

## **The main responsibilities of the Admissions and Pupil Place Planning Team**

### **Briefing Note**

#### **Background:**

The Admissions and Pupil Place Planning Team are responsible for delivering the Council's statutory duty to ensure that every Walsall resident child has an appropriate school place. This duty is fulfilled through the following functions which are performed by the team:

#### **Admissions:**

- Produce and arrange consultation on the admission arrangements for all Walsall community and voluntary controlled primary schools;
- Collate consultation responses, write the cabinet report on the outcome of the consultation and refer to cabinet for the determination of the admission arrangements on an annual basis;
- Publish determined admission arrangements annually;
- Review the proposed admission arrangements of all foundation, voluntary aided schools and academies and provide comments and advice to the schools on any changes which should be made to aid clarity or which must be made in order to comply with the School Admissions Code;
- Review the determined admission arrangements of all foundation, voluntary aided schools and academies and provide advice on any areas of non-compliance with the School Admissions Code and, if appropriate recommend referral of non-compliance admission arrangements to the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator;
- Produce the composite prospectus of admission arrangements for all schools in the borough and publish as three separate information for parents documents (on primary, secondary and 14-19 admissions) on an annual basis;
- Produce the common application forms for secondary, primary, 14-19 and midyear admissions on an annual basis;
- Coordinate the annual secondary and primary admission rounds including:
  - Set up the admission rounds on the Capita One admissions database;
  - Provide advice and support to parents/carers and schools on the process of submitting an online application by telephone, in person at the Civic Centre and the Parent Support Advisor holds workshops for parents at primary schools and the Central Library and attends parents evenings;
  - Provide advice and support to parents/carers, schools, colleagues in other service areas on all aspects of the school admissions and appeals process;
  - Respond to enquiries from parents, schools and colleagues in other services made by telephone, email, in writing and in person. At certain times of the year (particularly in the period after the primary and secondary offer dates) the team receives an extremely large volume of telephone calls and email enquiries;
  - Import online applications to the Capita One admissions system;
  - Exchange preference data files with neighbouring authorities on a regular basis;

- Take action including liaison with schools, parents and the data team to resolve queries on application files and remove them from suspense (these queries occur when there is a discrepancy between the information which a parent submits in their online application and the data already held on the pupils file – typical queries involve differences in address and can take some considerable time to resolve);
- Collate evidence submitted in support of requests for priority for admission under the medical/social criterion and forward this to schools which are their own admission authority. Collate evidence submitted in respect of applications for community and voluntary controlled primary schools and complete recommendation and referral to the Director of Children's Services for final decision;
- Provide preference lists to voluntary aided schools, grammar schools, two of the secondary academies, secondary schools with specialist places for ranking and voluntary controlled schools for allocation of church places;
- Notify neighbouring local authorities of offers which can be made to out of borough applicants;
- Make offers of places at Walsall schools to Walsall resident applicants and make offers of places at out of borough schools to Walsall resident applicants on behalf of neighbouring admission authorities;
- Complete and submit the statutory annual return on pupil preference/offer data for the secondary and primary admission rounds and submit it to the DfE;
- Provide lists of offers made to schools;
- Compile and maintain Reception, Year 3 and Year 7 waiting lists for all Walsall schools (with the exception of the Ormiston Shelfield Academy and Walsall Academy who maintain their own waiting lists throughout the process) until 31 August and then transfer waiting lists to the schools;
- Produce appeal forms for community and voluntary controlled schools and send out to parents who wish to submit an appeal;
- Make offers to children from the waiting lists as places become available;
- Complete the statement of case and act as presenting officer at admission appeal hearings for all community and voluntary controlled primary schools;
- Collate data for the Local Authority's annual report to the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator;
- Write the Local Authority's Annual report to the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator and submit it to the OSA by 30 June each year;
- Collate updated information on admission appeals and provide an update to the OSA on the Local Authority's Annual report in August each year;
- Write detailed reports to respond to all complaints about the admissions process which are submitted to the Local Government Ombudsman;
- Write first line response to complaints from parents and schools;
- Provide information and draft responses to enquiries from local councillors and members of parliament;
- Collate vacancy figures from all schools in order to provide parents with accurate information on the availability of places for midyear admissions purposes;
- Produce locally agreed admissions protocols including the Walsall Council Admissions Policy, Managed Move and Fair Access, arranging consultation including working with task and finish groups as appropriate and arrange for these to be reviewed when appropriate;

