

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION TO PARENTS AND ETHNICITY MONITORING

To: Community Relations Forum

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Author: Director of Education

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To update the Forum on information and support provided for ethnic minority families seeking admissions to Buckinghamshire schools and the progress on setting up systems for monitoring the progress of different ethnic groups in the grammar school selection procedure.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

- 2 **The Forum is asked to comment upon this report.**

C. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3 The additional costs for printing pages in the parent information booklet and the costs of the helpline for non English speakers have been met from within existing admissions budgets.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4 At the meeting of the Partnership Forum in May 2000, item 9 explained the progress being made by Health, Social Services and Education in the development of a County-wide service to support meeting the needs for support of those who require interpreting and translation services.

E. ADMISSIONS BOOKLET 2001

- 5 Pupils, Students and Families has worked in partnership with Social Services to set up a helpline for parents in Asian and other languages (approximately 28 languages) for parents enquiring about information related to admissions to Buckinghamshire schools. Interpreters have been trained by the admissions team in understanding the information provided for parents. The new "Guide for Parents" (enclosed) has sections translated into two languages for filling in the application forms and three languages for phoning the helpline.
- 6 In addition, the information for year 6 pupils parents has been translated into two other languages (enclosed). The Appeals process indicates that parents have access to a translation service should this be appropriate.

F. OTHER BOOKLETS

- 7 At present, the booklets related to Parent Partnership and the Student Support Team are being updated to provide further access to helplines and will contain some material in two other languages.

G. GRAMMAR SCHOOL SELECTION PROCEDURE

- 8 Three Headteachers scrutinise each years proposed test papers to ensure that all references are likely to be understood by all the children taking the test. The Review and Appeal stages have always recognised that the first language of the home environment may affect performance in the tests. At the Review stage the checklist contains a line “English is not the main language of the family”.
- 9 Schools have been asked to provide data for each pupil and the categories include ethnic data which is one of the areas that Form 7 asks for information on. Schools have been encouraged by the LEA to complete a new admissions form which helps them to collect this data at the point of enrolment. However, at this stage, this data is not yet complete and has not been validated or matched. The data can only relate to Buckinghamshire schools and so comparative data is not yet possible given the large number of pupils registering for the 11+ procedure attending elsewhere. We hope to complete the Buckinghamshire data ready for 2002 entry.
- 10 We are taking legal advice at present in relation to the Data Protection Act and the future requirement to compel all parents to fill in this data. Ethnic data is regarded by the Data Protection Act as sensitive data and as such ‘explicit’ consent is required prior to processing. This requires text on the registration form to make it clear to parents that in signing the form they are agreeing to the information on the form being processed within the LEA. However, it is not clear whether we can oblige parents to complete the data.

H. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11 Partnership Forum meeting of 16 May, item 9.

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