

JOINT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Guidelines for Admissions Consultations for Voluntary Aided Schools

Governing Boards of Voluntary Aided schools are the admission authority for the school. This information is in accordance with Schools Admission Code 2021, section [1.45 to 1.48](#).

When changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult on their admissions arrangements (including any supplementary information forms) that will apply for admission applications the following school year. The term 'admission arrangements' means the overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding on the allocation of school places.

Where the admissions arrangements have not changed from the previous year, there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admissions authorities must consult on their admissions arrangements at least once every 7 years even if there have been no changes.

Consultations must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and be completed by the **31st January**.

Once admission authorities have agreed their admission arrangements, they must notify the appropriate bodies and publish a copy of the arrangements on their website displaying them for the whole of the school year (the school year in which offers for places are made).

- Deadline to formally agree admission arrangements - **28 February**
- Deadline to publish on school website - **15 March**
- Deadline to send copy to LA and notify key stakeholders - **15 March**
- Deadline for LA to publicise all schools' arrangements and how objections can be submitted - **15 March**
- Deadline for objectors to refer cases to the Schools Adjudicator - **15 May**

The LA has a statutory duty to refer a school or academy's admission policy to the School Adjudicator if, it is not legally compliant.

Timing

Consultation must last for a **minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January** in the determination year.

The law requires you to consult with:

1. Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen; (parents of the school and other schools, churches and anywhere else you can reach parents.)
2. Other persons in the relevant area* who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions; (Local pre-schools and nurseries etc)
3. All other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools); (Other schools in the local area, including community schools, VA schools, VC schools, academies)
4. Whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority; (The Local Authority)
5. Any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority; and (neighbouring LA if on or near a border)
6. In the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination. (The Diocese)

*Your LA can provide you with details of your 'relevant area'.

When you send a copy of your proposed policy to other schools, please ask them to share with parents etc.

As a church school, share the proposal with local churches.

What you must include in the consultation

- Throughout the consultation period you must publish a copy of your full proposed admission arrangements (including the proposed PAN) on your website
- Details of the person within the admission authority (or school) to whom comments may be sent

- The areas of the policy on which comments are not sought because they are not changing ([policy changes need to be highlighted and made clear](#)).

The easiest way is to have the proposed policy on your website as a PDF and details of who to contact regarding comments (it is useful for this to be a separate email address). Send emails, where possible, stating that the policy is under consultation with a link to the policy on the website.

Send a letter where email is not possible, again with the website link.

Admission authorities must also send a copy of the proposed admission arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed above upon request.

Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent challenge and for a policy change to be overturned.

Keep good records of all consultation activity, including copies of any letters, emails, posters, social media or local media articles, a screenshot of your webpage, and the responses. If someone lodges an objection with the Adjudicator, the Adjudicator will request evidence to prove that your consultation met the statutory requirements.

Following consultation, governors must meet in February to discuss the outcome of the consultation and decide whether any further changes need to be made.

Ways to communicate with stakeholders

- letters or emails to all current parents
- posters in and around school
- social media or local media articles
- school website

Following Determination

Once admission arrangements have been determined for a specific school year, you cannot change them unless such revision is necessary, such as:

- a mandatory requirement of the Code
- admissions law
- a determination of the Adjudicator
- any misprint in the admission arrangements



- a significant change to the context of the school (this would require the agreement of the Adjudicator)