

## Education Services

### Review of Policy for Admissions

and

### Pupil Placements in Mainstream Schools

### Consultation Proposal Document

We are looking for your views on our proposal to apply new procedures for admissions and placing requests to schools within Inverclyde. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires a local authority to undertake statutory consultation if it wishes to modify its guidelines for placing requests for a school. The proposed policy is attached in its entirety as an appendix to this consultation proposal document; however the two main areas for changes to the policy for consideration are outlined below.

Please note that the proposed amended guidelines for priority for admissions to schools and placing requests are **only** in the event of a school being oversubscribed.

**When considering the priority for placing requests for schools, we propose to add two qualifying criteria to those already in place. The changes, and the order in which they will be considered are highlighted, below, in bold.**

We will consider placing requests using the following sequence of priority criteria:

1. A child who has a medical condition or additional support needs, who requires facilities or support only available in the requested school.
2. Those cases where a brother or sister attends the school and will continue in this school during the next session.
3. **In secondary schools: children who attend a primary school *associated* with the secondary school as a result of a placing request or a request to remain according to the length of time at the *associated primary school*. This means that pupils who have attended for the longest time will have the highest priority.**
4. **In the case of denominational schools: pupils who can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith.**
5. All other children of school age residing in the defined catchment area of the school according to distance of home address from chosen school. (An example of such a placing request would be where a child who has attended the non-denominational primary school of his/her geographical catchment area makes a placing request to the

denominational secondary school of its catchment area due to the distance of his/her home address from the said secondary school).

6. All other children of school age residing in Inverclyde according to distance of home address from their chosen school.
7. Children of school age residing out with Inverclyde whose additional support need is supported by significant input by education and another appropriate agency and who are requesting a place within a school which has specialist provision to meet the child's needs.
8. Children of school age residing out with Inverclyde according to distance of home address from their chosen school.

**In the particular and exceptional circumstances where a school has insufficient capacity to accommodate all pupils for the chosen denomination living in its defined catchment area, then it is proposed to regard all such pupils as having made placing requests which will be considered, in order of priority, as below:**

- 1) A child who has a medical condition or additional support needs, who requires facilities or support only available in the requested school.
- 2) Those cases where a brother or sister attends the school and will continue in this school during the next session.
- 3) In the case of denominational schools: pupils who can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith.
- 4) Distance of home address from chosen school.

**Closing date for responses on this consultation will be:**

**Monday 7 November 2016**

**There will be 2 public meetings held on:**

**Wednesday 26 October 2016 at the Port Glasgow Community Campus, 6:30 pm**

**Thursday 27 October 2016 at Inverclyde Academy, 6:30 pm**

This document has been issued by Inverclyde Council for consultation under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: (01475) 712853.

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## **Communication list and how to access the proposal document:**

### **Statutory consultees:**

- The Parent Council of affected schools
- The parents/carers of the pupils at the affected schools
- Parents whose children are expected to attend the affected schools within 2 years of publication of the proposal document
- Pupils (where they are considered to be of suitable age and maturity)
- Council employees at the affected schools
- Trade Union representatives
- Church representatives
- Bord na Gaidhlig
- Community Councils

### **Other stakeholders who will be contacted:**

- Education Scotland
- Elected Members
- Local Members of Parliament and local members of Scottish Parliament
- General Public (Inverclyde)

Consultees will be informed that in order for their views to be taken into account, they must complete and submit a copy of the Consultation Response Form. Interested parties are invited to respond to the proposal by making an online submission using the link:

[www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay)

Alternatively, written submissions should be made using the form attached at the end of this document no later than Monday 7 November 2016.

### **Accessing the proposal document**

The steps listed below have been taken to ensure that the proposal document is widely available.

- Notice of the proposal and of publication of this proposal document has been placed in The Greenock Telegraph to engage with the general community
- The proposal document has been published on the Inverclyde Council website: [www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay)
- This document can be made available in alternative forms or translated by contacting Education Services on (01475) 712853
- The proposal document will also be available for inspection at all educational establishments, Council Customer Services and libraries

## **1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 The Education and Lifelong Learning Committee meeting of 18 August 2009 approved the issue of a revised policy for Admissions and Placing Requests for consultation and agreed to the implementation of the new policy on 3 November 2009. The review took into consideration several key areas which included:
  - The need for a single policy which is applicable to all schools
  - The need for a policy which acknowledged the reduced availability of places at the time and supported the delivery of the Schools Estate Management Plan
  - The need for a policy which reflected current legislation
  - The need for a policy which clearly defined priorities in respect of placing requests
  - The need for a policy which clearly defined the decision making process in place in respect of all admissions to main stream schools in Inverclyde
- 1.2 The revised policy has been in place for 6 years during a period of significant changes in the school estate in Inverclyde. Inverclyde now has a school estate that meets the current and projected requirements for pupils who reside in the area. We are fortunate to have high quality schools across Inverclyde and whilst most parents opt to send their children to the school of their chosen denomination which serves the area that they live in, current legislation gives parents the right to submit a placing request to another school.
- 1.3 Whilst this legislation gives parents the right to submit a placing request, it does not guarantee that the placing request will be granted. Inverclyde has a policy on placing requests and admissions to schools in order to ensure that schools are not oversubscribed or that Inverclyde Education Services does not have to employ extra teaching staff. This policy contains the criteria for the allocation of places if a school is oversubscribed.
- 1.4 On 3 May 2016 in a report presented to the Education and Communities Committee, the Corporate Director of Education, Communities & Organisational Development recommended that a revised policy on placing requests be presented to the Education and Communities Committee for consideration in September 2016. This was in light of the large number of placing requests that could not be accommodated through the current policy to Notre Dame High School and the high number of appeals to the Education Appeals Committee.
- 1.5 In their meeting on 6 September 2016, the Education and Communities Committee agreed to the wording of the draft proposal that would be taken out to consultation.
- 1.6 In reviewing the current policy, the reasons given by parents who make placing requests has been taken into consideration, along with decisions made by the Education Appeals Committee. Similar policies from other local authorities have also been reviewed.

