

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE ADMISSIONS FORUM** held at Room 15a, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 11 November 2010

PRESENT

Mr S Fell (Chairman)
Mr N Sharpe (Vice-Chairman)

Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools:	Mrs J Woodthorpe	Headteacher, Campton Lower School
Voluntary Aided Schools:	Ms Neale	Governor, Dunton Lower School
	Mr N Sharpe	Ashton Middle School, Dunstable
Church of England Diocese:	Mr R Slade	Diocese of St Albans
Roman Catholic Diocese:	Mrs F Image	Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative
Academy:	Mr J Kemp	Vice-Principal, All Saints Academy, Dunstable
Local Community:	Mrs D Day Hodgson	Virtual School Headteacher, Central Bedfordshire (representing Looked After Children)
Apologies for Absence:	Ms W Anderson-Welsh Mrs P Cotton Cllr Mrs A M Lewis Mrs A Phillips Squadron Leader Michelle Ramsden Mr I Robinson Mr B Sear Mrs C Spurgeon	- Ethnic Minorities Group - St. Vincent's Primary School, Houghton Regis - Portfolio Holder Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council - Headteacher, Streetfield Middle School, Dunstable - RAF Henlow - Parent Representative - Parent Representative - Headteacher, St Mary's Lower School, Clophill
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs R Bonwick Ms L Braisher Ms A Bray Mrs M Clampitt Mr J Goldsmith	Head of Admissions Service Senior Admissions Officer Head of School Support Committee Services Officer Assistant Director (School Organisation and Planning)

Ms C Warner

Head of Partnerships and
Reintegration, Bedford Borough
Council**CBAF/10/12 Minutes and Matters Arising**

The Forum considered the minutes of the Central Bedfordshire Admissions Forum held on 23 June 2010.

Minute reference CBAF/10/10:-

Officers confirmed that the wording in the information booklets for parents had been amended to reflect that denominational transport would no longer be provided.

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Central Bedfordshire Admissions Forum held on 23 June 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CBAF/10/13 Fair Access Protocol

The Forum received and considered a report relating to the Fair Access Protocol, which had been agreed with schools in July 2009 and had been in operation since September 2009. The Protocol ensures the equitable distribution of 'hard to place' students across schools. The number of pupils placed through the Protocol during 2009-2010 Academic Year by phase and category were set out in Appendix A of the report..

It was noted that the current Protocol determines the school placement based on distances as follows:-

Lower and Middle Schools – five miles from home to school placement

Upper Schools – ten miles from home to school placement.

The five mile distance limit for middle schools had resulted in some middle schools not having any children placed under the protocol. The Fair Access Protocol Working Group had raised the distance limit as an issue. The Forum noted that the transport arrangements were currently under review, the outcome of which could lead to a possible increase in the distance pupils are asked to travel. Members of the Forum asked for data to be provided to the next meeting of the Forum and that the Interim Assistant Director for Learning and Strategic Commissioning attend the 22 March 2011 meeting with recommendations for the Forum to consider.

Members of the Forum were reminded that previously it had been agreed that schools in challenging circumstances and with a high population of challenging pupils could be exempt from accepting pupils under the Fair Access agreement.

The Forum was asked to consider a change to the Protocol in relation to Academies enabling them to be exempt from admitting pupils through the protocol **only** if they were previously a school or replaced a school in special measures (or removed from special measures within the last two years) or under notice to improve. The Forum agreed that the change should be made for any new Academies and that the existing academy, All Saints, would continue to be subject to the two year window.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the number of pupils admitted through the Fair Access Protocol during the 2009-2010 academic year be noted;**
- 2. that consideration of the distance limit for middle schools be deferred to the 22 March 2011 meeting to allow additional information and recommendations to be considered;**
- 3. that only those Academies which had previously been or replaced schools in special measures, (or removed from special measures within the last two years), or under notice to improve, be exempt from admitting pupils through the Fair Access Protocol.**

CBAF/10/14 In-Year Admissions

The Forum received and considered a report concerning issues associated with in-year admissions, further to a request having been made for this at the 23 June 2010 meeting (minute no. CBAF/10/10 refers).

The In-Year Guidance Notes for Schools were attached to the report at Appendix A with copies of the In-Year Application Form (Appendix B) and the In-Year Guidance Notes for Parents and Carers (Appendix C). The waiting list information had not been available at the time the agenda was published and was circulated at the meeting.

It was noted that the application form and the guidance notes for parents and carers were available on the Central Bedfordshire website as PDF documents.

