

Report



Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years

Part 1

Date: 8 April 2025

Subject School Admission Arrangements 2026/27

Purpose To review the recent consultation exercise and determine the Council's resulting school admission arrangements for the academic year commencing September 2026

Author School Admissions Manager

Ward All wards, as the admission arrangements apply to all community and voluntary controlled schools in Newport.

Summary In accordance with Welsh Government statutory School Admissions Code, admission authorities are required to undertake an annual consultation on admission arrangements in the school year beginning two years before the school year in which the arrangements will apply.

As an admission authority, the Council undertook its consultation on proposed admission arrangements for the academic year commencing September 2026 between 1st December 2024 and 21st February 2025. No policy changes were proposed.

Proposal To set the Council's admission arrangements for the academic year commencing September 2026 as consulted upon, without amendment.

Action by Chief Education Officer

Timetable In accordance with the statutory code admission arrangements must be determined by 15th April 2025.

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Management Team
- Education Senior Management Team
- Senior HR and Finance Business Partners

Signed

Background

Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Council (as the admission authority) has responsibility for the discharge of the school admissions function for all community and voluntary controlled schools in Newport. In this role, the Council acts in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code.

It is a statutory requirement of the School Admissions Code that the Council carries out an annual consultation on its school admission arrangements (policy) between 1st September and 1st March each year so that the resulting admission arrangements can be determined, either in their original form or with such modifications as the Council think fit, by 15th April in the determination year. The determination year (2024/25) is the school year beginning two years before the school year in which the arrangements will apply (2026/27).

The consultation on admission arrangements 2026/27 took place between 1st December 2024 and 21st February 2025. No policy changes were proposed.

No comment/feedback was received during the consultation window.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Code provides lists of bodies that admission authorities must and should consult with on changes to admission arrangements. The following is a list of all consultees.

Statutory:

- Governing bodies of all community and voluntary controlled schools in Newport
- Governing bodies of all voluntary aided schools in Newport
- Representatives of the Roman Catholic Diocesan
- Representatives of the Church in Wales Diocesan
- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Cardiff City Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Torfaen County Borough Council

Non-statutory:

- Newport School Admissions Forum
- Headteachers of all schools in Newport
- Newport City Council elected members
- Community councils in Newport
- Newport Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership
- Family Information Service

Financial Summary

There are no costs associated with the proposal to determine admission arrangements for 2026/27.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Failure to determine the admission	M	L	This is an annual process, and consultation has already been undertaken in accordance with	Chief Education Officer

arrangements for 2026 by the required date			the requirements of the statutory code.	
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Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
 Corporate Plan
 Education Service Plan

Options Available and Considered

Option 1: To determine and set the Council's school admission arrangements for September 2026 as outlined in the recent consultation with stakeholders.

Preferred Option and Why

Option 1 is the only option. No changes were proposed in this consultation and no feedback was received. Determining the admissions arrangements on an annual basis ensures a fair and equitable school admissions policy that is compliant with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial implications to this report. Admissions activity is undertaken within existing budgets and there is no financial consequence to implementing the admissions arrangements for September 2026.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

As set out in the report, the local authority is required under the School Admissions Code to draw up and consult upon admission arrangements within a prescribed timeframe. The Council has carried out a proper consultation in accordance with the Code and received no feedback. It is within the remit of the Cabinet Member to determine the response to the consultation document and the policy relating to schools.

Comments of Head of People, Policy, and Transformation

The annual consultation on schools' admission arrangements helps to meet sustainable development duties under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, in particular the duty to 'involve' stakeholders in decisions that affect them and to work collaboratively. Following stakeholder consultation, the report recommends that the 2026 admission arrangements be taken forward with no policy changes.

An updated Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to accompany this report.

There are no human resources implications in this report.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015
- Equality Act 2010
- Socio-economic Duty
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

The Council has several legislative responsibilities to assess the impact of any strategic decision, proposal or policy on people that may experience disadvantage or inequality.

A full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) was undertaken on this proposal and published on the Council's website (available in Welsh [here](#) and English [here](#)). This FEIA considers our legislative responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010), including the Socio-economic Duty, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011).

This consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the legislation outlined in the statutory School Admissions Code, which outlines the key stakeholders (both statutory and non-statutory) that should be consulted as part of the process, but this is not exclusive, and the Council has previously extended this list in response to feedback received. An invitation to engage in the consultation process was emailed to identified stakeholders, and the proposal was published on the Newport City Council website, and on social media platforms such as X and Facebook. All documentation was available in Welsh and English.

The sustainable development principle and 5 ways of working set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act have been considered as outlined below:

- **Long term** (*the importance of balancing short- term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs*): As an admission authority, the Council acts in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (and the School Admissions Appeals Code). As imposed by the Codes the Council annually sets out its own local admission arrangements, known as the Newport School Admissions Policy, following consultation with stakeholders. Admission to all community and voluntary controlled schools in Newport is governed by this policy (each Governing Body derives the school admissions policy for voluntary-aided schools). These policies are in place to ensure that access to education is managed fairly and equitably, whilst ensuring that no one school is forced to admit more children than it can reasonably accommodate. Newport's population is continuing to increase and with it the number of school age children. Welsh Government recommends 10% as the optimum level of surplus school places. Currently, in terms of English-medium places, Newport schools have only a 7% surplus at primary level and 5% at secondary level. This is of particular concern in the context of the significant and increasing number of in-year school applications received year on year. The Council is therefore seeking to maintain effective school place allocation procedures through application of a fair and equitable school admissions policy.
- **Prevention** (*How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help us meet our objectives*): It is important to restrict the number of priorities within the policy's oversubscription criteria to the most essential categories only to avoid dilution of their impact, especially where demand for places is significant. The School Admissions Policy gives the highest priority for admission to the most vulnerable children in our communities; including children looked after by a local authority and those with additional learning needs. Additionally, whilst the key theme of the WG Code is parental preference of school, the school admissions policy is largely centred on local catchment areas, which give priority for school places to local children over those who live further away. Not only does this support families in managing the home to school journey, but it also facilitates effective transition through the various stages of education. However, parents can apply for any school of their choosing, even if it is not the catchment school.
- **Integration** (*Consider how the proposals will impact on our wellbeing objectives, our wellbeing goals, other objectives, or those of other public bodies*): This proposal supports the following:
 - 'A more equal Wales' – through access to education pupils are enabled to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.
 - 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' – the Welsh language is protected and promoted by the establishment of new Welsh-medium schools.
 - 'To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities' through access to education.

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 and Well-being Objectives:

- Economy, Education and Skills – To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities through access to education.
- An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council – To build cohesive and sustainable communities through the application of catchment area priority for admission.
- **Collaboration** (*have you considered how acting in collaboration with any other person, or any other part of our organisation could help meet our wellbeing objectives?*): The school admissions policy was established and is regularly reviewed collaboratively with colleagues throughout the Council, with local schools, governing bodies, diocesan representatives and with neighbouring local authorities.
- **Involvement** (*The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the city we serve*): It is a statutory requirement of the School Admissions Code that the Council carries out an annual consultation on its school admission arrangements between 1 September and 1 March each year, beginning two years before the school year in which the arrangements will apply. In Newport, both statutory and non-statutory stakeholders are consulted.

Consultation

Stakeholder consultation has taken place as outlined in this report.

Background Papers

FEIA

Newport City Council Consultation Document: School Admissions Policy 2026/27

Dated: 8 April 2025