

Report to Cabinet

15 January 2025

Subject:	Determination of Admission Arrangements for Sandwell’s Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2026/27
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Councillor Jalal Uddin
Director:	Director of Children and Education Services, Sally Giles
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Donna Williams, Team Manager, School Admissions and Appeals Service donna_williams@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

For the reasons set out in the report, it is recommended that Cabinet:-

- 1.1 delegate authority to the Director of Children and Education Services to publish the Local Authority’s Admission Arrangements for 2026/27 academic year for places in all community and voluntary controlled schools as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Local Authority (LA) must abide by the requirements of the School Admissions Code (‘Admissions Code’) and associated regulations and determine admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools each year. This report relates to the proposed arrangements to apply for the 2026/27 academic year. The proposed determined arrangements are in line with the requirements of the Admissions Code.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan

Growing Up in Sandwell	We want Sandwell to be a great place for children to grow up and to ensure a brighter future for children and young people, where every individual is valued and given access to the tools to succeed. Ensure that every child in Sandwell has access to a place in a good or outstanding school.
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4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Purpose of the Report

4.2 The Admissions Code published in September 2021 requires the Local Authority (as the admissions authority for community and voluntary controlled schools), to formally agree admission arrangements for those schools every year, even if the arrangements have not changed from previous years. Admission authorities must determine admission arrangements for entry in September 2026 by 28 February 2025.

The Admissions Code also requires the LA to consult governing bodies of community and voluntary controlled schools where it proposes either to increase or keep the same Published Admission Number (PAN). The proposed admission arrangements and PANs are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.3 Background and main considerations

4.4 The LA last consulted all stakeholders on its admission arrangements in November 2023, and Cabinet has continued to agree to publish these arrangements for subsequent years as there have been no material changes. At its meeting on 17 January 2024 Cabinet agreed to publish the arrangements for the 2025/26 academic year (Minute No. 9/24).

4.5 The arrangements for 2026/27 are attached in Appendix 1.

4.6 The current position

4.7 The LA's oversubscription criteria for the academic year 2026/27 for community and voluntary controlled schools does not require consultation on in accordance with the Department for Education's 2021 statutory 'School Admissions Code' guidance as there are no material changes to the Local Authority's admissions arrangements and it is recommended that the new policy be determined.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 There is no alternative option open to the LA in relation to its responsibilities for agreeing and publishing oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools. The LA must abide with the requirements of the Admissions Code.

6 Implications

Resources:	No strategic resource implications have been identified.
Legal and Governance:	<p>The School Admissions Code (issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) was published in September 2021 and associated regulations require all admission authorities to determine (formally agree) admission arrangements every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required.</p> <p>The Local Authority must also ensure it has consulted on its determined admission arrangements at least every 7 years, or when material changes are proposed to its policy.</p> <p>Following determination of arrangements, any objections to those arrangements must be made to the Schools Adjudicator. Objections to admission arrangements must be referred to the Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.</p>

<p>Risk:</p>	<p>The Corporate Risk Management Strategy (CRMS) has been complied with. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to determine admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools in accordance with the Admissions Code and associated regulations. Based on the information provided, it is the officers' opinion that there are no current "red" risks that need to be reported with regards to this proposal.</p> <p>If this report's recommendation to publish the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools is not approved the LA will be in breach of its statutory duty as determined by the Admissions Code.</p>
<p>Equality:</p>	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment initial screening has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.</p> <p>The Policy ensures we have a fair and equitable procedure for children needing an admission to Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools</p>
<p>Health and Wellbeing:</p>	<p>This proposal supports the prioritisation of applications from the local community and gives clarity to parents and carers about how their applications will be considered, including how they will be measured under the distance criterion.</p>
<p>Social Value:</p>	<p>In supporting the prioritisation of applications from the local community the proposal will ensure that children will be educated and develop within their residential and social communities.</p>
<p>Climate Change:</p>	<p>No impact on climate change.</p>
<p>Corporate Parenting:</p>	<p>Adoption of the proposed Admission Arrangements for 2026/27 will ensure the Local Authority fulfils its Corporate Parenting responsibilities by supporting all children applying for a school place at a community or voluntary controlled school.</p>

7. Appendices

- 7.1 The proposed admission arrangements are attached in the appendix to this report. These also include the Published Admission Numbers (PAN) of all community and voluntary controlled schools.

8. Background Papers

None