



Alsager School  
An Achieving School - A Caring Community

**MINUTES RELATING TO AGENDA ITEM 11 FROM THE FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING OF ALSAGER SCHOOL ON 28/11/18**  
**Alsager School – 28th November 2018 – 6:00pm, Alsager School**

No.	Item	Action
11	Draft Admissions Policy 2020-2021 & Feedback	EWa

EWa – reminded governors that the C&P committee had met on 13/6/18 and had agreed to take the draft Admissions Policy for 2020-2021 out to consultation. She reminded governors of the following:

- that this consultation period ran from 1/10/18 to 11/11/18
- that all of the individual feedback and her feedback summary report had been uploaded to SharePoint prior to the full governing body meeting
- Governors confirmed that they had accessed and had read all of the feedback regarding this consultation
- Mrs Walton also noted the importance of the governors considering all of the responses.

She went on to note:

- That as a governing body the decision to reach tonight was one of the following:
  - 1. To change the admissions policy
  - 2. To stick with what we currently have
  - 3. To amend the policy

She reminded governors of the need to consider all of the key themes that had been highlighted during the consultation. She reminded governors that part 1 of the meeting minutes would be published after the meeting and available to the public.

EWa – went on to note that:

- in terms of the Admissions Code and the determination of the policy, that the governing body of Alsager School must determine things by 28/2/19 latest
- once we have determined the arrangements, we must notify the appropriate bodies and advertise the approved policy on our website for one year
- a copy of the agreed policy must be sent to the LA
- the feedback received during the consultation period with regard to the catchment area
- that although the geography of a catchment area can be changed this would need to be part of the consultation and would be highly challengeable due to it infringing upon other school's catchment areas

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – made the point if governors were to consider changing the geography of the catchment area, it raised the question at what point do we stop?

EWa – then distributed to the governors some maps which our data manager had supplied. These maps included data which indicated the locations and areas of where our current cohort of students came from. The data manager had supplied a map for each of our year groups, ie Years 7-11 inclusive. Discussion followed. It was noted that the vast majority of our current cohort all come from within our catchment with some students, in particular Kidsgrove students, being outside the catchment area.

Mrs Walton then invited questions from the governing body.

Discussion followed regarding the Hassall Green area as this had been a theme as part of the consultation.

EWa – advised that we have some Hassall Green children in older year groups and according to the consultation some Hassall Green parents would like their children to come here in the future. It was discussed that they were in the catchment for different local secondary schools.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** – Governor asked for confirmation on which year group this policy would most affect?

EWa – advised that it will affect all the current year 5 students in primary schools. She went on to note that only one of our feeder schools (Rode Heath Primary School) had responded to the consultation and they had asked for more time. Additionally, apart from WVPS, (Weston Village Primary School), the other feeder schools were all in catchment.

#### **Feedback Summary:**

EWa – referred the governors to the feedback summary report which she had prepared and took the governing body through this. She asked the Chair if he wished for her to go through each response individually. It was agreed that as all of the feedback has been distributed prior to the meeting and governors had all ready it thoroughly that a systemic approach through each key theme would be a good starting point. Mrs Walton then presented her summary.

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – noted that the key question here is why are we doing this and advised that we have people living in Alsager who currently don't attend a local primary school who may not get into Alsager School when they apply. So, they won't be able to send their children to their local secondary school. This was one of the themes of the consultation.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor asked the question why some local residents didn't sent their children to one of their local primary schools?

EWa – advised of the problems with getting a place at the local feeder schools as they are at full capacity. Discussion followed on the this.

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – advised that the local feeder primary schools do use catchment as a criteria but the local feeder schools are full. He noted the impending expansion at Cranberry Academy, which would help meet the demand of primary school places in Alsager.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor – noted that there was a big risk if this policy was approved that individuals could be moving into the area to secure a place.

EWa – reminded that we as a school had increased the PAN from 235 to 265 as from September 2019 and so more places are now available. She went on to note that attending a local feeder school is still in our over subscription criteria so children attending a feeder school were still advantaged.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** – Governor gave the example that say we have 25 students across the primary feeder schools and we only have 16 places available. Governor asked would they be ranked on distance to decide who is allocated the places? EWa – confirmed that to be the case

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – he advised governors that when we applied to expand the school that we had to give in some data. He noted that currently in Y7 there were 31 non Cheshire East students, all of which were either , LAC (looked after children), SEN or siblings.

**Governors Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor – noted that the key year for us to consider was Year 5. He went on to note that we have 217 students in the current Y5 feeder primaries and so based on a PAN of 265 that all 217 could all get in. It was noted that there are more children in year 4 as there are 245 which is still less than our PAN.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor noted the increase in the local housing which is growing all the time.

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – noted that if we take Excalibur Primary for example, that 19% of their students live out of the area the figure for Pikemere is 16% who live outside Alsager. He advised that he had no other data available for the other feeder schools.

EWa – referred to page 3 of her summary and noted the feedback from parents highlighting the following points:

- Those who live in catchment but their child does not attend one of the feeder schools
- Those who children/child attends a feeder but doesn't live in catchment
- She advised that the only way to secure a place here at Alsager for some was for them to move into the area but the issue they then face is that the local feeders are full. She noted the difficulties here for both situations
- noted that some people spoke about paying their council tax to their LA and they feel that too many students come from the Staffordshire area.
- feedback from grandparents was then noted and it seemed to be a number of grandparents providing childcare but the children don't live in Alsager and the potential problems that could be caused for them if their grandchild did not secure a place.
- some feedback indicated that the admission policy isn't broken so why change it

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – noted that Alsager is a one town secondary school

EWa – noted that there was an argument that our Admissions policy is not fit for purpose in that local residents cannot get a space at Alsager and are going to appeal. However, equally there is real concern about children who go to school in the town already and are part of the community who are concerned about not securing a place. EWa felt that it was right to consult on the policy due to the number of people being unable to secure a place at the school who live in Alsager. She gave an example of a local resident who could see the school from their window but could not get a place because they did not attend a feeder school. It is for governors to decide if the change should happen.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor noted the commitment that parents have put into getting their children a place here, that parents have thought this through over a long time and that she personally feels that we have a responsibility towards them in this regard, as they have decided to put their children into the local feeder schools to get a place at Alsager.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor noted the financial commitment families enter into, ie moving into the area which can be expensive.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor asked if everybody was in agreement that our current policy was not fit for purpose.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor noted that Weston was not in catchment and a discussion followed.

EWa – referred to the number of Weston parents who had replied and noted the following in this regard

- that one of the key themes from Weston parents that they felt being part of AMAT felt they should get priority over other feeder schools
- that some parents from Weston had advised that they were happy to join AMAT as they felt that would secure them a place at Alsager School. Mrs Walton advised that we need to be very clear on this, these are two separate issues

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – advised the governing body

- that in any primary school making the decision to join any MAT that this does not guarantee the parents of a primary school a place at a secondary school within the MAT

- before WVPS converted to academy status, it was mentioned to both the Head and Deputy at Weston that the Admissions policy was likely to be reviewed. He also advised that this was shared with the governing body at Weston and this was done before they converted.
- the purpose of a MAT is not to guarantee a secondary school place - the benefits of being in a MAT are whole ranging and should not be based on securing school places
- that some parents at Weston who responded to the consultation are unhappy about this as are some of the governing body at Weston
- Weston will remain a feeder, still be advantaged and that they are aware that the PAN has increased to 265 as from September 2019
- That the purpose of any secondary school is to serve its local community

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor advised that he was in agreement that this is the case and that any secondary school's purpose was to serve its local community.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor advised that he felt that WVPS parents were in a better position than some other parents as Weston is a feeder school and this is still part of the over subscription criteria

**Chair of Governors Comment/Question/Challenge** - asked how governors at Weston responded to this and asked how they felt?

