

East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department

Equalities Impact Assessment of Proposed New Policy

The general equality duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate unlawful treatment;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations

across the following protected characteristics:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Sex and Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief

1. Title of the new policy/proposal	Proposed Changes to the Arrangements for Admissions and the Transfer of Pupils from Primary to Secondary in Respect of all East Renfrewshire Roman Catholic and Non-Denominational Primary and Secondary Schools Effective from January 2017.
2. Description of the new policy/proposal	The purpose of the proposal is noted in the consultative proposal document on page 3, paragraphs 10 and 11; and paragraph 67.
3. Responsibility for implementing the policy	East Renfrewshire Council.
4. In what way does the proposed new policy eliminate unlawful treatment of the group:	<p>The vision of the Education Department, <i>Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences</i>, is at the heart of the work that department and school staff undertake as they seek to provide the highest quality education and services to develop all children and young people.</p> <p>There is a statutory requirement for every education authority to secure, for their area, adequate and efficient provision of school education. East Renfrewshire Council has organised the structure of school provision to ensure that children can attend their local catchment denominational or non-denominational primary, and can then progress to their local secondary school. In providing adequate and efficient provision of school education, East Renfrewshire Education Department is required to take account of the relevant legislation and guidance as set out on page 3, paragraph 12 of the consultative document.</p> <p>The proposal sets out how the changes to admission arrangements and P7 to S1 transfer arrangements will address oversubscription from within the catchment through use of consistent prioritisation. This would give greater long-term certainty to help ensure that children attending their local primary can progress to their local secondary in line with a 3-18 curriculum supporting transition, continuity and progression.</p>

		The Council is required to formally consult on changes to school admission arrangements and variations to the arrangements for the transfer of pupils from a primary school to a secondary school. How this is carried out and who must be consulted is clearly set out in the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. This process ensures that all key groups are consulted with (see page 25, paragraph 146 of consultative proposal document). Education Scotland also has a statutory role in the process.
Age		The proposal sets out how East Renfrewshire Council will provide clarity on the proposed arrangements to address oversubscription by pupils from the school's delineated catchment areas to any denominational (Roman Catholic) and non-denominational primary and secondary school. In particular, it set out a single set of criteria to be applied when a school is oversubscribed. The policy also ensures that ERC schools remain open to all pupils, providing the opportunity for children of other faiths and none to receive a Roman Catholic faith based education.
Disability		n/a
Gender reassignment		n/a
Sex and Sexual Orientation		n/a
Marriage and Civil Partnership		n/a
Pregnancy and Maternity		n/a
Race		In the consultative proposal document paragraphs 68-87 on pages 13-16 set out the proposed admission and transfer arrangements for ERC Roman Catholic and non-denominational schools. All children living in the delineated catchment area would be entitled to enrol in P1 regardless of race, belief and religion. Only in the event that a school is over-subscribed will applications be regarded as placing requests.
Religion and Belief		The proposal ensures that East Renfrewshire Council continues to provide sufficient denominational (Roman Catholic) places to meet anticipated known demand. There will also still be the opportunity for children of other faiths or none to receive a Roman Catholic faith based education.

5. In what way does the proposed new policy advance equality of opportunity for each group:	
Age	<p>The proposed policy advances equality of opportunity for those children within ERC who attend an ERC primary school as they will be able to progress to their local secondary in line with a 3-18 curriculum, supporting progression and transition.</p> <p>The proposal will also enable the Council to ensure best value in managing its schools estate. The proposal minimises the extent of any necessary capital investment recognising that there are adequate school places to meet needs. As such available resources for education can be directed to key priorities and allow for a more equitable distribution of resources. There is also likely to be a benefit for pupils in reducing the risk of very high occupancy rates in Roman Catholic schools.</p>
Disability	n/a
Gender reassignment	n/a
Sex and Sexual Orientation	n/a
Marriage and Civil Partnership	n/a
Pregnancy and Maternity	n/a
Race	n/a
Religion and Belief	<p>The proposed policy advances equality of opportunity for those within this group who are of a particular religious faith (Roman Catholic) and who wish to have their children enrolled in such a faith (Roman Catholic) based school.</p> <p>Families of all faiths or none will still have every opportunity to seek enrolment within a Roman Catholic school.</p>
6. In what way does the proposed new policy foster good relations with each group:	
Age	n/a
Disability	n/a
Gender reassignment	n/a
Sex and Sexual Orientation	n/a
Marriage and Civil Partnership	n/a

Pregnancy and Maternity		n/a
Race		n/a
Religion and Belief		The proposal introduces more control on school applications and would ensure that any remaining places in denominational (Roman Catholic) schools are prioritised for baptised Roman Catholic pupils moving into the area. These pupils would be more likely to attend their local catchment Roman Catholic school instead of being redirected and placed in a school outwith their local area or to a non-denominational school. As a result pupils will face less disruption and be more settled, and will be less likely to face the prospect of a second transfer between schools after moving into the area.
7. Potential for the proposed new policy to have a negative impact (Low, Medium, High)		<p style="text-align: center;">High</p> <p>If this is deemed to be high, the following section should be completed.</p>
8. Evidence to be considered in relation to the protected characteristics.		The consultation document considers in detail the present position (pages 4-10), the effects of implementing the proposal (pages 16-19) education benefits (pages 20-22) and the implications of the proposal (page 23); this reflects evidence in respect to age and religion.
9. Evidence of higher or lower participation, uptake or exclusion by any group within the protected characteristics.		<p>All ERC pupils remain entitled to a place in ERC schools; it is only in the event that a school is over-subscribed that the prioritisation through placing request will be used. The Equality Act and associated guidance recognises that denominational schools are set up primarily to serve those of that faith and allows for criteria based on belief to be used in assessing placing requests. Of all East Renfrewshire resident children declared as Muslim in our schools, 27% (official census 2015) attend a Roman Catholic school, which represents approximately 260 pupils across primary and secondary, and the majority (73%) attends non-denominational schools.</p> <p>The evidence set out in the document (paragraph 97) indicates that there are adequate Roman Catholic places to accommodate all Roman Catholic baptised catchment children and a number of places to meet demand from catchment children of other faiths or none.</p>
10. In the context of the preceding sections, identify any groups whom you consider should be consulted. Please specify and give reasons.		<p>In carrying out a formal consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended the Council has consulted with all relevant statutory consultees. The Council has held two public meetings and two meetings for Parent Council members. In addition and in response to expressed wishes the Council has consulted with representatives from the Muslim community.</p> <p>Education Scotland also has a statutory role in the process; this includes meetings with staff, pupils and parents including meeting with the Roman Catholic Church representative on the East Renfrewshire Education Committee.</p>
11. Actions to be taken to address any issues identified and ways in		The proposal includes transitional arrangements so that all pupils entitled to a place under current

<p>which positive impact can be demonstrated.</p>	<p>admission arrangements and enrolled by the end of December 2016 continue to be entitled to transfer to the associated secondary school.</p> <p>As part of the wider consultation, all responses will be considered in finalising the policy.</p> <p>Education Department Officers have arranged to meet with representatives of the Muslim community to continue to foster good relations.</p>
<p>12. Justification for the proposed new policy based on the above information.</p>	<p>This is set out in the consultative document, in particular in terms of the education benefits and implications of the proposal.</p>
<p>Name of Departmental Officer developing the proposed policy:-</p> <p>Mark Ratter – Head of Education Services Maureen Sneddon – Quality Improvement Officer</p>	
<p>Date of this assessment</p> <p>October 2016</p>	