## 2.0 PROPOSED CHANGES

- 2.1 Change 1 - is to add the following statement as the third qualifying criterion for the allocation of placing requests:

**In secondary schools: children who attend a primary school *associated* with the secondary school as a result of a placing request or a request to remain according to the length of time at the *associated primary school*. This means that pupils who have attended for the longest time will have the highest priority.**

Within the current policy, if a child attends a primary school as a result of a placing request for whatever reason, then that child is given no preference if they submit a placing request for the associated secondary school. In practice this means that a child who changes denomination at the point of transfer from primary to secondary can have preference over those who attended the associated primary school. This has meant in the past that classes and friendship groupings from associated primary schools have been split up because placing requests from pupils changing denomination have received priority. The fact that pupils were not staying with the friendship groups from associated primary schools was one of the most common reasons for placing request appeals during 2016. This change would give higher levels of priority to pupils who attend an associated school and would avoid splitting up established friendship groups.

- 2.2 Change 2 – This is to add the follow statement as the fourth qualifying criterion for placing requests:

**In the case of denominational schools: pupils who can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith.**

All of the denominational schools in Inverclyde are Roman Catholic. There are three Roman Catholic secondary schools and 9 primary schools. If priority for placing requests is given to pupils who attend an associated school, then there is a possibility in the future that denominational schools could be oversubscribed because parents opt to send their child to a denominational primary school in order to help secure a place at their preferred secondary school. The addition of the above qualifying criterion hopes to provide a fair and equitable solution to managing the rolls of all schools, but to specifically ensure that places remain available for children whose families are Roman Catholic and wish them to be educated in the Roman Catholic faith environment.

- 2.3 Change 3 - The current policy is not clear as to the selection criteria that should be used if a school is oversubscribed for pupils who wish to attend a school of their chosen denomination in their catchment area. It should be noted that this is currently not a scenario for Inverclyde and our pupil projections show that we would not expect it to be. However, because it is a situation that could possibly arise in the future, then it makes sense to have a clear set of guidelines that are understood by all. The proposed order for allocation of places in this situation broadly follows the proposed criteria for the allocation of placing requests but it omits attendance at an associated primary school as a qualifying criterion for a secondary school. This is because almost all pupils would already be in attendance at an associated school within the catchment area. However, this proposal would still give some element of priority to pupils who wish to attend a denominational school who could demonstrate an affinity to the church in the form of a certificate of baptism.

### **3.0 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**

3.1 The formal consultation on the proposal within this document will be undertaken under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. The consultation requires to run for 30 school days and will start on Monday 19 September 2016 and will end on Monday 7 November 2016. Written representations must be received by this date in order to be taken into account.

3.2 All schools will be affected by this proposal.

#### **3.3 Public Meeting**

There will be 2 public meetings held on:

- Wednesday 26 October 2016 at the Port Glasgow Community Campus, 6:30 pm
- Thursday 27 October 2016 at Inverclyde Academy, 6:30 pm

The meetings will provide those in attendance with an opportunity to:

- Hear about the proposal
- Ask questions about the proposal
- Express views about the proposal

A note will be taken of the views expressed during the public meeting and of any questions asked. In addition to the public meeting, written representations including online responses will be able to be made during the consultation period.

#### **3.4 Who will be consulted?**

Statutory consultees:

- The Parent Council of affected schools
- The parents/carers of the pupils at the affected schools
- Parents whose children are expected to attend the affected schools within 2 years of publication of the proposal document
- Pupils (where they are considered to be of suitable age and maturity)
- Council employees at the affected schools
- Trade Union representatives
- Church representatives
- Bord na Gaidhlig
- Community Councils

Other stakeholders who will be contacted:

- Education Scotland
- Elected Members
- Local Members of Parliament and local members of Scottish Parliament
- General Public (Inverclyde)

Consultees will be informed that in order for their views to be taken into account, they must complete and submit a copy of the Consultation Response Form.

Pupil consultation will take place through Primary (P4 - 7) and Secondary Pupil Councils.

### **3.5 Involvement of Education Scotland**

The Council will provide the proposal document to Education Scotland at the start of the consultation period. When the consultation period has ended, Inverclyde Council will collate all of the written and oral representations. Thereafter, the following information will be provided to Education Scotland:

- A copy of relevant written representations made to Inverclyde Council on the proposal (or summary of them if agreed within Education Scotland)
- A summary of oral representations made at the public meetings
- Other relevant documentation, as far as is practicable

Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal taking account of the above, the Educational Benefits Statement contained in this proposal document and in so far that Education Scotland considers them relevant, any written representations made directly to them. Education Scotland may also visit the schools affected by the proposal and make reasonable inquiries of persons there and of such other persons as they consider appropriate. Education Scotland require to send their report to Inverclyde Council no later than 3 weeks (or longer if agreed with Inverclyde Council) after having received the information from Inverclyde Council.