It was noted that military personnel are often advised at short notice of new postings. It was noted that in these circumstances an assignment order is given, followed by the service personnel being posted into a pool for final placement. The Forum was advised that the armed forces will look into the possibility of the appointers issuing letters at the earliest possible time, which would allow the school placement process to move ahead. It was noted that the posting of military personnel was organised through separate centres, the Navy via Portsmouth, the Army via Glasgow and the Air Force via High Wycombe.

RESOLVED

that the report be noted.

CBAF/10/15 **Consultation**

The Forum received and considered a report which advised on the procedures for consulting on changes to admission arrangements as required by the School Admissions Code.

RESOLVED

that the requirement on admission authorities to consult every three years, unless the admission arrangements are to be changed, be noted.

CBAF/10/16 **Standard Admissions Policy**

The Forum received and considered a report which advised of the change in the definition section of the standard admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled schools. A copy of the policy was attached to the report at Appendix A.

It was noted that the definition of “very exceptional” medical grounds had been amended by the inclusion of the words in italics as follows:-

“Very exceptional” medical grounds refers to cases where there are **exceptional** medical reasons which make it **essential** that a child should attend a particular school and where the preferred school is the **only** school locally that could meet the child’s needs. A medical report from the child’s doctor or consultant must be submitted with the application form, setting out valid medical reasons why it is essential for the child to be admitted to the school in question and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. *The Local Authority reserves the right to seek further information in order to determine* whether it is essential for a child to be admitted to the preferred school on medical grounds. Admission on medical grounds cannot be considered where the medical condition relates to that of a parent/carer, brother or sister or other relative/childminder.”

Officers proposed to circulate the amended policy together with any changes that might be required. The Forum was asked to recommend to the governing bodies of foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools which include the medical grounds criterion in their policy to amend the definition for September 2012. Subject to approval of the Secretary of State, the Academy was also asked to consider making the change.

RESOLVED

1. **that the change to the “very exceptional” medical grounds definition of the standard admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled schools, for September 2012, be noted;**
2. **that the governing bodies of foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools that include the medical grounds criterion within their policy, be asked to make the necessary change.**
3. **that, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, the Academy be asked to consider making the necessary change.**

CBAF/10/17 **Admission Numbers**

The Forum received and considered a report which proposed that no changes be made to the admission numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools, nor were any changes proposed to the exceptions which may result in the admission number for a school being exceeded.

The Forum at their meeting held on 21 October 2009 (minute no. CBAF/09/19(iii) refers), had agreed the exceptions which were attached to the report at Appendix A. It was noted that no changes were proposed.

A question was asked in relation to children of military personnel. Military personnel have a number of difficulties when being redeployed or transferred to another base. As their orders may not be known until very close to their moving date, registering for a school is problematic. It was noted that the RAF had agreed to look into what can be done to provide information earlier.

RESOLVED

that the exceptions which may result in the admission number being exceeded be noted.

CBAF/10/18 **Co-ordinated Admission Schemes**

The Forum received and considered a report which set out the proposed co-ordinated admission schemes for 2012/2013. It was noted that the national closing date of 15 January 2012 would fall at the weekend. The Department for Education had confirmed that the dates were set irrespective of whether the dates were working days.

Officers informed the Forum that the schemes would be circulated for information only and as no significant changes had been made to the co-ordinated schemes there was no requirement to carry out a consultation.

The **Co-ordinated Scheme for Upper Schools and Academies** had the following minor changes:-

- reference to the transfer booklet being available only on request
- reference to possible future middle phase academies

- the timescales which had been updated for 2012/2013.

The **Co-ordinated Scheme for Middle, Primary and Lower Schools and Academies** had the following minor changes:-

- reference to possible future middle phase Academies
- reference to lower phase Academies
- reference to the transfer booklet being available on request

RESOLVED

1. **that the proposed co-ordinated admissions scheme for upper schools and academies be noted;**
2. **that the proposed co-ordinated admissions scheme for middle, primary, lower schools and Academies be noted.**

CBAF/10/19 Open Evenings

The Forum received and considered a report which sought the views and agreement of the Forum on the proposed dates for open evenings for the September 2012 admissions.

The proposed dates were as follows:-

- Upper Schools and Academy: 19 September 2011 – 21 October 2011
- Middle Schools: 1 November 2011 – 25 November 2011

The Forum agreed the proposed dates .

RESOLVED

that the proposed dates for the open evenings be agreed and recommended to the schools and the Academy.

CBAF/10/20 Date of Next Meeting

The Forum noted that the next meetings of the **Central Bedfordshire Admissions Forum** would be as follows:-

- 22 March 2011 in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Dunstable at 8.30am
- 28 June 2011 in Room 14, Priory House, Shefford at 8.30am.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 8.30 a.m. and concluded at 9.20 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated