

Determination of School Admissions Arrangements for 2023/24.

Date: 9 February 2022

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report seeks approval of the Leeds City Council admission arrangements (admission policy) for September 2023. The admission policy applies to all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in the city (101 schools) to ensure places are allocated in a fair and transparent way
- These arrangements do not apply to schools that are an Academy, Voluntary Aided, Foundation Trust or Free School. These schools are their own admitting authority and so determine their own admission arrangements
- Admissions arrangements must be determined annually under statute and the arrangements for September 2023 must be determined by 28 February 2022

Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

- a) Determine the school admissions arrangements for the academic year 2023/24 by approving the admissions policies for the Leeds Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools (Appendices A, B, & C)
- b) Authorise the Lead for Admissions and Family Information Service to take any actions should there be a need to revise these arrangements after they have been determined, where this revision is necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement of the Admission Code, admissions law, a determination of the Schools Adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements, under regulation 19 of the School Admissions Regulations 2012
- c) Note the following:
 - i. The Coordinated scheme for admissions arrangements for entry in September 2023 (Appendix D)
 - ii. That the officer responsible for this work is the Lead for Admissions and Family Information Service
 - iii. That the statutory date for implementation (i.e. determination of the policies) is no later than 28 February 2022, with the arrangements published by 15 March 2022.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 This report seeks approval of the admissions arrangements for entry to voluntary controlled and community Leeds schools in September 2023, to meet the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code (2021).

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 2 The Local authority (LA) has two distinct functions for Leeds School admissions:
 - It is the Admission Authority for community and voluntary controlled schools and so must set the admission arrangements (i.e. admission policy) for those schools only
 - It has a duty as the LA in coordinating the normal round admission process and sending out school place offers on national offer day on behalf of all Leeds schools.
- 3 Admission Authorities must set ('determine') admission arrangements annually. The admission arrangements include the admission policy, any supplemental information forms and relevant maps such as catchment maps. Executive Board as the decision maker is asked to determine the admission arrangements as a whole for Leeds community and voluntary controlled schools.
- 4 There are currently 95 Primary, 1 Junior, 4 Secondary schools and 1 All Through school that the attached admission policies apply to. There are currently 271 schools (excluding special schools and alternative provisions) in Leeds. All other Leeds schools are responsible for setting their own admission arrangements.
- 5 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 84 and The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 require an admission authority to publicly consult on their proposed admissions arrangements, whenever any changes are proposed. There is also a requirement to consult at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

2021 Admission Code changes

- 6 In May 2021, the DfE published an updated School Admission Code (the Code) which came into force on 1 September 2021. The Code changes were
 - Introduction of a dedicated section which sets out a clear process for managing in-year admissions, including:
 - Introducing timescales for different stages of the application
 - Requiring local authorities and admission authorities to provide information on the in-year application process
 - Making the in-year process easier for parents to navigate
 - Changes to improve the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols by:

- Making the purpose of Fair Access Protocols clearer
 - Introducing timescales for placement decisions
 - Ensuring Fair Access Protocols are only used to support the most vulnerable children
 - Clarifying the provisions relating to the use of Fair Access Protocols for children with challenging behaviour
- Amending references to previously looked after children in the Code to include children who have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in care as a result of being adopted, and children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after in England
 - Providing clarification on which address to use for admission of service or crown servant children
 - Some minor drafting changes to improve clarity
- 7 These Code changes meant all admission authorities had to review and amend their determined 2021 and 2022 admission arrangements to ensure they remained compliant with the mandatory 2021 Code. Amendments that are necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement of the Code do not require consultation, as permitted by regulation 19 of The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 8 Leeds City Council's 2021 and 2022 admission arrangements were amended on 27 July 2021 to ensure compliance with the new Code from 1 September 2021. We published the amended arrangements on the website at <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/How-we-decide-how-to-assign-school-places.aspx>

2023-2024 admission arrangements for Leeds community and voluntary controlled schools

- 9 The admission arrangements for the academic year 2022/23 are included in full at Appendices A, B, and C and include the admission policy and priority catchment area maps.
- 10 Where changes are proposed, there must be a statutory consultation carried out in accordance with the Code. There are no proposed changes for 2023 and there has been no public consultation. The last public consultation was on the September 2022 admission arrangements. This ran between 2 November 2020 and 13 December 2020.
- 11 Where there is no consultation, the arrangements determined should be the same as the previous year, unless there are any changes related to the mandatory requirement of the Code, admissions law, a determination of the Schools Adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements. The arrangements in the Appendices A, B, and C are the 2022 arrangements, which were updated in July 2021 following the new Code being issued.

