

**CABINET  
9 FEBRUARY 2021**

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**SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS 2022-23**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Jon Clarke, Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
James Stroyan, Director of Children and Adults Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Members' approval for the Local Authority's admission arrangements for the 2022/2023 academic year for maintained schools in the Borough.

**Summary**

2. In line with the School Admissions Code, an Admission Authority is required to annually determine the admission arrangements used to allocate places for schools for which it is the admission authority - **Appendix A**.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that Members consider and approve the determined admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for which Darlington Local Authority is the admission authority.

**Reasons**

4. The recommendation is supported as all admission authorities are under a statutory duty to determine admission arrangements for schools for which it is the admission authority for the academic year 2022/2023.

**James Stroyan  
Director of Children and Adults Services**

**Background Papers**

School Admissions Code – Issued December 2014

S17 Crime and Disorder	Not relevant to this report
Health and Well Being	Offering a school place to meet parental preference and close to a child's address enhances safeguarding and provides security for the child.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Not relevant to this report
Diversity	There are a range of schools in Darlington with Governance ranging from Community Schools to Voluntary Aided, Foundation and an Academy. Parents have a wide choice of schools to match the diverse needs of a pluralistic community.
Wards Affected	The admissions criteria affect children living in all wards across Darlington
Groups Affected	Parents, Pupils, Schools, Neighbouring Authorities, other Admission Authorities.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no budget implications. This paper proposes an admissions policy to be adopted for the 2022/23 academic year.
Key Decision	This is a key decision as it affects more than one ward in Darlington.
Urgent Decision	For the purposes of call in this matter does not represent an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Provision of an Admissions Policy ensures sufficient places are available in each community so that children can attend a school of their choice.
Efficiency	The Admissions Policy and management of school places ensure that the Local Authority complies with statutory guidance on Surplus Places. This enables parents to have a choice in a school place but ensures resources are not wasted and school budgets are not overcommitted.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. The Local Authority acts as a 'clearing house' for all applications for a place at a school in Darlington at the normal point of entry (September). This is part of a co-ordinated scheme (**Appendix B**). Co-ordination also includes the offering of places to children who are resident in Darlington but have stated a preference for a school in another LA area.
6. The Local Authority acting in its capacity as an admission authority will make a single offer of a school place each academic year, to parents who have expressed a preference for their child to be admitted to a maintained school within Darlington. Although all applications will be considered on an equal weighting basis, should a

child be eligible for a place at more than one school, parents are requested to rank their order of preference on the 'Primary/Secondary School Application Form 2022/23' in order that only one offer will be made. The relevant admissions oversubscription criteria will be applied to all schools that are oversubscribed. The equal preference system operates to give parents choice in their selection of schools, allocating their highest ranked preference wherever possible.

## **Consultation**

7. Admission Authorities are required to consult on its admission arrangements at least once every 7 years. Consultation must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before the arrangements are to take place and must last for a minimum of 6 weeks. This consultation period allows parents, other schools, religious authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about the proposed admission arrangements. In line with the requirements, Darlington Local Authority consults with the appropriate bodies within the timescales.
8. The Local Authority was not required to consult on its admission arrangements for 2022/2023 as it undertook consultation in 2019 for Whinfield Primary and in 2018 for all maintained schools. Full details of the admission arrangements for 2022/23 for maintained schools are provided in Appendix A.
9. Every 7 years Local Authorities must consult on a co-ordinated scheme. Consultation must take place if there is a substantial change before that time. Each year all Local Authorities are required to formulate and publish on their website a co-ordinated scheme for all publicly funded school within its area by 1 January in the relevant determination year.
10. The Local Authority last consulted on a scheme in 2017 and has not made any substantial changes since that time.

## **Legal Implications**

11. As an Admission Authority, Darlington Local Authority must determine its admission arrangements each academic year and would be in breach of its statutory duty in accordance with the School Admissions Code, issued in December 2014.
12. The Authority would be in breach of its statutory duty if it did not co-ordinate the application process for all schools within its authority in accordance with the School Admissions Code, issued in December 2014.