

Cabinet

18 November 2025

School Admission Arrangements 2027/28: Proposed Co-ordinated Admission Schemes

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Tracy Coombs, Portfolio Holder for Education

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Summary

Each year the Local Authority is required to publish admission schemes and arrangements for primary and secondary schools. If changes are made from the previous year, the Local Authority must undertake a consultation.

The schemes set out how the Local Authority will co-ordinate the processing of applications to schools. The arrangements also set out the relevant entry arrangements (oversubscription criteria and published admission numbers) for Community and Voluntary Controlled primary, infant and junior schools.

Academies, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools undertake their own consultation on entry arrangements but must co-ordinate with the Local Authority schemes.

This report details the proposed changes to the primary and secondary admission schemes and seeks Cabinet approval.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Cabinet is asked to agree the amendments to the admissions arrangements for 2027 in section 5 of the report and to approve the admissions schemes for 2027 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.
- 1.2. The Cabinet is also asked to agree to delegate authority to the Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education, to make any necessary in-year changes to the scheme as required.

2. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 2.1 Approving the proposed admissions schemes would ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty to comply with admissions legislation.
- 2.2 Delegating the approval of in-year changes to the Director and Portfolio Holder would ensure swift decision-making should we need to make unforeseen amendments to dates/processes. For example, in the past we had to amend some scheme dates to avoid clashes with neighbouring local authorities who published their scheme dates at a different time to us.

3. Budget and policy framework

- 3.1 Medway's school admission arrangements are consistent with the requirements of the School Admissions Code, which is issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA 1998). There are no specific budgetary implications.
- 3.2 As the admission authority for Medway's Community and Voluntary Controlled schools the Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that its admission arrangements are lawful.
- 3.3 The aim of our admission arrangements is to ensure that the transition for children and their families is as smooth as possible, which supports the Council's priority of supporting Medway's people to realise their potential.

4. Background

- 4.1 This report and Appendices 1 and 2 provide details of the proposed schemes for primary and secondary admissions in September 2027/28.
- 4.2 The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 states that consultation must take place if there are significant changes from the previous year and/or no consultation has taken place for seven years.
- 4.3 There are no significant changes and a consultation took place last year therefore we have not consulted for 2027/28.
- 4.4 The proposed co-ordinated admission schemes ensure that there is a clear and fair methodology for allocation of school places in Medway.

5. Options

- 5.1 The only changes to the scheme from 2026/27 are the revision of dates to fit the 2027/28 admission timeline.
- 5.2 Appendix 1 to the report provides details of the Local Authority's proposed co-ordinated admissions schemes for primary admissions 2027.

5.3. Appendix 2 to the report provides details of the Local Authority's proposed co-ordinated admissions schemes for secondary admissions 2027.

6. Advice and analysis

6.1 It is not envisaged that the proposed co-ordinated admissions schemes and admissions arrangements would have any adverse effect on any of the protected characteristic groups.

7. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Own admission authority schools can change their admission arrangements (including their published admission number) by undertaking their own consultations	Own admission authority schools are permitted to change their arrangements through the annual consultation process	Medway Council can respond and/or object to the consultations of own admission authorities	DIII

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	IV Minor

8. Consultation

8.1. As outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report, a consultation was not required this year. If we make changes for 2028/29, we will carry out a consultation.

9. Climate change implications

9.1. Officers do not anticipate the admissions process outlined in the proposed scheme will have a negative impact on climate change.

9.2. In recent years, over 99% of admissions applications are submitted online and all applications are processed electronically. Other than the < 1% of applications received in hard copy, the admissions process is paperless.

10. Financial implications

10.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The Medway Admissions Team is funded from the central services block of the Dedicated School Grant.

11. Legal implications

11.1. In accordance with the requirements of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Local Authorities are required to consult each year with the governing bodies of the schools for whom it is the admission authority (i.e. Community and Voluntary Controlled schools) on the proposed admission arrangements for the following year. In addition, local authorities are required to consult with other admission authority schools (Academies, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools), other local authorities and other relevant parties (e.g. diocesan boards). Similarly, own admission authority schools have a duty to consult on their proposed arrangements with the local authority and other parties.

11.2. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out the procedure for Determining Admission Arrangements, which includes the manner of consultation, matters to which consultation is to relate and the timescale for consultation. All consultations must be completed by 31 January of the academic year prior to that being consulted on (i.e. 31 January 2023 for 2024 admissions).

11.3. Local authorities have an important role to monitor the arrangements of all schools for compliance with the School Admissions Code. Each local authority is required to report to the Schools Adjudicator on the fairness and legality of the admissions arrangements for all schools in our area. The Schools Adjudicator has a wider remit as the independent enforcer of fair access to schools.

11.4. The proposed arrangements require all schools to admit children with Educational, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) or Statements of Special Educational Needs, which name that particular school.

11.5. Medway Council and Schools must comply with obligations in regard to equalities under the Equality Act 2010, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by this Act. It must advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. This involves removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people, including taking steps to meet the needs of people who have a "protected characteristic" in the terms of this Act (protected characteristics for these purposes are: disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). It must encourage people from

protected groups to participate in public life and other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

- 11.6. An admission authority must not discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.
- 11.7. The Equality Act 2010 contains limited exceptions to the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief and sex. Schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character are exempt from some aspects of the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and this means they can make a decision about whether or not to admit a child as a pupil on the basis of religion or belief. Single-sex schools are lawfully permitted to discriminate on the grounds of sex in their admission arrangements.
- 11.8. Admission authorities are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty and therefore must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in relation to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 11.9. The Human Rights Act 1998 confers a right of access to education. This right does not extend to securing a place at a particular school. Admission authorities, however, do need to consider parents' reasons for expressing a preference when they make admission decisions, though this may not necessarily result in the allocation of a place.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Primary Admissions Scheme 2027-28
Appendix 2 - Secondary Admissions Scheme 2027-28
Appendix 3 – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background Papers

None