### **3.6 Consultation Report**

After receiving Education Scotland's report, Inverclyde Council will review the proposal taking account of relevant written representations received during the consultation period, oral representations made during the public meeting and Education Scotland's report. Inverclyde Council will then prepare and publish a consultation report which will include a recommendation on the proposal.

Inverclyde Council will notify on the publication of the consultation report, which will be made available on Inverclyde Council's website, in schools and at Inverclyde Council's Customer Service Centre.

The consultation report will be published 3 weeks before it is formally considered by Inverclyde Council.

### **3.7 Inaccuracies or omissions**

Where inaccuracies or omissions are discovered within this proposal document, Inverclyde Council will determine whether relevant information has been omitted or, if there has been an inaccuracy. Appropriate action will then be taken by Inverclyde Council which may include issuing corrections, issuing a corrected proposal document or an extension of the consultation period. In any of these events all relevant consultees (and where applicable the notifier(s) of any omissions or inaccuracies) and Education Scotland will be advised of the appropriate action. Notifiers of any omissions or inaccuracies will also be given the opportunity to make representations if they disagree with Inverclyde Council's determination of and any action on the matter, which may result in Inverclyde Council making a further determination / decision on the matter.

## **4.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE FOR THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 It is expected that the proposal, if accepted, would be implemented from the 1 February 2017. The enrolment process for the academic year 2017/18 will take place during the month of December 2016 for secondary schools and January 2017 for primary schools. Normally any placing requests would be considered in January. Because the outcome of the consultation will not be known until mid-January which is half way through the enrolment process, for 2017 only, the submission of placing requests will be delayed by one month and take place between the 1 and 28 February 2017. This means that parents or carers submitting placing requests will have knowledge of the outcome of

the proposal and the criteria that will be used for the allocation of places before they submit their request. In January 2018, for the academic year 2018/19 the procedure will revert back to that stated in the policy.

## **5.0 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS – ASSESSMENT OF THE LIKELY EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSAL**

Education is a key priority of Inverclyde Council.

- 5.1 Inverclyde Council is firmly committed to delivering a high quality education provision in learning environments fit for learning and teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Environments that nurture ambition and aspirations, improve attainment and achievement, and create and widen opportunities for all children and young people to achieve their full potential and move into positive and sustained destinations when they leave school. Inverclyde Council also demonstrates its strong belief in the value of education through financial investment to allow full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), and supporting programmes and activities that focus on removing barriers to learning and closing the attainment gap.
- 5.2 This policy builds upon current practice and the previous criteria for the allocation of placing requests remain in place. The proposed changes give two additional criteria for placing requests that will be considered as priority three and priority four. This means that pupils with a medical condition or additional support needs or those who have siblings at a school will continue to receive the top priority for placing requests. This will be regardless of the school they currently attend or an affinity to a faith. In this way, families can be assured that Inverclyde Education Services will always make every effort to ensure that brothers and sisters are educated at the same school if they so wish. We see this as a key educational benefit and in line with our continued focus on opportunities for family learning.
- 5.3 All Inverclyde schools remain open to all pupils and will continue to have an inclusive and respectful ethos which helps every pupil to achieve their best. This policy only proposes changes to admissions to schools if a school is oversubscribed. This means that the education authority is reducing the risk of extremely high occupancy levels that may take a school over a defined capacity. It also means that Inverclyde can meet the requirements in relation to the provision of Roman Catholic education.
- 5.4 When a school is nearing capacity or goes over capacity there are inevitable pressures on both the facilities available for pupils and the curriculum. This has particularly been the case in Notre Dame High School in recent years.
- 5.5 If a secondary school is oversubscribed, social areas will become increasingly congested and will have to be managed in a way that ensures the safety of all pupils. This may mean measures are put in place to avoid congestion at certain busy times and pupils do not always have the freedom to socialise with their peers in an environment that is stress free and relaxing. This will affect all youngsters but could especially add to the stress of those who are undergoing exam preparation in the senior phase.
- 5.6 As pupils progress through the Broad General Education the outcomes and experiences are delivered across each of the curriculum areas in a framework that provides opportunities for personalisation and choice. Schools work with their parent and pupil councils to establish a curriculum rationale that is appropriate for the learners within their school. If a school is working close to capacity then this personalisation and choice would be restricted by the availability of facilities, resources and access to appropriate staff.