- Maintain a database of managed moves and attend managed move meetings at schools when invited to do so and produce reports on managed moves as requested;
- Maintain a database of children admitted to Walsall schools under the Fair Access Protocol;
- Advise parents and schools and colleagues in other services on the operation of locally agreed admissions protocols and colleagues in other services;
- Providing briefings to elected members;
- Where complaints about the admission arrangements of Walsall schools are submitted to the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator the team will collate and provide any data requested by the OSA and the Service Manager will attend meeting with the OSA and the schools concerned;
- Attend regional admissions group meetings;
- Respond to DfE consultations (e.g. consultations on revised School Admissions Codes) on behalf of the LA.

#### **Children Missing Education:**

- The Service Manager is Walsall's named contact for Children Missing Education (CME) is the Lead Officer for CME, chairs the multi-agency CME Panel and is a member of the West Midlands Regional CME consortium;
- The Admissions and Pupil Place Planning team:
  - Maintain a list of potential CME pupils;
  - Collate and prepare cases for referral to the CME Panel;
  - Undertake casework in relation to CME cases;
  - Produce and distribute minutes of the CME Panel meetings;
  - Liaise with CME colleagues in neighbouring local authorities and other LAs nationwide on matters concerning children missing education and tracking off roll pupils;
  - Identify schools to be named in School Attendance Orders;
  - Maintain a database of children missing education;
  - Prepare statistical reports in relation to children missing education;
  - Maintain a database of off roll pupils (pupils who have been removed from the roll of a Walsall schools and whose whereabouts is unknown);
  - Undertake pupil tracking activities to locate off roll pupils;
  - Prepare cases for referral to the Walsall Inclusion Partnership and present cases at WIP meetings.
- The Service Manager attends multi agency meetings, child in need meetings and child protection conferences relating to children missing education as required.

#### **Pupil Place Planning:**

- Undertake net capacity assessments for schools;
- Produce projected pupil numbers (using birth data from the Office of National Statistics and the Health team, information on pupil yield from planned housing developments, pupil migration trends, and information from neighbouring boroughs on proposed school organisation changes) which are reviewed on an annual basis;

- Completing an annual audit of pupil projections using final offer admission data and pupil numbers from the October school census to review projections produced for the SCAP survey and make revised recommendations for school organisation changes as appropriate;
- Complete and submit the statutory annual SCAP return to the DfE;
- Analyse pupil projections and forecast trends to identify potential shortfalls and surpluses and school places and provide recommendations on measures which can be taken to address shortfalls and excessive surplus in pupil places;
- Undertake the statutory process to make school organisation changes to maintained schools (including opening, closing and expanding schools) which includes managing formal and informal public consultation, writing consultation documents, presenting proposals at public consultation meetings and at consultation meetings with school staff, students and governors, receiving and collating consultation response and producing a consultation report; writing complete statutory proposals and the associated notices and ensuring that these are correctly displayed throughout formal consultation, writing associated cabinet reports ;
- Attend regional school organisation groups and Educational Building and Development Officers Group (EBDOG) meetings as appropriate;
- Attend Development Team Meetings when appropriate,
- Attending the Capital Asset Programme Board.
- Collating data and drafting responses to relevant Freedom of Information Requests.

#### **Freedom of Information Requests:**

- Respond to freedom of information requests relating to areas covered by the service;

#### **Press Enquiries:**

- Produce information and write draft responses to enable the communications team to respond to requests for information on matters related to the service area which are received from the local and national press.

#### **School Term Dates:**

- The Service Manager manages the annual consultation process to set term dates for Walsall schools including:
  - Attending the regional term dates consultation meeting;
  - Liaising with professional associations and school representatives to produce proposed term date models;
  - Arranging consultation on proposed models;
  - Producing a report on the outcome of the consultation;
  - Publishing agreed term dates.

**Kate Mann – Service Manager, Admissions and Pupil Place Planning**

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