

**Agenda Item: 12**

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**Meeting: Admissions Forum**

**Date: 24 June 2009**

**Subject: Parental Feedback on 2009 Admissions**

**Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning**

**Summary:** The report provides the Forum with feedback on the admissions process, from parents who applied for a lower, middle or upper school place for September 2009.

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Contact Officer: Rosa Bonwick

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That the analysis of responses and comments received be noted.**

**Background**

1. As part of the Local Authority's on going commitment to improving the information provided to parents/carers, the booklets issued as part of the September 2009 admissions process included a feedback form.
2. For those parents who applied using the online application system, there was the option of completing an online feedback form seeking their comments on the online application process.
3. The information provided in this report relates to responses received from parents applying for a school place prior to the establishment of the unitary authority and therefore covers both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough.

**Transfer to Middle and Upper School**

4. The number of responses received was very low. Only 17 parents returned the feedback form. A summary of the responses received is provided at Appendix A and the comments received from parents are summarised at Appendix B.

5. The response rate was too low to be able to draw any meaningful conclusions. In terms of the comments received, one parent requested information on the differences between trust, community and foundation schools. That information is included in both the transfer and starting school booklets. The other parent requested catchment area information. Although catchment area information is not included in the booklets, parents are signposted to the catchment area information on the Local Authority website

### **Admission to Lower School**

6. The response rate from parents of children starting lower school was much lower, with only 2 responses being received. A summary of those responses is provided at Appendix C. In terms of the comments received, one of the parents requested information on catchment areas and the other was unhappy with the timing of the lower school application process.
7. Members of the Forum will recall that the timescale for lower school admissions has been revised for the September 2010 admissions round.

### **Online Applications**

8. The number of parents who provided feedback on the online application process was relatively low, with only 41 responses being received. A summary of the responses is provided at Appendix D and the comments received from parents are summarised at Appendix E.
9. Most parents found the online application process easy or very easy to use and would use the online facility again. In terms of the comments received, some parents appeared to have problems with the registration process and the email verification. This has been tested and no problems have been identified. The verification email is delivered promptly to the applicant's email address. The delay in receiving the confirmation email may, therefore, be related to the applicant's internet provider. The password format is complex and has been set up by the software supplier as a default setting. It should be possible for the software supplier to simplify the format and this has been raised with the supplier. A concern raised by two of the parents relates to the security of the data entry pages. This was brought to the attention of the Local Authority at the time and was promptly resolved.
10. All of the comments received have been noted and where possible have been resolved or passed to the software supplier.

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#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A Parental Feedback - Transfer to Middle and Upper School Analysis of Responses

Appendix B Parental Feedback - Transfer to Middle and Upper School Analysis of Comments

Appendix C Parental Feedback - Admissions to Lower School Analysis of Responses

Appendix D Parental Feedback – Online Applications Analysis of Responses

Appendix E Parental Feedback – Online Applications Analysis of Comments