

4 November – 15 December 2019

Consultation on Admission Arrangements for 2021/22

Frequently Asked Questions

Consultation website: www.sheffield.gov.uk/schoolcatchment
for more information, events, and to fill in the survey



General

“Why is the Local Authority consulting on the Admission Arrangements?”

The Local Authority has to set or “determine” its admission arrangements every year. This is a legal requirement. If the Authority is proposing any changes to its admission arrangements such as the extension of the King Edward VII catchment area, it is required to consult on the changes.

“The language is too complicated and lengthy. It is not aimed at people who do have anything to do with Admissions on a regular basis. A more concise explanation would be helpful.”

This is a fair point and is helpful feedback. The consultation document is necessarily lengthy because it has to cover the entire Admission Arrangements, however, the following provides a little more detail. Admission arrangements comprise of:

1. Oversubscription criteria
2. Co-ordinated Admission Schemes
3. Catchment areas
4. Admission numbers (number of places)

“What are oversubscription criteria?”

Oversubscription criteria must be published. They explain how places will be prioritised if more applications are received than there are places available. The Council’s 8 oversubscription criteria are as follows:

1. Looked After and previously Looked After Children
2. Attendance at a linked infant school – speared infant and junior schools only
3. Catchment area & Sibling
4. Catchment area
5. Siblings of children refused a place at their catchment school
6. Sibling (Non-catchment area)
7. Feeder Primary School (Y6-Y7 only)

8. Other application

“What are Co-ordinated Admission Schemes?”

Local Authorities are required to co-ordinate the admission procedures for the first year of entry – Reception, Year 3 (Junior Schools) and Year 7 (Secondary Schools). The Authority must provide parents who live in Sheffield with the opportunity of applying for up to three schools. Preferences can include schools in other Authorities but the application must be made to Sheffield as the “Home” Authority.

The Authority will consult on parents’ behalf with other Authorities where appropriate and will make a single offer to parents on the national allocation dates:

Reception and Year 3	16 April prior to the September start
Year 7	1 March prior to the September start

“What are catchment areas?”

The Local Authority operates catchment areas as one of its oversubscription criteria. Each house is linked with specific primary and secondary schools. These are the schools for which parents have the highest priority.

A secondary school has linked designated primary schools. The secondary school catchment area is a composite of the catchment areas for its primary feeder schools. Specific catchment area maps can be provided on request by emailing:

admissionsconsultation@sheffield.gov.uk

“It’s really difficult to find out catchment area.”

A postcode search is available at this link. It can tell you the primary and catchment area school for your address:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/school-catchment-checker>

“What are Admission Numbers?”

The Published Admission Number (PAN) is the minimum number of places that must be offered if there is demand.

“It would be helpful to know which schools are oversubscribed.”

We publish details on oversubscribed schools following each allocation round. Details of oversubscribed primary and secondary schools for September 2019 can be accessed at:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/catchment-areas-over-subscribed-schools>

“What happens if you don’t get your first or second choice of school? Can you be sent outside your catchment area?”

We will try to offer you a place at your preferred school but this is not always possible. You are advised therefore to use all three preferences to maximise your chances of being offered a school that you would be happy with. If we cannot offer a place at any of your preferred schools, we will try and offer a place at your catchment area school. If your catchment area school is full we will offer a place at the nearest school with available places. A place is not reserved at your catchment area school if you do not apply there.

“I’d like more information about waiting lists.”

A child will automatically be placed on a waiting list for any school at which they have been refused admission. The waiting list must be prioritised in line with the oversubscription criteria above. If a child (A) is first on the list and another application is received for a child (B) who is higher on the criteria, Child B will go ahead of Child A. A waiting list position can therefore go down as well as up.

A place is offered from the waiting list when a school falls below its published admission number. E.g. If a school has a PAN on 60 and the number of allocations falls to 59, a place will be offered to the first child on the waiting list.

“The schools admission criteria are unfair since it is unjust that good students will not have access to good schools if the parents do not live in the good school area. The school allocation should be dependent on capability of the students and not on catchment only.”

Many secondary schools in Sheffield have catchment areas that stretch from the suburbs to inner city areas. This means that children from all areas have catchment status at some schools. Popular and oversubscribed schools reflect their catchment area populations.

No maintained school in Sheffield operates any selection by ability.

“I feel it would be fairer to count 'sibling' above catchment only as having children at two separate schools when they're young would be really difficult and could impact on employment, health, relationships and the wellbeing of parents and children.”

Sibling links are important and are prioritised within the oversubscription criteria. Catchment areas are, however, strongly supported in the city and on average 70% of parents apply for their catchment school.

“Who takes the final decision about these proposals?”

The Cabinet Member for Education & Skills will make the final decision on the Local Authority's proposed Admission Arrangements by 28 February 2020.

All schools are committed to trying to ensure the best outcomes for the children and young people in their area. Part of this is a commitment to ensuring each child has access to a good school place in the area they live in. There is a strong recognition from both primary and secondary schools that additional places are needed in these areas and that a mix of new provision and expansions at popular/oversubscribed local schools is the correct way to achieve the places required. Where new schools are proposed, all existing local schools have committed to working closely with any new providers to ensure a strong local offer for all children in the area.

Section 8, Admission to 6th Form includes a mixed reference to GCSE grades as letters and numbers. Can this be clarified as the grades do not all equate directly from the letters to numbers system (I understand grade C is a 4/5)? Section 3, SEN should refer to EHC plans not statements.

The previous criteria for eligibility to Sixth form was 5 A-C Passes at GCSE including English and Maths. In the new 1-9 scoring system a C Grade would equate to a 4 so a requirement of five passes between 4 and 9 would be required to be considered for a Sixth Form Place. Section 3 should indeed refer to EHC Plans and not statements.

How this will disadvantage other children outside of the catchment or not part of feeder school.?

With regard to the proposed extension of the King Edward VII Catchment area. In recent years all children attending the designated feeder schools Lydgate Junior School, Nether Green Junior School, Sharrow Primary School, St. Mary's CE Primary School, Walkley Primary School and Westways Primary School have all been eligible for places at King Edward VII irrespective of whether they reside in the catchment area or not.

The only way that non catchment children attending a feeder school could be refused admission to KES is if significant numbers of parents from the Hallam catchment area were to apply for a place there.

My son will be going to secondary school in 2021 and I hope this won't affect him.

The Admission Arrangements that we are consulting on will take effect from September 2021 so are relevant for children and families in current Year 5 (2019/2020) and younger.