

Responses received to the consultation on the proposed 2017 admissions policies for Community and Controlled schools

Response 1:

From: HPC Clerk [<mailto:clerk@heighingtonpc.org.uk>]

Sent: 10 December 2015 17:37

To: SchoolAdmissions

Subject: Consultation on Lincolnshire Admissions Arrangements for September 2017

Dear Mr Gamble,

Please find below comments from Heighington Parish Council in respect of the Lincolnshire County Council consultation about proposed changes to the oversubscription criteria for schools.

Whilst the schools in the immediate vicinity of Heighington are academies and operate autonomous admissions policies, we are aware that several academies do take note of Lincolnshire County Council policies to inform the evolution of their own admissions policy. The principal interest of Heighington Parish Council is to reduce travelling to school by car and to encourage walking to school. Therefore, our comments relate to the proposal to introduce "straight-line distance" for the assessment of the nearest school.

- 1) We support the removal of any reference to "driving distance".
- 2) We support the introduction of "straight-line distance" but with two caveats (items 3 and 4 below).
- 3) In those rural areas with a parish council, we believe any application of "straight-line distance" should be preceded by an assessment of whether a child lives in the same parish council area as the location of the proposed school. Information about whether a residential property does or does not sit within a particular parish council area is readily available from the electoral register, so this criterion would be straight forward to administer.
- 4) In respect of "straight-line distance", substantial physical barriers such as Main Rivers, railway lines and escarpments/hills may generate unexpected results, which could ultimately lead to increased travel by car, bus or taxi. Therefore, we propose that substantial physical barriers should be defined and straight-line distances should not be allowed to be measured through them. Instead, any straight-line distance should be measured in two parts, with the intermediate location being a viable crossing point of that substantial physical barrier. For example, it is potentially the case that some remote properties on Heighington Fen would have shorter straight-line distances to the school in Fiskerton than to the school in Heighington. However, the actual travelling distance to Fiskerton (via Bardney or central Lincoln) would be considerable and this and similar outcomes should clearly be avoided.

Jane Ripley Clerk to Heighington Parish Council

School admissions manager comment on response 1:

Academies are not bound to take notice of Lincolnshire County Council's oversubscription criteria or vice versa. The response in effect proposes the use of residence in the Parish as an oversubscription criterion, but this is not possible as it would require consultation which has not been undertaken. To introduce the respondent's proposed mixed system of measuring would risk a breach of the Code's requirement that arrangements be objective as "substantial physical barrier" could be seen as subjective.

Response 2:

Dear Mr Gamble

Minute No 71.15u

Sutton St Edmund Parish Council wishes the present system to remain in place and not to adopt the linear system.

Yours sincerely

Jane Ripley

Response 3:

From: Jane Ripley [<mailto:the.clerk@btinternet.com>]

Sent: 15 November 2015 10:58

To: SchoolAdmissions

Subject: Consultation reply

Dear Mr Gamble

Minute No 203.15

Gedney Parish Council wishes the present system to remain in place and not to adopt the linear system.

Yours sincerely

Jane Ripley

Clerk to Parish Council

Response 4:

From: Paul Fox [<mailto:paul.fox@st-michaels.lincs.sch.uk>]

Sent: 09 September 2015 11:16

To: SchoolAdmissions; Ian Roscoe; Lynda Taylor; Cara Russell

Subject: Re: Admissions Policy Consultation 2017 - Proposed Policy Changes

Dear Steve & Team

Re. 1.39A Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children eligible for the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium and also children eligible for the

service premium. Admission authorities should clearly define in the arrangements the categories of eligible premium recipients to be prioritised.

If Lincolnshire agree to this, as a regularly oversubscribed school in Louth, our governing body believes we will be full of siblings and Pupil Premium and **children who live close to the school will be pushed out**. This goes against the idea of children attending their nearest school. Although we understand the thinking behind the idea, we feel it is unnecessary for Pupil Premium children to be given priority over other children. To give parents in Louth a choice, we continue to offer places using the Church criteria, but these would also be pushed out.

We are also concerned about the idea Summer Birth children could start a year later. Could you clarify whether this means they miss Foundation Stage out and go straight to Y1 (and therefore way behind their peers) or do they start in FS and are, therefore, 8 when they take KS1 SATs and leave me age 12 (taking the 11+ a year late) and start secondary school age 12 in Y7. Will our grammar school be happy with this?

The school admissions manager sent this response to the school:

Dear Paul

Thank you for the comments below, they will go to Cllr Mrs Bradwell at the appropriate stage of the process.

This is the link to what the DfE is saying about summer-born:

[Press release: Summer-born children to get the right to start school later](#)

I had heard rumours from other school admissions managers that this was on the way but we only had this information this week.

Once we have decided how to respond I will contact schools. It looks as though the DfE means to set in place a requirement for secondary schools to honour these decisions for summer-born, addressing a potential difficulty.

On the PP side; I am gathering information on where these children currently attend. It may be that this would show that these children are already able to access their local school without implementing this proposal. This will also go to Cllr Mrs Bradwell before she makes the decision on whether to implement this or not. If you have analysed your current PP children from this perspective this would be helpful information to make an informed decision, especially as yours is a consistently oversubscribed school. As school admissions manager I have several technical concerns about implementing the proposal, some of which may be resolved over the consultation period; if I were not confident about this I would have to advise Cllr Mrs Bradwell accordingly, but the final decision rests with her.