- 5.7 Flexible routes for qualifications are established for each learner over the course of the senior phase of education. The current formula for defining the capacity of a secondary school allows for flexibility of pupil choice in the senior phase. The closer a school is to the defined capacity for the school, the less flexibility can be built in to the senior phase. This means that pupils may not get access to their first choice of subjects because classes are oversubscribed.
- 5.8 In both primary schools and secondary schools, the closer to capacity a school gets then the more pressure there is on resources. This means increased pressure on lunch halls, social areas and the timetabling of facilities such as music rooms, gym halls, science labs, libraries and ICT provision. This gives schools less flexibility to provide high quality learning experiences and opportunities for social interaction and means that projects that involve inter-disciplinary learning could suffer because of the lack of availability of resources and space.
- 5.9 Whilst all schools across Inverclyde Council work hard to ensure smooth pastoral and curricular transitions regardless of the schools attended, there are some specific educational benefits to a transition from P7 to S1 within associated school groups. Because schools work as associated school groups, often staff will have worked together to identify curriculum rationales and progression through curricular areas. Pupils from the primary schools may well have visited the associated secondary schools or have been involved in joint projects with other pupils and staff. In this way the transition in learning can be more seamless if a pupil has attended a primary school associated with the secondary. Under the current policy no consideration is given to pupils who have attended the primary school associated with the secondary school.
- 5.10 Another advantage of considering attendance at a primary school associated with the secondary is the consideration of friendship groupings. Under the current policy there have been cases where a child was the only one from their friendship group not to be allocated a place at the associated school because they lived further away than pupils from other schools who had also submitted placing requests to change denomination. Parents reported that they felt this was unfair and the stress of being split from their friends caused some pupils to become ill and for pupils to feel isolated. Whilst the proposed changes will not stop this entirely, it does go some way to redressing the balance and reducing stressful situations for pupils in their transitions from primary to secondary.
- 5.11 Because a change has been proposed to the allocation of placing requests with regard to associated schools, there is a possibility that this could lead to an oversubscription of denominational schools within Inverclyde, especially in the primary sector. This proposal makes provision to control the intake to denominational schools by giving priority to pupils with a declared affinity for the religious ethos of a Roman Catholic school, evidenced by a certificate of baptism.
- 5.12 It is not considered that there will be any adverse impacts on children attending Inverclyde schools by implementing this proposal. There would also be no detriment to other users of the school facilities or the wider community.
- 5.13 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken in the preparation of this proposal and any equality issues that are raised during the consultation period will be taken into account.

## **6.0 EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 This proposal has no financial implications but may mitigate against extra teachers being taken into employment because of placing request appeals.

## **8.0 RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL**

- 8.1 Page 4 of this document provides details on how to access a copy of the proposal document.
- 8.2 Interested parties are invited to respond to the proposal by making an online submission using the link:

[www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay)

Alternatively, written submissions should be made using the form attached at the end of this document no later than Tuesday 7 November 2016.

## **9.0 Appendix 1 – Proposed Draft Policy on Admissions and Pupil Placement in Mainstream Schools:**

### **Inverclyde Council Draft Policy on Admissions and Pupil Placement in Mainstream Schools**

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## Section A - Core Principles

- 1.0 The Admissions and Pupil Placement Policy is applicable to all **mainstream schools** in Inverclyde.
- 1.1 The Admissions and Pupil Placement Policy recognises the right of parents to make a placing request to have their child educated in a school of their choice. Parents in turn should recognise that they do not have an automatic right to have their **placing request** granted.
- 1.2 For the purposes of determining which school a pupil should attend the authority is divided into defined geographical **catchment areas**. Each address in Inverclyde is assigned to a non-denominational and a denominational primary and secondary school.
- 1.3 At the point of entry to primary school parents may choose the primary school of either educational sector, (**non-denominational** or **denominational**) assigned to their home address, which they wish their child to attend. This policy is premised on the assumption that having made a choice about the educational sector (**denominational** or **non-denominational**) at primary stage, a pupil will remain in that sector for the duration of their education in Inverclyde.
- 1.4 All of the **denominational** schools in Inverclyde are Roman Catholic. Roman Catholic schools are open to all children regardless of faith. Where a **denominational school** is oversubscribed, either for within the **catchment** area pupils or through **placing requests** then priority will be given to pupils who can demonstrate or have declared an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith and a supporting letter from the Church.  
(see sections C and D)
- 1.5 There are no **denominational** primary schools within the areas of Quarriers Village, Kilmacolm, Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. Parents often choose to send their children to the local non-denominational primary school because of the travelling distance to their nearest denominational primary school. In such circumstances the following admission arrangements will apply:
  - children whose parents have selected to send their child to the **non-denominational** school serving their defined **catchment area** assigned to their address rather than to their assigned denominational primary school because of travelling distance, will have the choice at primary 7 of seeking admission to either the **non-denominational** or **denominational** school assigned to their address. The Council's policy in respect of school transport will apply.
- 1.6 Inverclyde has a Gaelic nursery and primary unit attached to Whinhill Primary School. It is the right of parents to make a request to the Authority for Gaelic medium education. Parents wishing their child to be educated in Gaelic medium should register with their local school and make a **placing request**. Gaelic Secondary education is accessed in Glasgow. Transport is provided.
- 1.7 Each secondary school has a list of **associated primary schools**. This means that pupils who live within the geographical **catchment area** and of the chosen sector (**denominational** or **non-denominational**) would normally transfer to the secondary school without the need for a **placing request**.

- 1.8 Attendance at an **associated primary school**, either through a **placing request** or the submission of a request to remain if a family have moved house does not guarantee a place at the **associated secondary school** and a **placing request** should be submitted.
- 1.9 A **Pupil Placement Panel** will be convened by the Corporate Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development if the situation arises where the number of pupils in a defined catchment area who are eligible to enter a school in primary or secondary is greater than the number of places available in the school.

The **Pupil Placement Panel** will also scrutinise recommendations on entry made by the appropriate Head of Service in Education Services to ensure the criteria has been applied appropriately and to determine which placing request applications should be granted and which should be refused.

- 1.10 The **Pupil Placement Panel** will comprise the Corporate Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development, the Head of Legal and Property Services and a Head of Service from another council service selected from a rota.
- 1.11 Where documentation such as **proof of residence**, a qualifying letter or baptism into a faith are requested, then the applicant will be given 4 weeks to produce original copies of an documentation requested. A Council Tax notice, plus a recent utility bill or other acceptable evidence will be accepted as proof of residence. Where there is doubt about any of the documentation, the Authority reserves the right to verify this information by cross checking with Council Tax records or undertaking spot checks.

