

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes

Report to:	Executive Councillor, Cllr Mrs P A Bradwell
Date:	30 March 2012
Subject:	Primary and secondary school admission policies for 2013 to 2014
Decision Reference:	02003
Key decision?	No

Summary:

The Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and controlled schools in the county. The purpose of this report is to enable the Executive Councillor to determine the final admission policy for entry into primary and secondary community and controlled schools for the academic year 2013/14. The admission policy only comes into force if a school has more applications than places available.

There has been a new school admissions code which came into force in February 2012. Two new mandatory requirements have been introduced by the new Code, the first states that for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area or crown servants returning from overseas to live in that area, arrangements must be made to support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. Arrangements must be appropriate for the area and described in the parent's booklet 'Going to School in Lincolnshire'.

The second mandatory change relates to children in public care. These children have always been top of the oversubscription criteria and the new Code has now added to this criterion. The Code states that children in public care or who had previously been in public care must be top of the oversubscription criteria. This now includes children who are adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order to the list.

In relation to the first mandatory requirement it is recommended that the following paragraph be added to the Local Authority admission policy.

"For late co-ordinated applications and mid year applications we will aim to remove any disadvantage to UK service personnel by applying the schools oversubscription criteria to their address. We will check to see if the address is within the distance of the last child admitted in the last admission round that was oversubscribed on offer day. If the address is within the distance the governors will consider admitting provided all children in public care and siblings have already been admitted. This will be irrespective of the fact that the school has had appeals heard or currently being scheduled. It maybe that the

governors cannot admit because of organisational or curriculum difficulties within the school, if this is the case we will consider any other preferences the parent may have expressed. For grammar schools the child must have qualified as well as live within distance.

We will need a copy of the notice of posting or official government letter and posting address before we can consider an application under these arrangements. We will allocate a school as soon as possible by applying the policies and practices that we normally follow but including the statement above."

In relation to the second mandatory requirement it is recommended that the present oversubscription criterion " The child is in the care of the local authority" be amended to " The child is in the care of the local authority or had previously been in its care". A note is also added under the 'Definitions and notes' section of the policy as follows:

" Note 1 includes children currently in public care or formally in public care, including any child who is adopted or who has been subject to a residence order or special guardianship order."

Recommendation(s):

The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve the amended admission policies in appendix A and B that include the recommendations above.

Alternatives Considered:

1. To retain the existing policy without the suggested amendments.

Advantages: Service children could still be admitted as now by individual discussion with schools and the independent appeals process would resolve any issues.

Disadvantages: The Local Authority is not fulfilling its duty to consider how its admission arrangements can be amended to support the Government's commitment to service personnel and by not printing the policy in 'Going to School in Lincolnshire.

2. To accept the proposal.

Reasons for Recommendation:

There is a mandatory duty to consider how admission arrangements can support service personnel and to include children who have previously been in public care.

For service personnel the wording of the proposal is framed so as not to give an advantage to service personnel, so they are not guaranteed a place at their

preferred school if it is full to its admission limit. Only if they live in the normal area would the Local Authority approach a school to admit above its numbers. There is a presumption that the governors would admit as they also have a duty to support the Government's commitment to service personnel, however if they are already above numbers because of successful appeals or they have organisational or curriculum issues then these also can be taken into account. There may be instances where governors are asked to admit several service personnel and they need to be able to refuse at some stage. The proposed wording allows this to happen. The Local Authority will do all it can but it can never guarantee a place.

For children in public care the recommendation meets the requirements of the new School Admission Code.

1. Background

The Executive Councillor has to consider the admission policy each year along with any comments received through the consultation process, which runs from 1 January to 28 February each year. There have been no comments received for the proposed amendment.

Lincolnshire is seen as a county that has strong military links especially with the RAF, so it needs to introduce a policy that supports the military covenant that allows governors to help service families wherever possible.

2. Conclusion

That the amended admission policies shown in appendix A and B be approved for entry into schools for 2013.

3. Legal Comments:

The legal considerations to be taken into account in the making of this decision, which is within the remit of the Executive Councillor, are set out within the report

4. Resource Comments:

There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

No

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

No

c) Scrutiny Comments

n/a

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire County Council primary school admission policy for community and controlled schools.
Appendix B	Lincolnshire County Council secondary school admission policy for community and controlled schools

7. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
School Admission Code February 2012	Pupil Services Manager

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