [CP1](#)

Single Outcome Agreement [SO3](#)

## Strategic Management of School Places

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 To approve the Reserved Places Policy (appendix 1).
- 1.2 Note the intention to prioritise baptised Roman Catholic pupils into 14 primary schools and into Holy Rood RC High School.
- 1.3 Note the intention to reserve one place per 60 pupils for the S1 intake.
- 1.4 To request an update report on the 2017/18 Admissions and Appeal Process in December 2017.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 A Communities and Families Working Group meets in January each year as part of the annual P1 and S1 intake process. This process ensures that a consistent and equitable approach is taken to accommodating catchment pupil numbers and, where possible, placing requests across the school estate. The information in this report is based on the most up to date information available, however, the numbers will change prior to the start of session in August.
- 2.2 Further to the information on intakes for August 2017 this report provides an update on school admission and appeals processes. In December 2015 a Short Life Member Officer Working Group on School Admissions/Appeals was set up to review the existing Admissions and Appeals processes and identify potential improvements.
- 2.3 The group met four times and interested parties were invited to attend and outline their experience of being involved in the placing process and any issues and challenges that needed to be addressed. Head teachers, a Trade Union representative, Appeal Panel Chairs and Members all attended.
- 2.4 A survey was issued to 606 interested parties including head teachers; parents/ carers; panel chairs/members; Council officers; parents who applied for appeals; and elected members. 395 returns were received with the majority of respondents 232 identifying themselves as parents/carers.
- 2.5 An action plan was developed and used throughout the process with a number of activities already in place for the start of the 2016 placing process.

- 2.6 In Edinburgh, admissions for P1 and S1 each August are managed by the Placements team. The headteacher is responsible for all admissions at all other stages and for P1 and S1 after August.
- 2.7 It was agreed that an Admissions and Appeals report would be submitted to Committee on an annual basis.

### 3. Main report

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#### Management of School Places

- 3.1 A Communities and Families Working Group meets each January to review registrations for the following August, consider appropriate S1 and P1 intake limits for each school and agree proposed class organisations for primary schools.
- 3.2 The key issues which have emerged this year are:
- the necessity to prioritise, as in previous years, baptised Roman Catholic (RC) pupils at certain RC schools;
  - the increase in demand for places at the Gaelic Medium Education (GME) primary school Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce;
  - the requirement to increase reserved places in secondary schools.
- 3.3 Given the normal trend of loss of pupils between now and the start of session, it is anticipated that numbers will drop in all Roman Catholic schools to allow the majority of those who have registered to receive a place. However, catchment applications currently exceed places available. Accordingly, prioritisation of baptised Roman Catholic catchment pupils will be necessary at the following schools for August 2017:
- Holy Cross RC Primary School
  - St Andrew's Fox Covert RC Primary School
  - St Catherine's RC Primary School
  - St Cuthbert's RC Primary School
  - St David's RC Primary School
  - St Francis' RC Primary School
  - St John Vianney RC Primary School
  - St John's RC Primary School
  - St Joseph's RC Primary School
  - St Mark's RC Primary School
  - St Mary's RC (Edinburgh) Primary School
  - St Mary's RC (Leith) Primary School

- St Ninian's RC Primary School
- St Peter's RC Primary School
- Holy Rood RC High School

3.4 Demand for places at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce has increased significantly since last year and there is currently no policy in place to limit the intake at this school. While the demand can be accommodated this year similar intakes in future years will not be able to be sustained at the school. A long term strategy for the growth of GME is required and an update on how this will form part of a wider review of the schools and lifelong learning estate is included in another report on the agenda for this Committee.

### **Reserved Places**

3.5 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows the Education Authority to reserve places in schools for catchment children that move into the catchment area. Reserved places have been used effectively to ensure that children have been able to attend their local catchment school. For the P1 intake into Primary Schools it is proposed to reserve one place per class of 25 pupils and two places in a team teaching class. This is the same as last year. In Secondary schools it is proposed to reserve one place per 60 pupils for the S1 intake. Last year only one place per school was reserved for the S1 intake. In some of our high demand schools reserving one place proved inadequate with a number of schools having to refuse places to incoming catchment pupils, leading to catchment waiting lists. The Education Authority believes that it is important for children and young people to be able to attend their local catchment school. To tackle this issue it is proposed to increase the number of reserved places in secondary schools as outlined above.

### **Admissions and appeals processes**

- 3.6 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. Legal advice has indicated that any significant change to these policies would require a full statutory consultation which would involve consulting with all parents.
- 3.7 Primary schools across the city hold Open Days in November to let new parents see what happens in the school and also to promote local schools for local children. There is also a sustained media campaign to encourage parents to visit their local school and to make clear there will be less likelihood of out of catchment places in the coming year, even for siblings.
- 3.8 We look to ensure the well being and life experience of all children without barriers to achievement in keeping with 2050 City vision **A Fair City**.

3.9 The number of final applications for outwith catchment places is as follows:

<b>Primary 1</b>	
2016	962
2015	995
2014	1141

<b>Secondary 1</b>	
2016	723
2015	787
2014	777

3.10 The number of appeals and the outcomes for the last four years is detailed below:

### **Primary**

<b>Appeals</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Number lodged	261	263	236	268
Placed prior to being heard	72	80	56	107
Withdrawn by parents	6	2	1	7
Heard by Appeal Committee	185	186	180	154
Refused	139	136	98	107
Granted	46	43	81	47

### **Secondary**

<b>Appeals</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Number lodged	58	17	53	74
Placed prior to being heard	13	1	0	23
Withdrawn by parents	2	0	2	1
Heard by Appeal Committee	43	16	51	50
Refused	37	10	41	43
Granted	6	6	10	7

3.11 It can be seen from the above figures that the issues that led to 39.3% of appeals being granted in 2015 were addressed by the measures recommended by the Working Group. In 2016 26% of Appeals were granted, which is in line with the 2014 figure (25%).