Co-ordinated Scheme – LA duty

- 12 The Leeds Co-ordinated Scheme sets out the Leeds scheme for coordinating applications for the normal round including late applications (those received too late for an offer to be made on national offer day) for all publicly funded schools within Leeds. This scheme relates to the LA duties which apply to all Leeds schools. It is separate from the role of admission authority for Leeds community and voluntary controlled schools.

- 13 The coordination scheme sets out how that LA fulfils its coordination duties for the 2023/2024 admission round. It includes key processes and a timetable that applies to neighbouring local authorities and own admitting Leeds schools (Appendix D).
- 14 Where the scheme is substantially different from the scheme adopted for the previous academic year, the local authority must consult the other admission authorities in the area and any other local authorities it determines (paragraph 2.22 of the Code). For 2023, there are no substantial differences to the 2022 scheme.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 15 There is no requirement to consult with the public where there are no changes to the admission arrangements.

What are the resource implications?

- 16 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

What are the legal implications?

- 17 As the admitting authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, Leeds City Council Executive Board is required under The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012 and the Admissions Code 2021 to determine the admissions arrangements by 28 February 2022.
- 18 The report is subject to call in.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 19 There are no significant risks associated with the required approval of the policy for 2023. The risk relating to the management of sufficiency of school places is managed through the city's corporate risk register.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 20 Inclusive growth and health and wellbeing: The admissions policy and arrangements continue to ensure children receive fair and consistent treatment and have reasonable access to local schools. This supports the council's obsession to improve attendance and contributes to good educational outcomes for children.
- 21 A key objective within the Best Council Plan is to build a child friendly city. The delivery of pupil places through the admissions arrangements is one of the fundamental entitlements in a child friendly city. A good quality school place contributes to the achievement of targets within the Children's and Young People's Plan such as our obsession to 'improve attendance, attainment and achievement'.
- 22 Climate Emergency: For many years, the Leeds admission policy has been focused on local children attending local schools and so being able to walk to school. All Leeds community and voluntary controlled schools prioritise admission based on having a sibling at the school or living in the school's catchment area and this support more children to attend a local school, reducing the need for transport and reducing the carbon footprint.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 23 The admissions arrangements are constantly reviewed in line with changes in birth rates, preference data, census data and the outcome of each admission round. Based on this, no changes were considered necessary for the 2023/24 admissions arrangements.
- 24 Where there is no public consultation, the arrangements determined should be the same as the previous year, unless there are any changes related to the mandatory requirement of the Code, admissions law, a determination of the Schools Adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements. The arrangements in the Appendices A, B, and C are the 2022 arrangements, which were updated in July 2021 following the new Code being issued.

b) How will success be measured?

- 25 There is a statutory requirement for admission authorities to determine and publish the 2023 admission arrangements on their website by 15 March 2023. Any individual or organisation can ask the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to consider those arrangements if it is felt they are not compliant with the School Admissions Code or if they are not published on time.
- 26 The School Admissions team and the Sufficiency and Participation team constantly review the admission arrangements considering any changes to birth rates, data from each school census and the outcome of each normal admission round. These teams will propose changes (that will require public consultation) when they feel the arrangements may need to be amended in order to ensure the successful operation of the admissions arrangements.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 27 That the statutory date for implementation (i.e. determination of the policies) is no later than 28 February 2022, with the policy published by 15 March 2022.

Appendices

- 28 Appendix A Primary (reception) 2023 admission policy with catchment maps
- 29 Appendix B Primary (junior -year 3) 2023 admission policy with catchment map
- 30 Appendix C Secondary (year 7) 2023 admission policy with catchment maps
- 31 Appendix D Leeds coordinated scheme for 2023/24
- 32 Appendix E - EDCI screening form. No adverse implications are anticipated

Background papers

- 33 None