

Report to Cabinet Member Education and Skills

Decision to be taken on or after 15 March 2019

**Decision can normally be implemented at least
3 working days after decision has been signed.**

Cabinet Member Report No. ED04.19

Title: Determined Admission Arrangements 2020

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Electoral divisions affected: All

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Summary

This report sets out the final co-ordinated admission scheme and the determined admission rules for voluntary controlled and community schools to be used for 2020 entry. These were the subject of a formal consultation with stakeholders in line with the national timelines as set out in the Department for Education (DfE) Schools Admissions Code.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member agrees the determined admission arrangements for admission in September 2020.

These arrangements shall include:

- 1. The coordinated scheme for primary and secondary admissions in Buckinghamshire, for admission from September 2020, as set out in Appendix 1.**

2. The 2020 determined admission rules for community and voluntary-controlled primary schools as set out in Appendix 2. This includes the admission rules for schools, nursery classes and nursery schools and the Published Admission Number for each school. In addition, the consultation gave a steer to the future consultation for 2021 entry regarding the feeder school rule for junior school intakes.

3. The determined admission rules for community and voluntary-controlled secondary schools as set out in Appendix 3. This includes the proposed Admission Number for each school and sixth form admission arrangements. A revised catchment area for Mandeville School is attached as Appendix 4.

4. The proposed relevant area for school admission arrangements from September 2021, as set out in Appendix 5.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

1. The Department for Education (DfE) Schools Admissions Code 2014 sets out the requirements for councils and admission authorities to follow with regard to (a) setting the Coordinated Scheme of Admission for Primary and Secondary Schools, and (b) determining the Admission Arrangements for Voluntary Controlled and Community schools.

The requirements in the Admissions Code are underpinned by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Education Act 2002 and The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

2. Prior to setting the Coordinated Scheme of Admission for Primary and Secondary Schools for September 2020 the Council is required to consult the governing bodies of community and voluntary controlled schools for which the Council is the admission authority, neighbouring admission authorities, governing bodies of academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools in Buckinghamshire, and other interested community groups for a minimum 6 week period which must be between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year.

Admission authorities for community and voluntary controlled schools are required to consult on admission arrangements whenever changes are proposed and at least every 7 years by consulting with the consultees listed above plus 'relevant parents' when setting the admission rules.

3. The consultation period for both the scheme and the rules was from 6 December 2018 to 31 January 2019 and was publicised on the Council's website and an online response form was provided. As part of notifying the statutory consultees, all Buckinghamshire admission authorities were notified via the school bulletin of the proposals, and other statutory consultees were notified by email.
4. By Regulation 17 of the School Admissions Regulations 2012 the Council is then required to determine its admission rules by 28 February 2019, and to notify the Secretary of State that the scheme has been accepted by admission authorities.

In addition, the Regulations require the admission authority (in this case the local authority) to publish on its website by 15 March in the determining year the determined

arrangements of all maintained primary and secondary school and academies in the county/borough, advising the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator, where it is considered that the arrangement do not comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions code 2014.

Comment was invited from:

- Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
- Other persons in the relevant area who have an interest in the proposed admissions;
- All other admission authorities within the relevant area;
- Adjoining neighbouring local authorities;
- The Oxford Church of England Diocese and the Northampton Catholic Diocese.

5. In total, 4 parents and 10 governing body representatives responded to the admissions consultation. The following chart summarises the questions we asked and the overall responses. A full record of the responses received is attached as Appendix 6.

Parent Responses and other consultees responses	Parental Responses			Governing Body Responses		
	Yes – in agreement	No – not in agreement	No view *	Yes – in agreement	No – not in agreement	No view*
Proposed drafting changes to the coordinated admissions scheme				6	1	3
We proposed the inclusion of a new rule as rule 2 to give priority of admission to previously Looked after children adopted from abroad (primary and secondary)	1	1	2	6	0	4
We proposed the inclusion of a new rule as rule 3 to give priority of admission to the children of staff who met certain criteria.	2	0	2	6	0	4
We made some proposed drafting changes to the nursery class and nursery school arrangements	1	0	3	6	0	4
We proposed to increase the PANs for 7 schools.	0	4 <i>All with reference to the Mary Towerton proposal</i>	0	4	4 <i>All with reference to the Mary Towerton proposal</i>	2
We proposed to decrease the PANs for 2 Primary schools.	1	0	3	3	0	7
We proposed to make changes to the ranking of the feeder school rule within the Junior Entry admission rules	1	0	3	4	0	6
We proposed to reduce the PAN for Mandeville School	0	0	4	4	0	6
We proposed to change the catchment area for Mandeville	0	0	4	4	0	6

* parents could also leave a blank response

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS SCHEMES AND RULES 2020

The Coordinated Admissions Scheme for all Buckinghamshire Schools

6. The final coordinated admissions scheme is as attached as Appendix 1. No substantive changes were proposed to the coordinated admissions scheme.

Six of the governing body responses were in favour of the proposed changes and the one adverse comment that was received was relating to a different issue (the proposed admission number for Mary Towerton at Studley Green).