## **Section B – Admissions Procedures**

### **1.0 Arrangements for registering a pupil in P1.**

- 1.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended by the 1981 Act, requires education authorities to secure the adequate and efficient provision of school education including arrangements for the admission of children to schools.
- 1.2 The process of registration records a child as eligible for education to be provided by the authority. The procedure of enrolment commits the authority to providing that education in a particular school.
- 1.3 The process for enrolling is as follows:  
On a date or dates in January each year intimated and publicly advertised by Education Services, parents/carers should register their children with their catchment area school of their chosen denomination if their children:
  1. Have attained the age of 5 years before that date
  2. Will attain the age of 5 years on or before the last day of February of the following year
- 1.4 Birth Certificates and proof of residence (Council Tax letter, plus a recent utility bill or other acceptable evidence) must be produced.
- 1.5 At the point of registration parents will have access to the handbook containing information about the school. Parents will also receive information about how to make a **placing request** should they decide not to send their child to their catchment school.

- 1.6 If a parent wishes to defer entry to primary school they still must register at the appropriate school to be advised of the Council's **deferred entry** procedures.
- 1.7 If a child has not reached the age of 5 years by the last day in February they would not be eligible to register at this time. In exceptional circumstances, a formal request for early entry should be submitted to Education Services for consideration.

## **2.0 Arrangements for transferring from primary to secondary school**

- 2.1 On completion of their primary education, pupils will normally transfer to the secondary school within their geographical **catchment area** and of their chosen denomination unless they have been granted a placing request to another secondary school.
- 2.2 Pupils will transfer from primary school to secondary school once per year on the date of the start of the new session for pupils. Transfer will normally take place at the end of primary 7.
- 2.3 The Head Teacher of the primary school will advise parents/carers in December each year that their children are due to transfer to secondary school in the following August. Intimation will be made of the name of the secondary school to which the child should transfer and details of liaison meetings with parents will be provided.
- 2.4 There are no denominational primary schools within Quarriers Village, Kilmacolm, Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. Parents often choose to send their children to the local non-denominational primary school because of the travelling distance to their nearest denominational primary school. In such circumstances the following admission arrangements will apply:
  - Children whose parents have selected to send their child to the non-denominational school serving the defined catchment area assigned to their address rather than to their assigned denominational primary school because of travelling distance, will have the choice at primary 7 of seeking admission to either the **non-denominational** or **denominational** school assigned to their address. Inverclyde Council's policy in respect of school transport will apply.

## **3.0 Arrangements for registering a pupil into primary and secondary school after the start of the school session in August.**

- 3.1 This applies to pupils moving into the **catchment area** of their chosen denomination after the start of a school session. In the first instance parents should make contact with the school directly to enquire if they have space for their child in the relevant stage or year group. Parents should provide proof of the address and the child's date of birth.
- 3.2 In addition, for secondary school placements, parents will need to provide details of the subjects that the child has studied, particularly at stages S4 and above. It may not be possible to match all subjects previously studied and children may need to choose new subjects to make a full timetable.
- 3.3 During school holidays, parents should contact Education Services to discuss the arrangements for registering their child into their preferred primary or secondary school.

## **Section C - Oversubscription of catchment area schools and the capping of schools**

### **1.0 Oversubscription of Schools**

Although rare, the situation may arise whereby a school is oversubscribed at either the primary 1 or secondary 1 stage for pupils of the chosen denomination who live within the **catchment area** of the school. In these circumstances, the **Pupil Placement Panel** should convene to determine the allocation of places.

Applications for all other stages of schooling for pupils within the **catchment area** of the chosen denomination should be dealt with by Head Teachers.

While every effort is made to provide places for all children in the school in their defined catchment area within their chosen denomination, places cannot be guaranteed. In such circumstances, pupils will be offered a place in the school of their chosen denomination nearest to their home address, until such times as a place becomes available in their catchment school. Inverclyde Council will meet any additional transport costs incurred due to attendance at the non-catchment school.

If a school is oversubscribed and cannot take pupils within the defined catchment area and chosen denomination then places will be granted in the following order:

1. A child who has a medical condition or additional support needs, who requires facilities or support only available in the requested school.
  2. Those cases where a brother or sister attends the school and will continue in this school during the next session.
  3. In the case of denominational schools pupils: who can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith.
  4. Distance of home address from chosen school.
- 1.1 If within catchment area places for the chosen denomination have had to be declined then a waiting list will be held by Education Services reflecting the above criteria. Parents will be informed if places become available. If the parent subsequently chooses that their child remain at the school out with the **catchment area** or chosen denomination the following should be borne in mind:
- Transport will only be made available for that academic year
  - The pupil may have to submit a placing request to their chosen secondary school
- 1.2 If Inverclyde Council refuses an application to one of its schools it must explain the reasons why to parents in writing. The grounds for refusal of a place are listed in Appendix 2. Parents have the right to appeal this decision through the **appeals process**.

## **2.0 Capping of schools**

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council is permitted to limit the overall roll of a school (the term commonly used is “capping”). It can limit not just the overall roll but also the intake of pupils into specific year groups. Where there are schools whose rolls will exceed their capacity or by the granting of placing requests will exceed their capacity in the future, there is a need to restrict access to these schools so that the roll can remain within the agreed capacity of the school.
- 2.2 The Council is allowed to reserve places within primary and secondary schools, based on the assumption that the places will be required for children and young people who are likely to move into the delineated areas of the schools during the session (Section 28A of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended).

