

Policy Statement for Schools

Purpose

To ensure that every school in Nottinghamshire is a good school.

Principles

In our work with schools and other education providers we will:

- (1) ensure sufficiency of school places
- (2) secure diversity of school provision to increase the opportunity for parental preference
- (3) ensure safe schools with fair access particularly for vulnerable pupils including Looked After Children (LAC) and those who need the protection of the Fair Access Protocol (FAP)
- (4) promote effective leadership and governance
- (5) build capacity to secure sustained and continued improvement
- (6) work collaboratively to support all children and families
- (7) promote the development of self improving schools
- (8) identify and disseminate effective practice
- (9) promote affordability in approaches to place planning, admissions and school improvement
- (10) ensure value for money.

Key Target Groups

School leaders
Governors
Education providers

Guidance

Provided below is a hyperlinked list, setting out a range of useful and relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance. The list will change in line with new documentation from central government. The first set of links will be as shown below:

Current and most relevant Bills and Acts, updated as necessary e.g [Academies Bill](#)
[Children and Young People's Plan](#)
[World Class Primary Programme](#)
[National Challenge](#)
[DCSF- Schools Causing Concern 2007](#)
[Ofsted framework and evaluation schedule](#)
[School Admissions Code](#)
[National College – Models of Leadership](#)
[Guidance on exclusion from school and pupil referral units \(DCSF 2008\)](#)
[Guidance on school behaviour and attendance partnership \(DCSF 2010\)](#)
[Promoting the education achievements of looked after children \(DCSF 2010\)](#)

[The Schools Admissions Code \(2012\)](#)
[The Schools Appeals Code \(2012\)](#)
[The Education Act 2011](#)

Key Requirements

In order to ensure all Nottinghamshire schools are good, we will:

- **Ensure the sufficiency of school places across the County, with increased diversity of school provision to increase opportunities for parental preference**

We shall fulfil the local authority's statutory duty to plan efficiently for the sufficiency of school places across the County. Whilst we acknowledge the importance of parental preference, we also recognise that it will not always be possible to provide every parent with their first choice of school.

We shall encourage the development of an increasingly diverse range of schools through partnerships with schools, school providers and school sponsors to meet basic need as well as to fulfil the local authority's statutory responsibility to ensure a range of school providers that will include Community Schools, Academies, Faith Schools, Free Schools and Studio Schools, which all provide increased choice for parents.

- **Ensure that the arrangements for school admissions are compliant with the Admissions Code February 2012 and that a Fair Access Protocol outlines procedures for admissions, including in-year admissions**

We shall ensure that admissions arrangements are legally compliant during all admissions rounds. The creation of the Place Planning and Admissions Board, chaired by the Service Director for Education, Standards and Inclusion and including a representative from the EFA (with observer status only), will monitor the implementation of The Admissions Code in Nottinghamshire to ensure that the most vulnerable are admitted to schools speedily and appropriately.

Through working in partnership with schools including those which are Academies, Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled, Free Schools or Studio Schools, the Local Authority's 'fair access', LAC and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) protocols will ensure that vulnerable children are appropriately admitted to a school. FAP, LAC and SEND protocols will be regularly mediated and reviewed with schools through a range of forums including the Education Trust Boards, Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGs) and the Schools Admissions Forum.

- **Promote a variety of models of leadership, governance and partnership to match local needs and circumstances**

We shall encourage those head teachers and governing bodies who are interested in academy status to make their decisions in the best interest of their pupils. The Local Authority will seek to work in partnership with all

Nottinghamshire schools, irrespective of their status. All schools will be entitled to purchase any Council provided services, as they choose. The legal requirement to promote diversity and choice will be delivered. Schools will be offered advice on the full range of governance, leadership and partnership options open to them. We shall signpost school leaders, governors and education providers to examples of diverse provisions within the County. Where appropriate, we shall develop new partnership arrangements with schools as well as other agencies, such as the National College, to promote choice.

- **Secure strong partnership between schools and wider children's services**

We shall encourage schools to continue to provide extended services in and around schools, such as breakfast and after school clubs. We shall encourage schools to play a full part in the range of provision made to engage with families where there is evidence that children or young people may be at risk of harm, of disengagement or of failing to flourish and achieve at school.

- **Use the full range of strategies and policies available to the Council to support schools**

We shall encourage all schools to engage in partnership work with other schools to share their strengths and to address weaknesses. For example, sharing leadership, management and subject expertise has been shown to benefit all of the partners involved. The Council will use resources, such as those for school improvement, to compensate schools for time and shared expertise. We shall promote good practice through sharing of experience by such means as conferences, meetings and the use of the Council's websites.

- **Provide services to help schools access necessary support to promote the well being of their pupils or guide schools to where such services are available**

We shall provide opportunity for all schools to share with a range of professional partners any concerns about the well being of their pupils, at an early stage of such concern. We shall work in partnership with schools, colleges and employers to ensure that young people have a range of opportunities to fulfil their potential through academic, vocational and employment options. We shall continue to provide and support a range of opportunities for young people to enjoy their leisure and avoid anti-social behaviour.