3.12 Each year in February the Pupil and Student Support Committee comprising an elected member from each political party and a religious representative from the Education Children and Families review selected placing requests to decide the priority order for placement.

3.13 Since the previous update the following aspects were successfully taken forward:

- Recruitment road show to increase the number of Appeal Committee Members and Chairs;

- Enhanced training for everyone involved in the process including Members of Appeal Committees, Chairs and Officers;
- Administration of appeals including the paperwork associated with Stage Appeals and Late Appeals by Committee services;
- All cases on behalf of the Council were presented by a Senior Solicitor;
- The management of 'reserved place';
- Establishing the criteria for 'exceptionality' in the context that all local schools are skilled to meet the needs of children with additional support needs.

3.14 The actions to be taken forward this current year are detailed below:

- Training school administration staff and /or business managers on the appeals process as they often assist Head Teachers;
- Evaluate and identify next steps after each training session;
- Use a Survey Monkey to review the process each year;
- Develop a letter for catchment schools to send out inviting families to visit the school following an out of catchment appeal not being upheld.

3.15 The admissions and appeals process is a high profile area for Communities and Families and rising school rolls in Edinburgh will mean that fewer families will be successful in out of catchment requests.

3.16 It is vital that the admissions and appeals processes operate as efficiently and effectively as possible to ensure a consistent, transparent and fair application of procedures at all times.

## **4. Measures of success**

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4.1 There is a consistent and equitable approach to allocating places across the school estate.

## **5. Financial impact**

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5.1 All work identified in this area is delivered within existing budgets.

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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6.1 There are no risk, policy compliance or governance issues.

## **7. Equalities impact**

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7.1 There are no negative equality or human rights impacts arising from this report.

## 8. Sustainability impact

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8.1 There are no sustainable issues.

## 9. Consultation and engagement

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9.1 This will be shared through the head teacher executive and parents will be engaged through locality and Consultative Committee with Parents arrangements.

## 10. Background reading/external references

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10.1 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2010/326/contents/made>

10.2 <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/bills/62938.aspx#stageone>

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## 11. Links

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<b>Coalition Pledges</b>	P2. Hold the maximum P1 class size at 25 and seek to reduce class sizes in line with Scottish Government recommendations P4. Draw up a long-term strategic plan to tackle both overcrowding and under use in schools
<b>Council Priorities</b>	CP1. Our children have the best start in life, are able to make and sustain relationships and are ready to succeed CO2. Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO3. Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
<b>Appendices</b>	1 Reserved School Places Policy

# Reserved Places in Schools

**Implementation date: August 2017**

## Control schedule

<b>Approved by</b>	Education, Children and Families Committee
<b>Approval date</b>	7 March 2017
<b>Senior Responsible Officer</b>	Andy Gray, Head of Schools and Lifelong Learning
<b>Author</b>	Maria Plant, Schools and Lifelong Learning Manager
<b>Scheduled for review</b>	March 2022

## Version control

Version	Date	Author	Comment
0.1	14.02.17	Maria Plant	

## Committee decisions affecting this policy

Date	Committee	Link to report	Link to minute
07.03.2017	E,C and F		



# Reserved Places in Schools

## Policy statement

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- 1.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows the Education Authority to reserve places in schools for catchment children that move into the catchment area. Reserved places have been used effectively to ensure that children have been able to attend their local catchment school. The Education Authority believes that it is important for children and young people to be able to attend their local catchment school. The Council has discretion as to how many places to reserve.

## Scope

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- 2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council Primary and Secondary Schools.

## Definitions

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- 3.1 P1 – Primary one.
- 3.2 S1 – Secondary one.
- 3.3 Team teaching class - This occurs when a primary class has 2 teachers because the number of pupils in the class exceeds the number that one teacher is allowed to teach in terms of The Education (Lower Primary Class Sizes) (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

## Policy content

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- 4.1 Currently the statutory maximum class sizes in primary schools are as follows:  
Primary 1 maximum of 25 pupils  
Primary 2 and 3 maximum of 30 pupils  
Primary 4 to 7 maximum of 33 pupils  
Composite Classes maximum of 25 pupils
- 4.2 The statutory maximum class sizes for secondary schools are:  
S1 and S2 33  
S3 to S6 30  
Practical Classes 20
- 4.3 **Primary Schools** - to reserve one place per class of 25 pupils and two places in a team teaching class for the P1 intake into Primary Schools.

- 4.4 **Secondary Schools** - to reserve one place per 60 pupils for the S1 intake.
- 4.5 **Retention of Reserved Places** – reserved places will be kept until a pupil moves into the catchment area. If an Appeal Committee or a Sheriff grant a placing request to a non-catchment pupil this will have the effect of reducing the number of reserved places at the school as the school roll will rise.

## **Implementation**

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- 5.1 August 2017.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

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- 6.1 Head Teachers will manage the policy effectively.

## **Related documents**

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- 7.1 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2010/326/contents/made>
- 7.2 <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/bills/62938.aspx#stageone>
- 7.3 [Placing in schools appeals](#)

## **Equalities impact**

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- 8.1 There are no negative equality or human rights impacts arising from this policy.

## **Sustainability impact**

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- 9.1 There are no sustainable issues.

## **Risk assessment**

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- 10.1 The Council places a priority on local children being accommodated in their local schools. Families can move areas or move into the city between registration and August. Therefore, we need to ensure that catchment children are accommodated in their local schools where this is operationally possible.

## **Review**

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- 11.1 Every five years.