Parental consultees do not have an opportunity to comment on the scheme.

The final coordinated admissions scheme for 2020 entry is attached as Appendix 1 and this will be adopted.

The Rules for Voluntary Controlled and Community Primary Schools

7. Two changes to the primary admission rules were proposed.

a) The inclusion of a rule (Rule 2) giving priority of admission to children who were previously looked after and who had been adopted abroad.

No negative comments were received relating to this proposed rule from either the parents or governing bodies that responded. The one adverse comment that was received was relating to a different issue (the proposed admission number for Mary Towerton at Studley Green).

b) The inclusion of a rule (Rule 3) giving priority of admission to children of staff employed at the school subject to certain criteria as set out in the notes.

No negative comments were received relating to this proposed rule from either parents or governing bodies that responded. Three positive comments were received from governing body respondents and are shown in Appendix 6.

The admission rules for voluntary controlled and community schools for admission for 2020 entry have therefore been updated to include the priority rule for children adopted from abroad (Rule 2) and the priority rule for the children of staff (as Rule 3) along with their associated notes.

The determined admissions policy for Buckinghamshire Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools is as set out in Appendix 2.

Future Changes to the Junior School Feeder rule from 2020

8. Across the county there are 15 voluntary controlled and community junior and combined schools with an entry point in the Junior Transfer coordinated admission arrangements. This arrangement of schools does not exist in all areas of the county; some areas are wholly served by combined schools. Parents of children attending infant schools would like their children to be able to progress with their friends to the linked junior school. At present, because our admission rules place catchment and sibling rules with a higher priority than the linked feeder school rule, some children in the feeder school may not get a place at the junior school because they are displaced by children living in the catchment who have a higher priority for admission but who do not attend the infant school (e.g. they have moved into the area). They are currently given a priority for

admission at junior transfer so they can be admitted to the junior school in the area in which they live.

The Council appreciates whether the rules give priority, as they do now, to catchment children before children who are in the infant school but do not live in catchment or vice versa some families are always going to be disappointed.

As no adverse comments were received a consultation in 2021 on moving the priority admission rule for children attending the feeder infant school from Rule 7 to Rule 5 placing it above the catchment and sibling rules is proposed to will take place.

Admission Arrangements Changes for Individual Schools for 2020

9. **Planned Admission Number (PAN) increases:** The following changes were included at the request of the relevant governing bodies:

- Oakridge School – Increase to 60 (was 56)
- Jordans School – Increase to 28 (was 24)
- Iver Village Infant – Increase to 60 (was 55)
- Haddenham St Mary CE School – Increase to 60 (was 30, and last year admitted a bulge class pending a permanent change in capacity)
- Highworth School – Increase to 60 (was 56)
- Roundwood School – Increase to 30 (was 27)

No objections were received for the above changes so they will be adopted.

Increased Admission Number – Mary Towerton School at Studley Green

- Mary Towerton at Studley Green – Increase to 14 from 12

Parent Responses and other consultees responses	Parental Responses			Governing Body Responses		
	Yes – in agreement	No – not in agreement	No view *	Yes – in agreement	No – not in agreement	No view*
We proposed to increase the PANs for 7 schools.	0	4 <i>All with reference to the Mary Towerton proposal</i>	0	4	4 <i>All with reference to the Mary Towerton proposal</i>	2

10. The comments received from both parents and governing bodies reflected concerns in the area that this admission number increase would result in an oversupply of school places in the area which would impact on neighbouring schools. The following comments summarise the points made (a redacted record of the comments is included in Appendix 6):

Re Mary Towerton: 1) Not sufficient children in the catchment of MT nor other schools in area 2) The school is not full now - not near to capacity 3) Other local small schools are not full including Ibstone, Cadmore End and Radnage 4) MT is already heavily over spending tax payers money when looking at DfE funding 5) Increase in places is totally unnecessary 6) This increase was not part of the original application/consultation to become a primary school

The governing body of Mary Towerton School at Studley Green have confirmed that they wish to proceed with an increase of their PAN to 14. The Admissions Code says:

1.3 Own admission authorities are not required to consult on their PAN where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN. For a community or voluntary controlled school, the local authority (as admission authority) **must** consult at least the governing body of the school where it proposes either to increase or keep the same PAN. All admission authorities **must** consult in accordance with paragraph 1.42 below where they propose a decrease to the PAN. Community and voluntary controlled schools have the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator if the PAN set for them is lower than they would wish. There is a strong presumption in favour of an increase to the PAN to which the Schools Adjudicator **must** have regard when considering any such objection.

1.4 Admission authorities **must** notify their local authority of their intention to increase the school's PAN and reference to the change should be made on the school's website. If, at any time following determination of the PAN, an admission authority decides that it is able to admit above its PAN, it **must** notify the local authority in good time to allow the local authority to deliver its co-ordination responsibilities effectively. Admission authorities may also admit above their PAN in-year.

As under the Admissions Code there is a strong presumption in favour of increases to PANs we propose to agree the change of PAN at Mary Towerton School at Studley Green to 14.