- **Use the full range of statutory powers to intervene in schools causing concern, where the Council retains power to intervene**

These will be used – but only after appropriate support has first been given. For example, we shall issue a warning notice if a school continually fails to improve standards of discipline and achievement after support has been provided. We will ask Ofsted to bring forward inspection where there is clear evidence of underperformance and inefficient or ineffective response to weaknesses.

- **Use risk management to intervene early and establish clear timelines with regard to outcomes and financial sustainability**

We shall risk assess across schools for which the Council continues to hold accountability, against a set of openly shared criteria. Head teachers will be given early notice of any concerns and of the grounds for such concern.

- **Close or reorganise schools where intervention is not effective**

Where a school, for which the Council retains accountability, shows evidence of inability to improve to acceptable standards, the Council will consider its closure. In such cases the premises may be used to extend another successful school.

- **Enable, where possible, good schools to expand**

We shall include a review of schools' performance into the planning process for the whole estate, so that more children and young people can attend successful schools. In reviewing the Local Authority's basic need requirements, acknowledgement of popular schools will be factored into any plans for expanding school provision wherever possible.

- **Seek out and respond to parents' views on school choices available in their area**

We shall use a range of means, including surveys, parent advice, the admissions process and complaints to ascertain the views of parents and seek, where possible, to expand good and successful schools and, where necessary and possible, close those that are unsuccessful and unpopular. We shall take appropriate account of any new schools established by parents and other providers in our estate management and planning.

Communication

The policy statement and the implications of implementation will be communicated with target groups through:

- **Education Trust, Primary, Secondary and Special Phase Boards and Governors' Board.**

These boards have been established specifically to promote effective consultation between Children, Families and Cultural Services (CFCS) and schools and their governors. The membership of each board consists of nominated head teachers representing other head teachers in their areas. The Governors' Board consists of members of the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGs) executive and a representative from each of the districts of the County, all nominated by their peers. The boards meet twice annually. Each of the head teacher boards elects a chair who serves on the Education Trust Board, which is itself chaired by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Cultural Services. A head teacher member of the Education Trust Board serves upon the Children's Trust Board for Nottinghamshire, which brings together,

under the Council's leadership, all those services responsible for the well being of children and young people and their families in the County.

- **Governing Bodies**

These usually meet once termly (3 times a year). Currently 97% of governing bodies buy back the Council's governor services package. Chairs of governors and head teachers are invited to a termly meeting with officers to discuss matters which may arise on their agendas, including usually a small number of reports from the Corporate Director. These meetings, as well as the Council's website, will be used to consult and communicate with school governors.

- **Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGs)**

We shall continue to use the local branch of the National Association of Governors, which meets termly, in order to consult and communicate with governors.

- **Area head teacher meetings**

These meetings are convened by local head teachers and are typically served by a County Council officer, where this is the wish of the head teachers. We shall continue to consult and communicate with head teacher colleagues through these meetings.

- **Schools Admissions Forum**

This is a forum of head teacher representatives from across all school types. It is chaired by a senior Member of the Council and has representatives of the Diocesan Boards of Education. Its purpose is to monitor admissions so that the process is fair and equitable. Where the implementation of this policy statement impacts on admission issues, the Admissions Forum will be consulted.

- **Schools Forum**

This is a forum of nominated head teachers, governors, Diocesan representatives, teaching and non teaching trade union representatives and representatives of voluntary and independent sector providers of education. The group shares with the Council decisions regarding schools' budgets. Where the implementation of this policy statement impacts upon schools' finance issues, the Schools Forum will be appropriately consulted.

- **Diocesan Education Board representatives of the Education Diocesan Board for the Church of England and Roman Catholic schools**

These meet termly with the Corporate Director and other senior officers of the CFCS Department. Where implementation of this policy statement impacts upon provision made through church schools, then the relevant Diocesan representative will be consulted.

- **County Council intranet and public websites**

The policy will be available to schools, Elected Members and officers through the County Council's intranet site, the school's website, known as Wired, and the public website.

- **Briefings for Elected Members and Council officers**

Upon being accepted as policy by County Council, briefings will be offered to Members and officers to explain the changing context of the relationship with schools and the scope and significance of this policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of the implementation of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Performance Board of the Children, Families and Cultural Services Department. The following outcomes will be evaluated to ensure that the implementation of the policy is effective:

- There will a greater proportion of schools judged, by Ofsted, to be good or better.
- No school will be judged by Ofsted to require special measures or to have serious weaknesses
- There will be increased diversity of models of school organisation, leadership and governance.
- Levels of satisfaction from parents and pupils, indicated in a range of surveys, will improve.
- There will be improvement in all relevant measures in the Children and Young People's Plan, including the eight national indicators with regard to the performance of schools, such as the end of Key Stage results.
- Increase in number of successful schools which have been expanded

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