



Consultation on proposed change to secondary school admission arrangements 2022/2023

Durham County Council is consulting on a proposal to change the oversubscription criteria for admission to community secondary schools and those academies who use the council's oversubscription criteria from 2022/2023.

The consultation will run from 15 September 2020 until 18 December 2020. This leaflet explains why we are consulting on the proposed change and explains how you can let the council know your views.

Background

The current oversubscription criteria for admission to secondary schools were introduced in 2011/12 and are as follows.

CURRENT OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA FOR COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

When there are more requests for places than those available, the criteria used to allocate places strictly in order of priority, are as follows:

- 1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order*.** A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
- 2. Children who appear to the Admissions Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted**
A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.
- 3. Medical Reasons**
Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement.

4. Sibling Links

Children who have a sibling already attending the school and who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.

5. Applicants to their nearest School

Those children who have applied for a place at the nearest school to their home address measured by the shortest walking route

6. All other applicants

Tie-breaker

Where the school is oversubscribed within any of the above categories the following tiebreakers will be applied:

- (a) For those children who have applied for a place at the nearest school to their home address (category 5), priority will be given to those who would otherwise have to travel the furthest distance to the next nearest school¹
- (b) For other children (category 6), priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school applied for. Otherwise if only one final place can be offered and two applicants live equidistant from the school, the LA's system of random allocation will apply.

Proposed change

The fifth criterion, "Applicants to their nearest School. Those children who have applied for a place at the nearest school to their home address measured by the shortest walking route."

If some children considered within this criterion cannot get a place at the preferred school, the tie - breaker is currently used "priority will be given to those who would otherwise have to travel the furthest distance to the next nearest school".

In recent years, this has resulted in some pupils who live closer to the nearest school than others, not getting a place. This is because other pupils would have to travel further to the next nearest school, therefore they would have priority, even though they live further away from their nearest school.

To avoid this situation occurring in the future, it is proposed to amend the tie - breaker to "**priority will be given to those living closest to the nearest school measured by the shortest walking route**".

Please note that those children with Education Health and Care Plans are subject to a different process for admission to school. This proposed change therefore has no impact on them.

Why the council feels this is important

When the council changed the criteria in 2011/2012, the tie-breaker was included so that those pupils living in remote rural areas of the county were not put at a disadvantage by potentially having to travel a considerable distance, if they could not get a place at their nearest school. However, this situation has not happened, and pupil projections indicate that secondary schools in rural areas of the county, will have places available in the future.

There are, however, areas of the county which are heavily populated where the tie – breaker resulted in some pupils who live closer to the nearest school than others, not getting a place. This is because other pupils would have to travel further to the next nearest school, therefore they would have priority even though they live further away from the nearest school.

We believe this change will be a fairer, more clearly understood tie - breaker that gives priority to those pupils who live closest to their nearest school rather than to those who have furthest to travel to the next nearest school.

The council's admission arrangements, which include the oversubscription criteria, have already been published for the academic year 2021/2022 therefore the earliest date the proposed change could be introduced is for the academic year 2022/2023.

Have Your Say

You can have your say on this consultation by 18 December 2020 in the following ways:

- Email your response to schoolorganisation@durham.gov.uk or
- complete the online form on <http://www.durham.gov.uk/consultation>
- Post the attached response form or write to: School Places and Admissions Team, Children and Young People's Services, Business Reply Service, License No. DU63 (Freepost), Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5BR.

Please note due to the situation with Coronavirus, staff are generally working from home and if you can respond via email or the online response form, that would be preferable.

Proposal to change the oversubscription criteria for admission to community secondary schools for the academic year 2022/2023

RESPONSE FORM

1. Please tick **one** box from the list below to let us know if you are responding to this consultation **mainly** as a

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resident | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent or carer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Governor | <input type="checkbox"/> Councillor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Parish/Town Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diocese | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbouring Authority (state which): | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School (state which): | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state): | |

2. Looking at the information in this leaflet, do you agree with the proposal to change the tie-breaker in the council's published oversubscription criteria for admission to community secondary schools from September 2022 to "Applicants to their nearest School. Those children who live closest to the nearest school to their home address measured by the shortest walking route.

Yes No

3. Please let us how this could impact on you?

4. Any other comments?

Our aim is to involve as many people as possible and, as such, we would like to make sure everyone has the opportunity to become involved. If you could answer a few questions about yourself it will help us to monitor our performance.

These questions are optional

5. Which of the following options best describes your gender?

Male Female In another way

6. What is your age?

16-24 years 25-44 years 45-54 years
 55-64 years 65 and over

7. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person? This may include any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity which has a substantial effect on your day-to-day life. Long standing means it has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least a year.

Yes No

8. Do you consider your child to be a disabled person?

Yes No

9. What is your ethnicity?

White British
 White Non-British
 Asian or Asian British

- Black or Black British
- Arab or Middle Eastern
- Mixed Race
- Travelling Community
- Other (If other, please specify below)

10. What is your religion or belief?

- Christian
- Sikh
- Buddhist
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Hindu
- None
- Other (If other, please specify below)

11. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual/straight
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Gay man
- Bisexual
- Other

If other, please specify below.

If you have any questions regarding this proposal, please contact schoolorganisation@durham.gov.uk

Please return this form by 18 December 2020 to:

Mr Graeme Plews, School Places and Admissions Team, Children and Young People's Services, Business Reply Service Licence No DU63 (Freepost), Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5BR
