

SCHOOL ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR ADMISSION 2006 – 2007

Authors: Sarah Vize, Admissions and Transport Manager
(01992 555863)

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an update to the County Admissions Forum on the Published Admission Numbers (PANs), for admission in the school year 2006-2007, for Community and Voluntary-Controlled schools in Hertfordshire

2. Summary

- 2.1 At its meeting on the 24 March 2005, County Council determined the admission arrangements for the school year 2006-7, including the PANs for each community and voluntary controlled school.
- 2.2 The County Council report of the 24 March 2005 outlined the requirement to publish notices where the PAN is set at a figure less than that derived from the net capacity of the school. There are thirty nine schools falling into this category.
- 2.3 Notices were published in the week commencing 16 May 2005, in the local newspaper serving the area, for thirty nine schools where the PAN is less than that derived from the net capacity.
- 2.4 PANs can be varied if there has been a major change in circumstances and the Office of the Schools Adjudicator approves the variation. Eleven of the thirty nine schools mentioned above are able to admit a number greater than the PAN and have asked the County Council to vary the PAN.
- 2.5 The County Council gave approval to the Director of Children, Schools and Families to request in-year variations from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, in order to effect such increases above the originally determined PANs.
- 2.6 Appendix 1 lists all the thirty nine schools and gives the numbers, the relevant area, the reason why schools can not admit a number higher than the PANs and identifies those schools where an in-year variation has been sought from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

3. Admission Numbers

- 3.1 Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 1999, admission authorities who determine an admission number for any school which is lower than that indicated by the net capacity formula must publish a notice to explain this in a local newspaper. There is a requirement to publish such notices, where the schools fall into the above category, on an annual basis, following determination of admission arrangements.
- 3.2 The notice must advise parents of their right to object to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator about the admission number. Under the Education (Objection to Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999, a parent whose child has attained the age of two but has not attained the age of five, or whose child is of compulsory school age and receiving primary education and in either case lives in the Relevant Area, can refer an objection about the admission number to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator within six weeks of the date of the notice.
- 3.3 The Adjudicator must receive objections from ten or more parents before an investigation must be made. (Both parents of a child can fill in a form – this will count as two parents for the purpose of reaching ten objections).
- 3.4 Notices must be published annually for all schools for whom the County Council is the admitting authority, with a PAN that is less than that derived from the net capacity regardless of whether the schools could accommodate more children.
- 3.5 Notices have been published in the week commencing 16 May 2005 and included a note stating “It is possible that the County Council will decide at its meeting on the 24th May 2005 to request an in-year variation to the Office to the Schools Adjudicator to increase the Determined Admission Number for specific schools with a Determined Admission Number lower than the Net Capacity”.
- 3.6 The County Council at its meeting on 24 May gave approval to seek these in-year variations and a request has been submitted.

4. Request for In-Year Variation to a number higher than the determined PAN

- 4.1 Once determined the admission number for a school can only be varied if either (a) there has been a major change in circumstances or (b) if the variation is necessary to implement statutory proposals.
- 4.2 Where schools are able to increase their PAN, there must be a major change in circumstances which would enable the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to consider such variations.
- 4.3 Having identified the schools falling into the category of having a PAN less than their net capacity, further discussions were held with those schools about the possibility of increasing the number of places towards the number indicated by the net capacity to give effect to the aim of maximising opportunity for parents to obtain a place at a school they want and to optimise the supply and demand of places. As a result of these discussions eleven schools requested that their PANs be increased.

4.4 Six of the schools are able and willing to increase their number to the IAN. These schools are:

Name	Type	PAN 2006	Indicated Admission Number
Barley C of E (VC) First, Royston	First	14	15
Essendon C.of E. VC Primary, Essendon	Primary	14	15
Roundwood Park, Harpenden	Secondary	180	182
St Albans Girls' , St Albans	Secondary	178	190
Marriotts, Stevenage	Secondary	150	161
Barnwell, Stevenage	Secondary	150	161

4.5 Three schools are able and willing to increase their admission number to a number greater than the PAN but lower than the IAN:

Name	Type	PAN 2006	Indicated Admission Number	Proposed Change of PAN 2006
The Barclay, Stevenage	Secondary	184	218	194
The Heathcote, Stevenage	Secondary	150	165	160
The Nobel, Stevenage	Secondary	184	192	189

4.6 Two schools are able and willing to increase their admission numbers to a number greater than both the PAN and the IAN:

Name	Type	PAN 2006	Indicated Admission Number	Proposed Change of PAN 2006
Fearnhill School Maths and Computing College, Letchworth	Secondary	180	188	190
The Priory, Hitchin	Secondary	150	162	180

4.7 It is not appropriate for the remaining twenty eight schools to admit more pupils than their PAN. The reasons for this include:

- (i) the requirement to meet the Key Stage 1 pledge that classes will not exceed 30,
- (ii) an increase would compromise equal opportunity principles in terms of equality of access to single sex provision,
- (iii) insufficient core, specialist and/or general teaching space to accommodate more pupils than the PAN,
- (iv) insufficient site capacity for a higher number,
- (v) no more places being needed to meet the potential demand,
- (vi) an interim change is not recommended pending consideration of the needs across the area,
- (vii) to balance the places available at linked infant and junior schools or middle and upper schools,
- (viii) the ability to integrate pupils from a linked special school or unit.

The attached Appendix 1 identifies the category that applies to each school.

5. Timetable

- 5.1 Following the decision of the County Council at its meeting on 24 May 2005, a request has now been made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to seek in-year variations for the school listed above. In addition, all statutory consultees have been notified of the plan to obtain in-year variations.
- 5.2 The Adjudicator may receive objections from parents concerning the notices which appeared in the newspapers and these will be considered by the Adjudicator if ten or more objections are received.
- 5.3 Once the Adjudicator has received objections from 10 eligible parents he or she will look at the issues raised and will ask the school to comment. The Adjudicator will then try to reach a decision within six weeks of information being received. The decision will be based on:
- information from Hertfordshire County Council (as the admission authority) and parents
 - any further evidence
 - the relevant legislation, the Code of Practice on School Admissions and guidance
 - other legislation such as that on equal opportunities, racial discrimination, and disability discrimination.
- 5.4 There are three scenarios which the Office of the Schools Adjudicator may need to consider:
- The County Council's request for in-year variations and objections from parents relating to the same schools.
 - The County Council's request, where no objections have been received.
 - Objections from parents to PANs at schools where the County Council has not requested an in-year variation.