

Admissions consultations underway: what do you need to know?

📅 10 October 2023 👤 Richard Freeth

Under the School Admissions Code 2021, the annual process for changing and determining admission arrangements begins on 1 October 2023 with determination on 28 February 2024, publication of the arrangements on 15 March 2024 for entry in September 2025.

Whilst it is not necessary to consult every year on a school's admission arrangements, where an admission authority chooses to do so, it must consult for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January.

Are you meeting the minimum requirements?

As a minimum, the proposed arrangements must be placed on the school's website but the admission authority must also consult with the local authority, other admission authorities and schools in the area, faith bodies (if a faith school) and parents of children aged between two and 18.

Cause of confusion

It is the latter category which appears to cause confusion for admission authorities. The consultation is not limited to parents at the school, but any parents of children between those ages. Therefore, an admission authority must identify and implement ways to share the consultation across a wider group of parents via other schools, early year providers and through other mediums such as notices in shops or libraries.

Records-keeping

Admission authorities should keep a record of the consultation methods utilised in case for later challenge via the courts or the Schools Adjudicator.

Once the consultation period is over, the admission authority must determine the arrangements and must take account of the responses received to the consultation. These should be expressly referenced in the minutes of the authority's meeting – again as evidence in case of challenge.

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