Planned admission number decreases

11. The following reductions to PAN will be made following the requests made by the relevant governing bodies:

- Denham Village Infant School – The change is as a consequence of the school becoming a combined school. The PAN on entry to the school will reduce to 15 from 24.
- Edlesborough School – The change is as a consequence of Dagnall School's plans to become a combined School that was consulted on last year to reduce the Junior Intake from 10 to 0. It has been agreed that as there has been a delay in the statutory process Dagnall CE School, can admit Year 3 children from September 2019 and potentially Year 4 children from September 2020. They have not yet formally become a combined school until the statutory process has started and finished. However, If Dagnall's proposal to become a combined school is successful, it is proposed that the change to Edlesborough School's Junior PAN will proceed to support the viability of pupil numbers.

As no objections or comments were received, reducing the admission numbers as set out above is proposed.

The rules for community secondary schools

12. One change to the secondary admission rules is proposed.

a) The inclusion of a rule (Rule 2) giving priority of admission to children who were previously looked after and who were adopted abroad.

No negative comments were received relating to this proposed rule from either the small number of parents or governing bodies that responded.

b) The inclusion of an explanatory note defining school staff and 'demonstrable skill shortage' to bring the secondary rules (which already included a priority rule for children of staff) in line with the primary admission rule definitions rule.

No negative comments were received relating to this proposed rule from either the small number of parents or governing bodies that responded.

It is proposed, for admission from 2020 entry to update the admission rules used for the two secondary community schools to include the priority rule for children adopted from abroad (Rule 2) and the priority rule for the children of staff (as Rule 3) along with their associated notes. These are therefore included in the determined admissions policy for Buckinghamshire Secondary Community Schools as set out in Appendix 3.

Mandeville School

13. During the consultation period it was proposed, in agreement with the school, to reduce the planned admission number from 200 to 180. There were not no adverse comments about the proposed change; however, due to a significant increase in the number of preferences we propose to move instead to a PAN of 210. The school and the local authority will work towards ensuring that the accommodation at the school is fit for purpose to accommodate the increased intake.

We consulted on a small change to expand the catchment area (see Appendix 4 map) to bring the planned new build developments off the Lower Road, Stoke Mandeville Road all within the catchment area boundary. There was no adverse comment regarding the catchment change.

For the above reasons, it is proposed to increase to the PAN at The Mandeville School to 210 and expand the school's catchment area to include proposed new development in the area as set out in Appendix 4.

Relevant area

14. Appendix 5 sets the relevant area which has to be set for 2021, no change is proposed and no comments were received. The relevant area is the area covered by Buckinghamshire County Council.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

The Council is required to determine and publish its admission arrangements for September 2020 by 28 February 2019, by statute, having regard to the views of consultees.

C. Resource implications

It is not expected that there will be any negative resource implications as a result of the identified changes to the rules and schemes.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

Effectiveness: This approach will produce outcomes for residents and stakeholders which they have indicated, through consultation, that they regard as important

Efficiency: This approach ensures that the continued effectiveness of the current system is not compromised by an ill thought through revision.

Economy: This approach has no impact on service delivery.

E. Legal implications

The current School Admissions Code (“the Code”) came into force on 19 December 2014 issued by the Department for Education under section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Code is to be read alongside the School Admission Appeals Code, as well as the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”) as amended by the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (“the Amendment Regulations”). The Regulations came into force on the 1 February 2012 and the Amendment Regulations came into force on the 19 December 2014. The Code and the Regulations and the Amendment Regulations apply to admission arrangements determined in 2014 and later years.

In determining its admission arrangements for 2020 the Council has a statutory duty as an admission authority to act in accordance with the Regulations and with the relevant provisions of the Code.

As part of determining its admission arrangements, the Council must set an admission number for each school’s “relevant age group” i.e. the age group at which pupils are or will normally be admitted to the school.

Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the Code requires the admission authority to consult for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January on their admission arrangements that will apply for the following academic year. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

F. Property implications

None

G. Other implications/issues

None

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

The proposals were publicised to councillors by email and no adverse comments were received. Appendix 6 sets out comments made by parents and statutory consultees during the consultation.

I. Communication issues

This was the subject of a 6 week consultation with stakeholders during the period 6 December 2018 and 31 January 2019.

J. Progress Monitoring

Admission rules are subject to regular review and consultation with statutory consultees.

K. Review

The policy forming part of this decision will be reviewed in line with national timescales ready for 2021 entry.

Background Papers

School Admissions Code 2014

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389388/School_Admissions_Code_2014_-_19_Dec.pdf

There are 6 appendices to this document

- Appendix 1 - The coordinated admission scheme for primary and secondary schools in Buckinghamshire County Council Local Authority from 2020 Admission Year
- Appendix 2 - The Buckinghamshire Admission Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for September 2020
- Appendix 3 - The Buckinghamshire Admissions Policy for Community Secondary Schools for September 2020
- Appendix 4 - Map of Mandeville catchment area change from 2020 entry
- Appendix 5 - The relevant area for 2021
- Appendix 6 - Summary of consultation responses

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 14/03/2019. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk