

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 002253
Date 3 May 2018

Admission in the Academic Year 2018-2019

Request:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I am seeking the following information:

- Confirmation that you have sent out letters to all parents of Y9 children, in respect of admission in the academic year 2018-19, in accordance with The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. These came into force on 14th February 2017 and for your convenience a copy of the regulations is attached
- Please could you provide a copy of the letter and the date when it was sent out.

The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 came into force on 14 February 2017. The regulations require Local Authorities to write to parents of prospective pupils about schools in their locality with atypical points of admissions. The requirement sets out that Local Authorities are required to write to the parents of prospective pupils with information about schools with an atypical admission age by no later than 12 September each year, following publication of their composite prospectus.

The City of Wolverhampton Council are compliant with this and the relevant correspondence was issued on 6 September 2017 (for the academic year 18-19). The correspondence sent was based on the Department for Education example letter.

30 January 2017

Dear Directors of Children's Services,

Regulations requiring local authorities to write to all parents of prospective pupils about schools in their locality with atypical points of admissions

I wrote to you on 22 November 2016 inviting your views on amending regulations to require local authorities annually to write out to parents of prospective pupils about schools in their locality with atypical points of admissions. This letter summarises the responses the Department received and sets out the Government response, including the next steps.

We invited responses over a 4-week period between 22 November and 21 December and received 45 responses. 11 responses were positive about the proposed change whilst 18 were against it. The remaining 16 responses did not indicate a clear view either way. Following the consultation, we are proceeding with the proposed amendment to regulations to bring this requirement into effect and the amended regulations were laid in Parliament on 23 January. These regulations will come into effect on 14 February.

The majority of responses, including some positive and non-committal responses, made the point that this would be a new burden on local authorities at a time of financial constraints. I can confirm that local authorities will be funded to comply with this new requirement, based on projected pupil numbers. In 2016/17 local authorities will be funded by a one-off grant and we will write to you in due course with the details of this.

The other common theme coming arising from the consultation was that the requirement would only work if letters were sent to the parents of pupils on roll at schools in a local authority, rather than those resident in a local authority but attending school outside of the authority boundaries. We agree with this and this is how the requirement is set out in the regulations.

Some responses expressed concern that this requirement would be unfair on other local schools, however we are clear that the effect of this requirement will be to ensure that parents are aware of schools with atypical points of admission within a reasonable travelling distance to which their children may be able to apply. We want to ensure that parents and pupils are aware of the choices open to them and that such schools are not disadvantaged in admissions compared to schools with typical age ranges. In addition, current practice in terms of informing parents and pupils about schools with atypical age ranges varies across the country. This new requirement seeks to address that variation and any resulting disadvantage that currently exists.

The new requirement sets out that local authorities are required to write, either by post or electronic means, to the parents of prospective pupils with information about schools with an atypical admission age by no later than 12 September each year, following publication of their composite prospectus. This information must include a statement of the fact that there is a school with an atypical admission age within the local authority or within reasonable travelling distance of the local authority area; a statement that the pupil may apply for admission to that school and the name of the school. Where there is a school with an atypical admission age in the local authority or within reasonable travelling distance of the local authority area, local authorities must also include in the composite prospectus a prominent statement that there is such a school, the age range of the school and where in the prospectus information about the school can be found.

In addition to the annual requirement to write out, the regulations set out transitional requirements for 2017 admissions only, whereby local authorities which have not already done so are required to write to parents within four weeks of the regulations coming into force – by 14 March 2017.

Experience of schools with an atypical admission age shows that pupils often travel further than would normally be expected for a more typical school, such as an 11-18 school, with pupils often travelling up to an hour or even longer. Local authorities should take this into account when considering what is a reasonable travelling distance.

Attached to this letter is a model letter, which may be helpful to you when creating the letter you will send out to parents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Pooley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Pooley

Deputy Director
Free Schools Group
Department for Education

Example letter

Dear parent or carer,

I am writing to you because you have a child who is due to move into Year 10 in September 2017 and to advise you of other opportunities for education starting in Y10 available in the local area, which you may not be aware of. These schools have atypical admission ages so take pupils at a different age to typical 11-18 secondary schools. This does not mean that you are required to move your child from their existing school if this is still the best option for them.

In the annex below is a list of the schools within a reasonable travelling distance, which you may wish to look into and consider whether your child would want to apply for a place in September. In addition, details are available in the council's prospectus of education options. You should also look at the GCSE curriculum at your child's current school, to help consider what the best option is for the next two years of your child's education.

University Technical Colleges are set up by universities and businesses and specialise in one or two technical subjects. At GCSE they offer a similar curriculum to a typical 11-18 secondary school, including the basics of English and Maths, as well as their specialist subject.

Studio Schools are similar to UTCs in that they have employer involvement in the curriculum and focus on developing the skills needed for employment, involving personal coaching and work experience, alongside a similar curriculum to a typical 11-18 secondary.

All schools have a statutory duty to secure impartial careers guidance for all Year 8 to Year 13 students to inspire young people to fulfil their potential and to make them aware of all opportunities open to them. We strongly recommend that your child discuss their options with a Careers Adviser in their current school or college.

If you decide that you would like to apply for a place at any of these schools for your child, you will need to complete an application form. For (name of schools) you will need to apply direct to them and details are on their website. For (name of schools) you will need to apply through the council, with details available on our website.

2017 No. 37

EDUCATION, ENGLAND

**The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations
2017**

<i>Made</i>	- - - -	<i>19th January 2017</i>
<i>Laid before Parliament</i>		<i>23rd January 2017</i>
<i>Coming into force</i>	- -	<i>14th February 2017</i>

The Secretary of State for Education makes the following regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 92 and 138 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998(a):

Citation and Commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 and come into force on 14th February 2017.

Amendments to the School Information (England) Regulations 2008

2. The School Information (England) Regulations 2008(b) are amended as follows.

3. In regulation 1(2) (citation, commencement and application) omit the words “and only to information in relation to the academic year 2010-2011 and subsequent years”.

4. In regulation 2 (interpretation) in the appropriate places insert—

“admission register” is the register to be kept in accordance with regulation 4(a) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006(c);

“registered parent” means a person named in the admission register for a school as the parent (as defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996) of a pupil registered at the school in accordance with regulation 5(1)(c) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;

“school with an atypical age of admission” means a school in which the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school is at the beginning of the fourth key stage or the preceding year but does not include a school designed to provide education for pupils formerly educated at a middle school;

5. In regulation 5 (local authority to publish composite prospectus)—

(a) 1998 c31. Section 92 was amended by section 51 of and schedule 4 to the Education Act 2002 (c.32) (the 2002 Act) and S.I. 2010/1158. See section 142 of the 2002 Act for the definition of “prescribed” and “regulations”.
(b) S.I. 2008/3093 as amended by S.I. 2010/1172, S.I. 2012/8, S.I. 2012/979, S.I. 2012/1124, S.I. 2013/758, S.I. 2014/2103, the Deregulation Act 2015 (c.20) and S.I. 2016/451.
(c) S.I. 2006/1751.

- (a) In regulation 5(1) after “composite prospectus area” insert “and in relation to all schools with an atypical age of admission within reasonable travelling distance of the local authority area”; and
- (b) After regulation 5(2) insert—
 - “(2A) Where there is a school with an atypical admission age in the local authority area or within reasonable travelling distance of the local authority area, a local authority must publish in its composite prospectus a prominent statement that there is such a school and specify in particular—
 - (a) the age range of the school; and
 - (b) where in the prospectus information about it can be found.”.

6. After Regulation 9 insert —

“Information about schools with an atypical admission age

9A.—(1) Where there is a school with an atypical age of admission in a local authority area or within reasonable travelling distance of the local authority area the local authority must provide the information specified in paragraph (2) to the person specified in paragraph (3).

(2) The information is—

- (a) a statement of the fact that there is a school with an atypical age of admission in the local authority area or within a reasonable travelling distance of the local authority area;
- (b) the name of the school referred to in sub-paragraph (2)(a);
- (c) a statement that the pupil referred to in paragraph (3) may apply for admission to that school; and
- (d) in relation to the school referred to in sub-paragraph (2)(b) the information specified in Part 2 of Schedule 2.

(3) The person is the registered parent of a pupil registered at a school within the area of the local authority who may apply in the offer year to be admitted to the relevant age group of a school with an atypical age of admission in the local authority area or within reasonable travelling distance of the local authority area. Relevant age group means an age group in which pupils are normally admitted (or as the case may be, will normally be admitted) to the school.

(4) Any information to be provided in accordance with paragraph (1) must—

- (a) be sent by post or by electronic means to the postal or electronic address for the registered parent recorded in the admission register; and
- (b) subject to regulation 9B, be sent on or after publication by the local authority of its composite admissions prospectus for the following academic year and not later than 12th September in the year of publication of the composite prospectus.

Transitional provision

9B. By no later than 14th March 2017 a local authority must provide the information to the registered parents in accordance with Regulation 9A in respect of admission in the academic year 2017-18.”.

19th January 2017

John Nash
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System
Department for Education

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These regulations amend the School Information England Regulations 2008 (the 2008 Regulations).

Regulation 4 amends regulation 2 of the 2008 regulations to include new definitions, including a definition of a school with an “atypical age of admission”. This means a school whose first year of admission is the beginning of the fourth key stage or the year before that, but does not include the type of school that pupils progress to from Middle Schools, commonly known as a High School.

Regulation 5(a) amends regulation 5(1) of the 2008 regulations to require a local authority to include in its composite prospectus information about schools with an atypical age of admission which are outside, but within a reasonable travelling distance of, the local authority area.

Regulation 5(b) inserts a new regulation 5(2A) into the 2008 regulations to provide that a local authority must include in its composite prospectus a prominent statement about schools in its area (or within reasonable travelling distance of its area) which have an atypical age of admission. It must give information about the age range of the schools and where to find information about them in the composite prospectus.

Regulation 6 inserts a new regulation 9A into the 2008 Regulations. Regulation 9A places a requirement on local authorities to send information to parents about schools with an atypical age of admission that are in, or within reasonable travelling distance of, the local authority area. Local authorities are required by regulation 9A(3) to send the information to parents of children registered at schools in their area who are eligible to apply to those schools. The information informs parents that their child may apply to a school with an atypical age of admission, giving the name of the school or schools and the information specified in Part 2 of Schedule 2 (information about each individual school including contact details, pupil numbers and age range and admission arrangements).

Regulation 6 also inserts a new regulation 9B into the 2008 Regulations. Regulation 9B is a transitional provision concerning admission to a school with an atypical age of admission in the academic year 2017-18. Local Authorities must send information to parents of eligible pupils within four weeks of 14th February 2017 (the date that these regulations come into force) notifying them that their children may apply to be admitted to such schools in the academic year 2017-18 and providing the information required by regulation 9A.

An impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument it has no impact on business and civil society organisations. The instrument has a minimal impact on the public sector.

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06 September 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you because you have a child who is due to move into Year 10 in September 2018 and to advise you of other opportunities for education starting in Year 10 available in the local area, which you may be aware of. These schools have atypical admission ages so take pupils at a different age to typical 11-18 secondary schools. This does not mean that you are required to move your child from their existing school if this is still the best option for them.

Below are details of schools that have atypical admission ages within a reasonable travelling distance, which you may wish to consider whether your child would want to apply for a place in September. You should also look at the GCSE curriculum at your child's current school, to help consider what the best option is for the next two years of your child's education.

University Technical Colleges (UTCs) are set up by universities and businesses and specialise in one or two technical subjects. At GCSE, they offer a similar curriculum to a typical 11-18 secondary school, including the basics of English and Maths, as well as their specialist subject.

Studio schools are similar to UTCs in that they have employer involvement in the curriculum and focus on developing the skills needed for employment, involving personal coaching and work experience, alongside a similar curriculum to a typical 11-18 secondary.

All schools have a statutory duty to secure impartial careers guidance for all Year 8 to Year 13 students to inspire young people to fulfil their potential and to make them aware of all opportunities open to them. We strongly recommend that your child discuss their options with a Careers Adviser in their current school or college.

If you decide that you would like to apply for a place at either UTC for your child, you will need to you will need to apply direct to them, via their website. The website details are shown below.

West Midlands Construction UTC

www.westmidlandsconstructionutc.co.uk

WMCUTC, Springfield Campus,
Cambridge Street, Wolverhampton, WV10 0JR

Tel: 01902 872 180

Email: info@wmcutc.co.uk

Open days held on;

Tuesday 17 October 2017 4.30pm to 7.30pm
Saturday 27 January 2018 10am to 3pm
Wednesday 28 March 2018 4.30pm to 7.30pm
Saturday 30 June 2018 10am to 3pm

West Midlands Health Futures UTC

www.healthfuturesutc.co.uk

Health Futures UTC, 350 High Street, West Bromwich B70 8DJ

Tel :0121 794 2888

Email: admin@healthfuturesutc.co.uk

Please refer to the website detailed above for information on open day(s).

Yours sincerely

Bill Hague

Bill Hague
Head of School Planning and Resources