

Admissions Code consultation

The Department for Education (DfE) is currently consulting on a draft version of the School Admissions Code.

24 August 2020

The Department for Education (DfE) is currently consulting on a draft version of the School Admissions Code. The consultation is about specific elements of the Code and the DfE have been explicit that they are not seeking wider views on potential improvements to the Code (of which there are many). Key changes include introducing a section on in-year admissions, clarifications around fair access protocol (FAP) admissions and introducing a definition of children with challenging behaviour.

The new in-year provisions seek to enable greater clarity to parents on how in-year admissions work which will require admission authorities to set out how parents can apply for a place. The proposals on in-year admissions include:

- Requiring admission authorities to inform LAs by 1st August each year whether they will be part of the LAs in-year admission co-ordination (where offered) or whether they will be managing its own in-year admissions. If an admissions authority is managing its own admissions then it will need to provide all the information required to do this including application forms and key contacts in the admissions authority for parents.
- There will be a greater role for LAs in-collating information for all the schools in their area relating to in-year admissions.
- By 31st August each year each admissions authority will have to publish information on its website about how parents can apply for an in-year place, including providing a suitable application form and the timeframes for when parents will be notified of the outcome. If part of the LA's co-ordinated scheme, the admissions authority would need to provide information on this.

There are some changes to FAP provisions to explain that the FAP should only be used for children where 'reasonable measures' have been taken to secure a place through in-year admissions processes. The clarification is designed to ensure that not all children who fall into one of the groups identified in the FAP are automatically put through the FAP when an in-year place could be obtained. The draft Code introduces a definition of 'children with challenging behaviour', which seeks to aid clarity for all concerned, although is in reality a very wide definition.

There are also other more minor drafting changes to the Code proposed that include making it even more explicit that the published admission number only relates to the 'relevant year of entry' and not to other year groups, additions to the definition of looked after (and previously looked after) children and clarifications to some elements of paragraph 1.9 of the Code which sets out factors that cannot be considered by an admissions authority in their arrangements.

The consultation closes on 16 October 2020, with a final new Code likely to be published in December 2020. You can access the consultation and draft Code [here](#).

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