



**Bristol City Council Primary and Secondary Admission Arrangements and  
Co-ordinated Scheme for the 2021/2022 Academic Year**

**Background and Overview**

It is the responsibility of all Admission Authorities to set admission arrangements which adhere to regulations set by the Department for Education's (DfE) School Admissions Code (2014) ensuring a clear and fair access protocol is in place for all school applications.

Admission arrangements are set by Bristol City Council for all Community and Controlled schools. Other schools are responsible for setting their own arrangements. This includes all secondary schools as well as many primary schools.

**Decision Details**

Minor alterations were made to the wording from the 2020/2021 arrangements, changing dates for the admissions process to suit the relevant academic year. The key principles however, including the order of the oversubscription criteria remain unchanged from previous years.

Bristol City Council's annual duty to set admission arrangements also includes determining the number of children to be admitted into the reception year for Community and Controlled schools. In order to comply with the School Admissions Code these arrangements need to be formally agreed by 28<sup>th</sup> February in the year prior to admission year. Once the admission number is set schools cannot admit fewer children (assuming there are sufficient applications) but can admit more children.

Demand for reception places has been reducing and some schools are experiencing difficulty with the number of children starting where infant class size regulations require multiple classes but these classes have a significant number of spaces. For example, a school with a PAN of 60 will plan for 2 classes. 35 children start, leaving 25 spare places. Pressure on school finances means that this is unsustainable.

Therefore a further proposal was to reduce the Published Admission Number (PAN) at some maintained primary schools.

The following schools requested a reduction to their PAN:

- Nova Primary school – PAN reduced from 60 to 30
- Summerhill Infant School – PAN reduced from 90 to 60

**Public Consultation**

A public consultation was open from 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019 through to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. During this consultation the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated

schemes for entry into Reception and Year 7 for the 2021/2022 cohorts as well as for in year applications and the proposed reductions in PAN were put online, allowing persons of interest including; school staff, governors and parents/carers to submit comments and feedback.

The consultation was hosted on the BCC Citizen Space consultation page and promoted via contact with all Bristol nursery, primary and secondary schools, relevant academy trusts as well as on the BCC admissions webpage and Ask Bristol e-bulletin. The consultation was targeted to schools and parents/carers as well as other relevant and interested parties.

We received seven responses.

There were no objections to the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated scheme for 2021/22.

Feedback was supportive of reducing PAN at Nova Primary School.

We received responses to Summerhill Infants PAN reduction with concerns about how this could impact the funding the school receives. That staff will lose their jobs and would the LA support these staff members find jobs elsewhere?

Questions were also raised about how local primary schools had opened or expanded, such as Whitehall primary, to the detriment of Summerhill.

We also received comments regarding how the falling primary school population could be managed by directing schools to set their PAN in order for all schools to stand the best chance of reaching capacity. Hence some school's reducing their PAN to support other schools and provide them with a better chance of survival.

### ***A response from Bristol City Council***

*Bristol City Council is proposing the decrease in PAN at both schools following conversations with senior staff and school governors in response to falling pupil numbers for primary age children across the city. With applications for the schools looking to be around one form of entry under PAN, the schools have to consider the impact this will have upon the way they structure their classes and organise staff. Fewer pupils has a direct impact upon the amount of funding the school receives. If schools are operating under capacity they are likely to face a cost deficit with funds needed for other recourses, including staff. This is inefficient and unsustainable for a school. Furthermore, it makes it difficult for them to maintain the high standards of education and wellbeing for the children.*

*As the proposed changes are not due to take effect until the 2021 academic year, this allows the school and staff time to make plans for the future. The schools and their governors are responsible for the decision making process regarding staff. The LA would support the school through this process.*

*With regards to expansion at Whitehall, this was planned and implemented while demand for primary school places was still rising. The school is also very popular with local parents. One of the key objectives for the LA is to meet parental preference. The school has remained heavily oversubscribed despite the increased places and falling pupil numbers in this part of the city.*

*The LA has a co-operative relationship with all maintained Bristol schools and we are working collaboratively with schools across the city to manage PANs in order to best meet forecasted demand.*

### **The Decisions Taken**

After reviewing the options available and considering the information at our disposal, the decisions taken have been:

- To proceed with the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated schemes for primary and secondary schools 2021/2022.
- To proceed with the proposal to reduce the pupil admission number at the following schools:
  - Nova Primary School - from 60 to 30
  - Summerhill Infant School - from 120 to 90

**James Last**

**School Organisation Officer**

13 February 2020