- 2.3 For the purpose of secondary schools which are approaching capacity, Inverclyde Council may keep two places for S1 for pupils who move into the catchment area and one place for pupils in other years.

For primary schools who are approaching capacity, Inverclyde Council will keep one space per year group for pupils who move into the catchment area.

Inverclyde Council will not employ an extra teacher or create another class due to placing requests.

## **Section D - Making a Placing request**

### **1.0 Arrangements for making a placing request at the beginning of an academic year**

- 1.1 Parents who wish their child to attend a school other than their defined catchment school are entitled to make a **placing request** for the school of their choice.
- 1.2 Information on how to make a **placing request** is distributed to parents/carers by Head Teachers at the point of enrolment in January in the case of pupils who are starting primary 1. When pupils transfer from primary to secondary school the information will be given out as part of the information pack in December.
- 1.3 Parents/carers may make only one **placing request** at a time for a pupil. If the initial request is refused the opportunity will be available to parents to make another request should they so wish.
- 1.4 Where applications are being made for the start of a new session these should be submitted to Education Services no earlier than 1 January and no later than 1 February prior to the start of the session in August. Applications received for P1 or S1 after the 1 February will only be considered after the applications received on time have been processed.
- 1.5 Applications will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt of each application.
- 1.6 Parents/Carers will be advised in writing of the decision made in respect of their application no later than 30 April.
- 1.7 Late applications may be considered at the discretion of the Head of Education.
- 1.8 If a **placing request** is submitted then the **catchment area** place that the pupil is entitled to will be kept until the outcome of the placing request application has been confirmed.
- 1.9 While every effort is made to grant **placing requests**, circumstances can arise whereby there are more applications than places available. In such cases the priorities for admission will be as follows:
1. A child who has a medical condition or additional support needs, who requires facilities or support only available in the requested school.
  2. Those cases where a brother or sister attends the school and will continue in this school during the next session.
  3. In secondary schools: children who attend a primary school **associated** with the secondary school as a result of a placing request or a request to remain according to the length of time at the **associated primary school**. This means that pupils who have attended for the longest time will have the highest priority. Appendix 3 shows the list of **associated school groups**.

4. In the case of denominational schools: pupils who can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith.
  5. All other children of school age residing in the defined catchment area of the school according to distance of home address from chosen school.
  6. All other children of school age residing in Inverclyde according to distance of home address from chosen school.
  7. Children of school age residing out with Inverclyde whose additional support need is supported by significant input by education and another appropriate agency and who are requesting a place within a school which has specialist provision to meet the child's needs.
  8. Children of school age residing out with Inverclyde according to distance of home address from chosen school.
- 1.10 When a **placing request** is granted the previously allocated place at the catchment school will be withdrawn. The newly allocated place will not be withdrawn unless the place was obtained on the basis of false information.
- 1.11 The **Pupil Placement Panel** should convene to determine the allocation of places. It will be the role of the **Pupil Placement Panel** to scrutinise recommendations on placing request applications made by the appropriate Head of Service in Education Services to ensure the criteria have been applied appropriately and to determine which applications should be granted and which should be refused. Where a placing request application is refused parents will be advised in writing of the grounds for refusal.

## 2.0 Arrangements for transferring from primary to secondary school

- 2.1 Parents who wish to make a **placing request** during the school year or school holidays should contact the school of their choice or Education Services to obtain an application form.
- 2.2 **Placing request** applications which are submitted to Education Services during the school year or school holidays will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt. Parents/Carers will be notified of the decision made in respect of their application within 8 weeks (exclusive of school holidays).
- 2.3 Such applications will be referred to the Head Teacher of the school concerned who will advise if there are places available in the school. Where the Authority declines an application for reasons other than there being no places available in the school the application will be referred to the Pupil Placement Panel for decision. If a placing request application is refused parents will be advised in writing of the reasons for refusal.

## 3.0 Families who move to a new address

- 3.1 Where a family moves to a new address which is out with the catchment area of the school their child currently attends, they have two options:
  - Enrol their child in the school serving their new defined **catchment area** for their chosen denomination.
  - Complete a form requesting that their child remains in the school they currently attend. If this

option is selected Inverclyde Council will not provide school transport. In the case of primary pupils, parents should check which the secondary school assigned to their new home address. It is likely that a placing request may be required for their child to attend the secondary school assigned to their previous home address.

#### **4.0 School Transport**

- 4.1 Inverclyde Council provides school transport for pupils who live more than one mile from their local primary school or two miles from their local secondary school by the shortest safe walking route.
- 4.2 Children who attend a school as a result of a **placing request** are not entitled to school transport. If, in exceptional circumstances, a pupil is unable to attend the catchment area school of their chosen denomination because it will pose a risk to the safety of the pupil or there is a legal reason why they cannot attend that school then the Authority may consider providing transport at the discretion of the Head of Education.

#### **5.0 Appeal procedures if a placing request is refused**

- 5.1 If Inverclyde Council refuses an application to one of its schools it must explain the reasons why to parents in writing. The grounds for refusal of a place are listed in Appendix 2.
- 5.2 If parents/carers are aggrieved by a decision of the Education Authority to refuse a placing request then the parent/carer may refer the decision to the **Education Appeal Committee** set up by Inverclyde Council.
- 5.3 The **Education Appeal Committee** hearing an appeal shall have a membership of three; one Councillor and two other members. The Councillor shall not be a member of the Council's Education & Communities Committee. The other members will not be members of the Authority or its Education Committee and will be in one of the following three categories:
  - Parents of children of school age.
  - Persons who in the opinion of the Authority have experience in education.
  - Persons who in the opinion of the Authority are acquainted with the educational conditions in the area of the Authority.