The school responded as follows:

Steve

On the Pupil Premium issue, I believe 7 out of 45 new FS intake are in receipt of PP, but as a school 50 out of 270 are PP (18.5%), but more like 70 out of 270 if you include Ever 6 (26%) so it can't be said PP children don't get a place here even though we are constantly oversubscribed. If a school is built in a leafy suburb, nice village or more affluent part of a town then it might be an issue that a school has low PP numbers, but it doesn't apply to us! The village schools are in a different position as many rely on parents' ability to transport children and this would restrict some PP families from choosing them. I do know some schools with next to no PP children at all.

Responses 5,6,7; school admissions manager comment

All three responses relate to the DfE's proposed changes to this aspect of the School Admissions Code 2014. This is the current Code and the County Council's arrangements comply with it. When the DfE brings a new Code into force after the required parliamentary process it will be possible to see how to change the Council's arrangements to achieve compliance. As there has been no consultation on any proposed change to this aspect of the Council's arrangements any change at this point would most likely breach the Code's requirements on consultation and therefore be unlawful.

Response 5:

Data Protection: I agree to the retention of my personal details by LCC as outlined above.

Name: Dr Sam Tarrant

E-mail Address: sam.tarrant@rspb.org.uk

Name of school comment refers to: Lincolnshire Admission Policy

Comments: With respect to your admissions policy consultation, I wish to make a specific comment relating to Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group. It is not in line with the current guidance being offered by the Department for education. See :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/summer-born-children-to-get-the-right-to-start-school-later>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389448/Summer_born_admissions_advice_Dec_2014.pdf

I draw your attention to Nick Gibb, Schools' Minister communication from on 8 September 2015, giving a commitment from the government that the School Admissions Code will be amended:

“to ensure that summer born children can be admitted to the reception class at the age of five if it is in line with their parents' wishes, and to ensure that those children are able to remain with that cohort as they progress through school, including through to secondary school. We will conduct a full public consultation in due course; and subject to Parliamentary approval will introduce these further changes to ensure that no child is forced to start school before they are ready.”

Admissions authorities are encouraged to agree to requests with immediate effect, ahead of any amendment of the Code.

Therefore I strongly recommend that Lincolnshire County Council admission code is amended to reflect this government policy position.

Various Council have already adopted this, and their approaches can be found here:

Devon: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/apply-for-a-school-place/apply-for-a-primary-school-place/delayed-admission-to-reception-for-summer-born-children>

Hertfordshire: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/css/parents/summerborn/>

Southwark Council:

http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/4340/updated_information_-_admission_of_summer_born_children

This admission policy area will be increasingly relevant for Lincolnshire Education Authority , given the significant increase in parents requesting admission to reception at compulsory school age, a 13 fold increase from 14/15, to 15/16 intakes - according to a recent freedom of information request https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/admission_of_children_outside_th_157

I await your amended policy, to be in line with Government guidance.

Response 6:

Data Protection: I agree to the retention of my personal details by LCC as outlined above.

Name: Joanna Tarrant

E-mail Address: joanna.tarrant@gmail.com Name of school comment refers to: Lincolnshire County Council Primary Consultation Admissions Policy 2017

Comments: I would like to address the misleading language and a failure to address cases of parents of summer borns requesting 'deceleration', in the admission document which is currently out for consultation.

Page 14 Admission of children outside their normal age group: this section is being misleading. If a parent of a summer born wishes to decelerate, the only decision the school/admission authority can make is into which year to admit the child. The LEA have no right to decide when a child goes to school, that is purely for the parent to decide. The LEA must decide into which year to admit the child, based on the best interests of the child on a case by case basis. None of this is made clear in the LCC admissions policy 2017. It is implied that there is a blanket policy which is in direct contrast to the wording of the DfE admission code 2014 section 2.17 and 2.17A.

2.17: 'the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. Admission authorities must make clear in their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission out of the normal age group'

2.17A 'Admission authorities must make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent's views'.

Response 7:

Data Protection: I agree to the retention of my personal details by LCC as outlined above.

Name: N. Schumann

E-mail Address: nicole_schumann@gmx.net

Name of school comment refers to: Community and voluntary controlled schools

Comments: I would like to comment on the school admission of summer born children:

LCC has ignored relevant guidance to make this process easier for parents. Nick Gibb has made it clear in a letter to all councils in England that councils must take action now. Summer born children must not be disadvantaged any longer and that councils make decisions against their parents wishes.

Postcode Lottery must stop! Summer born children must be allowed to start Reception at compulsory school age.

Below is a paragraph of Hampshire's admission policy.

Parents of children with birthdays between 1 April and 31 August 2012 (inclusive), whose child has not started in a Year R class during the 2016-17 school year, may wish to request admission to Year R in September 2017 rather than admission to Year 1. In these circumstances, all relevant factors will be considered in assessing the request; parents would be expected to state clearly why they felt admission to Year R was in their child's best interests. It is recommended that parents considering such a request contact the local authority in the autumn term 2015 to ensure that an informed decision is made. [Parents should refer to the Hampshire County Council webpage: www.hants.gov.uk/ad-summerborn.]