

VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICIES SUB COMMITTEE

17TH MARCH, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor Coulson in the Chair

Mrs B Sice, Mrs S Ulyett and Mr M Woods

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs B Comiskey – Education Leeds

Mr J Grieve – Governance Services

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominated by Mr Woods and seconded by Mrs Sice,

RESOLVED – That Councillor M Coulson be elected Chair of the Voluntary Aided Schools Admissions Policies Sub Committee for a one year period.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Gruen and Mrs F Beevers.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th March 2008 were accepted as a true and correct record

4 PURPOSE OF THE SUB COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report explaining the role of the Sub Committee

Addressing the report Mrs Comiskey, Admissions and Transport Section, Education Leeds said that the purpose of the Sub Committee was to consider Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust and Academy schools admission policies to:

- Collect and analyse the admission policies to ensure that they comply with the DCSF Code of Practice, as amended from time to time by , 1st April in the determination year
- Make recommendations upon the policies to the relevant school governors
- If necessary, to recommend to the Leeds Admissions Forum referral to the Schools Adjudicator of the governors of any school which does not comply with the Code of Practice

The Sub Committee Terms of Reference and Procedure were also submitted for Members information

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

5 RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE NEW ADMISSIONS CODE OF PRACTICE

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report which summarised the relevant aspects of the New Admissions Code of Practice which came into effect on 10th February 2009

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

6 UPDATE ON DRAFT ADMISSION POLICIES RECEIVED

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report which provided an update on the receipt of the draft admission policies for all Voluntary Aided schools in Leeds and considered if any action was required in respect of outstanding issues.

Mrs Comiskey reported that all VA schools had met the 1st March deadline. School Governors had been willing to accept the changes brought about by the New Admissions Code, the recommendations made by the Diocesan Boards and Education Leeds. It was reported there were no issues to report to the Sub Committee.

Legal Services Section had received all admission policies and supplementary information forms and raised the following comments:

- Requests for birth certificates
- Spaces for further comments or additional documentation
- Use of plural parents/signature of parents
- Request for detail of other children rather than siblings

The response from the Schools Adjudicator highlighted the following:

- Absence of definition e.g. “siblings”, “distance “ and “home address” or failure to specify details of a process e.g. how the home to school distance is measured
- Faults with supplementary information forms (SIP), particularly asking questions that are legitimate for a child already attending a school, but are not permitted at the application stage.
- SIPs must not ask for ; any personal details about the parents, both parents to sign the form, work phone numbers or ask for courtesy titles
- All policies must include a tiebreaker in case of oversubscription, this is an important mechanism

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note and welcome the excellent response from VA Governors and Headteachers in meeting the requirements of the Admissions Code
- (ii) That the Chair, on behalf of the Sub Committee, be authorised to write and thank Governors for their support in redrafting their admission policies
- (iii) To note that VA schools rely on the Diocesan Boards when there are changes that effect other admission authorities
- (iv) That a report be prepared and submitted to the Leeds Admission Forum which sets out the progress that has been made this year
- (v) That arrangement be made for the Sub Committee to meet again in 12 months time