Neither the Councillor nor the other members shall be a member of the Parent Forum of the school affected by the appeal.

- 5.4 The **Education Appeal Committee** shall be administered by the Council's Head of Legal and Property Services from whom details of the appeals procedure may be obtained. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the Head of Legal and Property Services.
- 5.5 The Head of Legal & Property Services shall maintain a rota to be used in selecting members to sit in hearings of the Committee.

#### **6.0 Policy Review**

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 5-yearly basis, or earlier if required.

## Appendix 1

### Glossary of terms

Catchment Areas	The catchment areas for a school are geographical. Every address in Inverclyde is in the geographical catchment area of a denominational and non-denominational school.
Mainstream School	A mainstream school is any school that is not classed as a special school. The definition of a special school is any school where the sole or main purpose of the school (or stand-alone unit) is to provide education specifically suited to the additional support needs of children and young persons selected for attendance at the school (or unit) by reason of those needs.
Denominational School	The majority of denominational schools in Scotland are Catholic and all of the denominational schools in Inverclyde are Catholic. A Catholic denominational school is one which promotes the ethos and values of the Catholic faith. Denominational schools are run in the same way as other local Authority schools. Every state pupil is open to pupils of all denominations.
Non-Denominational Schools	A non-denominational school is one that does not cater for a specific faith.
Placing Request	This is a request for a pupil to be educated at a school other than that allocated by the Education Authority. A placing request should be submitted if a pupil wants to attend a school out with their geographical catchment area or if a change of denominational sector is required.
Associated School (either primary or secondary)	A group of schools that traditionally work together because they share the same geographical catchment area and denomination. Each associated group of schools has one secondary and feeder primary schools. Whilst most joint working takes place in the associated school group, attendance at an associated primary school does not automatically ensure a place at the secondary school.
Pupil Placement Panel	The Pupil Placement Panel comprises the Corporate Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development, the Head of Legal and Property Services and a Head of Service from another council service selected from a rota. The role of the panel is to scrutinise recommendations on entry made by the appropriate Head of Service in Education Services to ensure the criteria has been applied appropriately and to determine which placing request applications should be granted and which should be refused.
Proof of Residence	Proof of residence should be a Council Tax notice and another formal letter e.g. a utility bill, a tax credit award notice.
Deferred Entry	All children who are 4 years of age by 28/29 February start primary school in the August of the same year. Children with January/February birthdays can automatically defer school entry for one year. Deferred entry for children born out with January / February is discretionary and is granted by the Additional Support Needs Forum.
Appeals Process	This is the right of the parent to appeal the decision made by the Authority to decline a place at their requested school.
Education Appeal Committee	The Education Appeal Committee is administered by the Council's Head of Legal and Property Services and has a membership of three, one Councillor and two lay members.
Parent Forum	A school's parent forum automatically includes every parent/carers with a child enrolled at the school. This is not the same as a Parent Council who act as a representative group for the parent forum.

### **Reasons for refusal of a place at a school**

**If Inverclyde Council refuses an application to one of its schools it must explain the reasons why to parents in writing. The following are the reasons why a Council may refuse an application for a place in one of its schools.**

- (a) If placing the child in the specified school (that is, the school specified in the application), would:
  - (i) Make it necessary for the Authority to take an additional teacher into employment
  - (ii) Give rise to significant expenditure on extending or otherwise altering the accommodation at or facilities provided in connection with the school
  - (iii) Be seriously detrimental to the continuity of the child's education
  - (iv) Be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school
  - (v) Be likely to be seriously detrimental to the educational well-being of the pupils attending the school
  - (vi) Assuming that pupil numbers remain constant, make it necessary, at the commencement of a future stage of the child's primary education, for the authority to elect either to create an additional class (or an additional composite class) in the specified school or to take an additional teacher into employment at that school
  - (vii) Though neither of the tests set out in sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) above is satisfied, have the consequence that the capacity of the school would be exceeded in terms of pupil numbers
- (b) If the education normally provided at the specified school is not suited to the age, ability or aptitude of the child
- (c) If the education authority has already required the child to discontinue his attendance at the specified school
- (d) If the specified school is a special school and the child does not have an additional support need requiring the education or special facilities normally provided at that school
- (e) If the specified school is a single sex school (within the meaning given to that expression by Section 26 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975) and the child is not of the sex admitted or taken (under that Section) to be admitted to the school
- (f) If accepting the request would prevent the Authority reserving a place at the school for a child likely to move into the area of the school.

(All references to the 'specified school' are to the school specified in the application.)

