

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Report Title	School Admissions Determined Arrangements 2027/28
Meeting / Date	Cabinet, 13 January 2026
Cabinet portfolio	Councillor Kizzy Gardiner, Portfolio Lead Member for Children and Young People
	
Report author/ Contact details	Pauline Smith, Head of Admissions Commissioning Children's Services pauline.smith@walthamforest.gov.uk
Wards affected	All
Public access	Open
Appendices	A – School Admission Determined Arrangements 2027/28 B – Equalities Screener

1. Summary

- 1.1 Admission arrangements for all schools are required to be determined annually by the approving body. The London Borough of Waltham Forest is the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools within the borough.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval for the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in Waltham Forest for 2027/28.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the school admissions determined arrangements for 2027/28 for community and voluntary controlled schools at Appendix A.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 Under the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended in 2014) and as set out in the School Admissions Code 2021, all admission authorities must determine their admission arrangements by 28 February every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required.

- 3.2 Admission arrangements include the overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places.
- 3.3 All admission authorities must participate in the normal rounds of coordination by the Local Authority, but any non-community or voluntary controlled school is permitted to conduct their own in-year allocations.
- 3.4 The Determined School Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in Waltham Forest for the year 2026/27 were approved by Cabinet on 14 January 2025.
- 3.5 As the Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools within the borough, the oversubscription criteria that are set out in Appendix A will apply to all those schools.
- 3.6 Academies, including free schools, voluntary aided and foundation schools are their own admission authority and must determine their own admission arrangements in line with statutory requirements.

4. Options & Alternatives Considered

- 4.1 Determining the admission arrangements on an annual basis is a statutory requirement.
- 4.2 Not determining the admission arrangements would put the Local Authority in breach of its statutory duty.

5. Council Strategic Priorities (and other National or Local Policies or Strategies)

- 5.1 The Community Strategy promotes economic, social, and environmental well-being of the local area.
- 5.2 Ensuring that children are allocated a school place while adhering to the School Admissions Code is an essential element to this strategy.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The regulations and School Admissions Code 2021 specifies that a statutory consultation is required where a change is proposed for admission arrangements.
- 6.2 A consultation was not required as there are no changes which required a consultation.

7. Implications

7.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk

- 7.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 Under the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 all admission authorities must determine their admission arrangements by 28 February every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required. The School Admissions Code 2021 (the Code) was issued under Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and came into force on 1 September 2021 and also applies to admission arrangements to be determined in the school year 2027/28 and any future years.
- 7.2.2 The authority must determine their admission arrangements on or before 28 February 2026 and publish their admission arrangements by 15 March 2026.
- 7.2.3 Under the Code once admission arrangements have been determined for a particular school year, they cannot be revised by the admission authority unless such revision is necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement of the Code, admissions law, a determination of the Adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements

7.3 Equalities and Diversity

- 7.3.1 The School Admissions Code 2021 promotes equality and adhering to the regulations and Code will ensure the Local Authority complies with its' obligations under the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Act screening has been undertaken (Appendix B), which determined that there was no potential for negative impacts on equality groups as a result of the proposed admission arrangements.

7.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)

- 7.4.1 The prioritisation of looked after children in the proposed admission arrangements strengthens protective factors by ensuring timely access to stable, supportive school environments, reducing vulnerability to exploitation and harm. Extending priority to children fleeing domestic abuse further supports community safety by enabling placement that enhances safeguarding, stability and resilience at a point of heightened risk.
- 7.4.2 As part of the determined admission arrangements, distance is one of the priorities used to allocate school places. This helps to reduce the need for long journeys, which might otherwise be undertaken by private vehicles, thereby supporting lower carbon emissions and improved air quality.

7.5 Council Infrastructure

- 7.5.1 No impact has been identified.

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None