

Policy Owner: CYPS - Portfolio holder

Policy Title: Policy Statement for Schools

Equality Impact Assessment: Action to be listed on LA system

Implementation: November 2013

Review: November 2014

Purpose: To ensure that every school in Nottinghamshire is a good or outstanding school.

Principles

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

- (1) ensure sufficiency of school places
- (2) emphasise and seek to retain the free choice of governors to decide upon the governance status of their schools.
- (3) help schools to keep all children and young people safe
- (4) 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)
- (5) promote effective leadership and governance
- (6) build capacity to secure sustained and continued improvement
- (7) work collaboratively to support all children and families
- (8) promote the development of self improving schools
- (9) identify and disseminate effective practice
- (10) recognise the value of partnership working between schools
- (11) promote affordability in approaches to place planning, admissions and school improvement
- (12) ensure value for money
- (13) promote partnership working that supports the development of local arrangements for those at risk of exclusion from schools
- (14) seek to retain small schools, especially those serving more isolated communities

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.

Revised Ofsted Framework
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-school-inspection>

DfE Schools Causing Concern Guidance
<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00192418/scc>

DfE Guidance on Exclusions
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/exclusion>

DfE Guidance on Attendance and Behaviour
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour>

National College Models of Leadership
<http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/modelsandpartnerships>

The Schools Admissions Code 2012
<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213254/school-admissions-code-2012>

The Schools Appeals Code 2012
<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213244/school-admission-appeals-code-2012>

Five Steps to Collective Responsibility - SEBD
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/sebd

Determined Admissions Arrangements 2013-14
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/learning/schools/admissions/school-admission-arrangements/>

Nottinghamshire Children and Young People's Plan
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/caring/childrentrust/childrenyoungpeopleandfamiliesplan2011to2014/>

Key Requirements

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

1. Ensure the sufficiency of school places across the County

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.

2. Value all our schools, whatever their governance and support, and challenge all schools appropriately

We shall challenge all schools, whatever their governance, to provide a good or outstanding quality of education. Where schools underperform and are at risk of receiving an adverse judgement from Ofsted inspection, or already in an adverse Ofsted category, we shall seek to promote the support of other schools or academies, or academy chains, to help drive improvement. We will not, however, place pressure on such schools to change their governance status, unless such a change is unequivocally in the best interest of the children and young people the school serves. There will be no presumption in favour of the superiority of any form of governance.

3. Ensure the arrangements for schools 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 Place Planning and Admissions Board 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 Place Planning and Admissions Board.

4. Maintain a variety of models of leadership, governance and partnership to match local needs and circumstances

If headteachers and governing bodies are interested in academy status, we shall encourage them to make their decisions in the best interest of their pupils. The Local Authority will 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. Schools will be offered advice on the full

range of governance, leadership and partnership options open to them. We shall, however, emphasise to all schools considering a change in their status from a community school that the Council values its community schools and will strive to protect their free choice on the matter of schools governance. The Council does not support the development of Free Schools, because they undermine rational planning and could prove to be wasteful and inefficient. We prefer, where possible, to expand good and popular schools to provide additional places, when needed, rather than see new schools opened by providers who may, in some instances, have no track record in providing education. However, where central government chooses to establish any Free School in Nottinghamshire, we shall work collaboratively with them, as with any other schools, irrespective of their governance, for the benefit of their children and young people. We shall expect Free Schools, in their turn, to work collaboratively with the Local Authority.

5. Secure strong partnership between schools and wider children's services

We shall encourage all schools to keep children and young people safe and promote their welfare, by working cooperatively with early intervention and social care services, where appropriate. 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. We shall remind all schools of the importance and requirement to work with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where there are concerns or allegations of child abuse and insist upon strict compliance with safer recruitment and working practices.

6. 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 have 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.

7. 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.

8. 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. In exceptional circumstances, where governance is weak and the school gives cause for grave concern, we shall apply to the Secretary of State to form an Interim Executive Board (IEB) to replace the Governing Body.

9. Use risk management to intervene early and establish clear timelines with regard to outcomes and financial sustainability

We shall continue to risk assess all schools against a set of openly shared criteria. Headteachers and Principals will be given early notice of any concerns and of the grounds for such concern.

10. 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.

11. Enable, where possible, good and outstanding 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.

12. 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 outstanding schools and, where necessary and possible, close those that are inadequate and unpopular.

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 termly or twice annually, as decided by their membership. 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.

- **Governing Bodies**

These usually meet once termly (3 times a year). Currently over 90% 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 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 schools' website, known as Wired, and the public website.

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

Once the policy has been amended by the Children and Young People's Committee, 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 amended policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of the implementation of this amended 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 outstanding.
- No school will be judged by Ofsted to be inadequate.
- 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 national indicators with regard to the performance of schools, such as the end of Key Stage results.
- There will an increase in the number of good and outstanding schools which have been expanded.