## Appendix 3

### **Associated School Groups and Catchment Areas**

Pupils who live in the catchment area for:

**Ardgowan Primary School**  
**Gourock Primary School**  
**Moorfoot Primary School**  
**TRANSFER TO Clydeview Academy**

Pupils who live in the catchment area for:

**Aileymill Primary School**  
**Kings Oak Primary School**  
**Lady Alice Primary School**  
**Whinhill Primary School**  
**TRANSFER TO Inverclyde Academy**

Pupils who live in the catchment area for:

**Inverkip Primary School**  
**Wemyss Bay Primary School**  
**TRANSFER TO Inverclyde Academy OR St Columba's High School**

Pupils who live in the catchment area for:

**All Saints Primary School**  
**St Mary's Primary School**  
**St Patrick's Primary School**  
**TRANSFER TO Notre Dame High School**

Pupils who live in the catchment area for:

**Newark Primary School**  
**TRANSFER TO Port Glasgow High School**

Pupils who live in the catchment area for:

**Kilmacolm Primary School**  
**TRANSFER TO Port Glasgow High School OR St Stephen's High School**

Pupils who live in the catchment area for:

**St Andrew's Primary School**  
**St Joseph's Primary School**  
**St Ninian's Primary School**  
**TRANSFER TO St Columba's High School**

Pupils who live in the catchment area for:

**St Francis' Primary School**  
**St John's Primary School**  
**St Michael's Primary School**  
**TRANSFER TO St Stephen's High School**

## Education Services

# CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO OUR POLICY ON ADMISSIONS AND PUPIL PLACEMENT IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

## CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Please use this form to let us know what you think about this proposal

The closing date for responses is **Monday 7 November 2016**.

**This form should be returned to:**

Education Services  
Wallace Place  
Greenock  
PA15 1JB

We are looking for your views on our proposal to apply new procedures for admissions and placing requests to schools within Inverclyde. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires a local authority to undertake statutory consultation if it wishes to modify its guidelines for placing requests for a school. The proposed policy is attached in its entirety as an appendix to this consultation proposal document; however the two main areas for changes to the policy for consideration are outlined below. Please note that the proposed amended guidelines for priority for admissions to schools and placing requests are **only** in the event of a school being oversubscribed.

**When considering the priority for placing requests for schools, we propose to add two qualifying criteria to those already in place. The changes, and the order in which they will be considered are highlighted, below, in bold.**

We will consider placing requests using the following sequence of priority criteria:

1. A child who has a medical condition or additional support needs, who requires facilities or support only available in the requested school.
2. Those cases where a brother or sister attends the school and will continue in this school during the next session.
3. **In secondary schools: children who attend a primary school associated with the secondary school as a result of a placing request or a request to remain**

**according to the length of time at the *associated primary school*. This means that pupils who have attended for the longest time will have the highest priority.**

- 4. In the case of denominational schools: pupils who can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith.**
5. All other children of school age residing in the defined catchment area of the school according to distance of home address from chosen school. (An example of such a placing request would be where a child who has attended the non-denominational primary school of its geographical catchment area makes a placing request to the denominational secondary school of its catchment area due to the distance of its home address from the said secondary school).
6. All other children of school age residing in Inverclyde according to distance of home address from chosen school.
7. Children of school age residing out with Inverclyde whose additional support need is supported by significant input by education and another appropriate agency and who are requesting a place within a school which has specialist provision to meet the child's needs.
8. Children of school age residing out with Inverclyde according to distance of home address from chosen school.

**In the particular and exceptional circumstances where a school has insufficient capacity to accommodate all pupils living in its defined catchment area, then it is proposed to regard all such pupils as having made placing requests which will be considered, in order of priority, as below:**

1. A child who has a medical condition or additional support needs, who requires facilities or support only available in the requested school.
2. Those cases where a brother or sister attends the school and will continue in this school during the next session.
3. In the case of denominational schools: pupils who can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith.
4. Distance of home address from chosen school.

**Questions 1- 3 are about the priority for placing requests**

**Q1 Do you agree with the addition of criterion 3 for placing requests?**

**In secondary schools: children who attend a primary school *associated* with the secondary school as a result of a placing request or a request to remain according to the length of time at the *associated primary school*. This means that pupils who have attended for the longest time will have the highest priority**

Yes  No  Undecided

**This box gives an opportunity to explain the reason for your response.**

**Q2 Do you agree with the addition of criterion 4 for placing requests?**

**In the case of denominational schools: pupils who can demonstrate an affinity with the religious ethos of the school and can provide documentary evidence of this in the form of a certificate of baptism into the Catholic faith.**

Yes  No  Undecided

**This box gives an opportunity to explain the reason for your response.**

**Q3 Do you agree with the order of priority for the allocation for placing requests?**

Yes  No  Undecided

**This box gives an opportunity to explain the reason for your response.**

**Q4 This question is about the order of allocation of places in the unlikely event that a school is oversubscribed for pupils within the catchment area for their chosen denomination.**

**Do you agree with the order of the allocation of places if a school is oversubscribed for pupils within the catchment area?**

Yes  No  Undecided

**This box gives an opportunity to explain the reasons for your response.**

**In order to validate your response to this proposal please provide your details:**  
(this section must be completed in order for your views to be taken into account)

**Name**

**Address**

**Q6** I am responding in my capacity as a *(please indicate by selecting the appropriate answer below)*

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Parent/carer of a child at primary school   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent/carer of a child at secondary school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent/carer of a child in nursery          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent Council member (primary school)      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent Council member (secondary school)    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of staff at primary school           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of staff at secondary school         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Church representative                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Elected Member                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trade Union                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of the public                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of Community Council                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bord na Gaidhlig                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other group (please specify)

**Handling your response – Please note that:**

We will use the information you provide for the purpose of this consultation, including statistical and analytical purposes.

We will pass a full copy of your response to Education Scotland, or a summary of it if agreed with them.

We are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and therefore would have to consider any request made under the Act for information relating to written responses/records or oral representations made to us relating to this consultation.

**Thank you for taking the time to respond.**

**If you would like to make any comment on the proposal, or suggest an alternative option for consideration please do so in the space below:**