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – advised that Weston joined the MAT at Easter 2018 and that Alsager School are now looking at changing our admissions policy. He advised that he understands the feelings of Weston parents and that this could impact on Weston numbers of which he is ultimately responsible for. He noted the moral dilemma here and what was is the right thing to do. He had emailed all parents at Weston to try and address their concerns.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor noted that feedback is personal and how emotive it all was. He advised that he himself is a Weston parent and that when he made the decision for his children to go to WVPS it wasn't to secure a place at Alsager.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor noted the transparency here and asked were any implications made at the time of conversion that Weston that they would secure a place at Alsager school following their conversion

RMi - advised that he was up front and was very honest about it all and Weston were never told that they would get preferential treatment nor was the question ever asked if they would.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor referred the committee to page 20 of the full feedback report. It was noted that this feedback indicated that this individual had sat in a meeting only twelve months ago where RMi had talked about the main focus for the academy was to provide a seamless journey for children aged 4 years to 18 years. The feedback went on to note that the suggested admissions policy changes, go against everything that RMi presented on. Discussion followed.

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi - gave an overview of this presentation which had taken place in the sixth form area where other local feeder primary heads were also in attendance in relation to 3 local primary schools joining AMAT. He noted that transition was talked about during the various presentations made by all of the Heads present but that following this meeting, 2 of the local primary schools changed their mind about joining AMAT. This presentation was above the planned growth of AMAT into 4 schools which subsequently did not happen.

**Time check 19:38pm**

EWa – noted the staff criteria issue was another key theme from the consultation.

**Governors Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor asked about places secured under the category of ‘staff criteria’

EWa - advised that in our current Y7 cohort that no applications had been received based on staff criteria. With regard to our current Y8 that only 2 students had secured places based on staff criteria. Mrs Walton then referred to the ‘Admissions code’ which included this as a potential over subscription criteria and is in our current policy.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor wondered if two years was a short time period and should this be set for a longer period?

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor noted that he was surprised about the number of positive comments received in the feedback. He advised that if we potentially don’t change the policy there could be a lot more feedback from local residents about not being able to secure places at their only local school.

**Governors Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor enquired about any more information on current Y6 students who had applied for places to start in September 2019 who were outside the catchment area.

EWa – noted that there was no historical data available as it was not in our current policy and therefore the LA who co-ordinate year 7 admissions do not identify catchment. She went on to note that we have received 460 applications for Y7 places for September 2019 and of these 282 are first choice applications. (PAN is 265)

**Executive Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – reminded governors that feeder primaries are still advantaged and that our PAN figure would be at 265 for September 2019 year 7 applications

### **Alsager Town Council Feedback**

EWa – Noted her attendance along with Mrs Young, Deputy Headteacher at a recent local town council meeting and that they were in unanimous agreement with the draft policy.

### **Cheshire East Admissions Feedback**

EWa also advised governors that Cheshire East admissions were in support of the changes and that they had also made a suggestion to add/include a section to reference **late entries/applications** which is covered in section 7.1 of the Admissions code. Mrs Walton recommended to governors that should they approve this policy that they take on this guidance. It was agreed by all that this was a good idea.

The entry for the new section Late Applications should read as follows:

*Applications received after the closing date will be recorded as ‘late’ and considered after all on time applications unless the Local Authority confirms that the reasons presented in support of the late submission justify the application being considered alongside on-time applications. Reasons can include exceptional medical reasons preventing an earlier application or late removal into the area. Reasons must be presented at the time of application and supporting documentation must be provided, which must be received by the dates specified in part two.*

If the policy was approved, Mrs Walton would liaise with the Clerk after the meeting to incorporate this into the policy. There was a discussion about every parent/carers right to appeal.

**Exec Head Comment/Question/Challenge** RMi – advised that if year groups are full then the appeals procedure would be followed.

**Time check 19.50pm**

Mrs Walton was thanked for her presentation on the feedback.

### **PROPOSAL**

**Chair of Governors Comment/Question/Challenge** made a proposal to the governing body of Alsager School to accept the presented policy and that we change our Admissions Policy 2020-2021 to include the changes in relation to catchment and to also include a section as recommended by the admissions team at the LA on ‘Late entries/applications’.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor asked for clarification if we were still looking at the same time frame?

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor - asked what the impact might be in changing the dates.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor – advised that he felt in moving the date would just be creating another issue further down the line and he felt it made little sense to change the dates.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor – made reference to the Open Morning which had taken place in September 2018 where we had some Y5 students who attended who may not be successful in gaining a place here at Alsager school.

EWa – reminded governors that being in one of the ‘feeder’ schools was still an over subscription criteria and that it was still at an advantage to be at a feeder school.

**Governor Comment/Question/Challenge** Governor asked EWa to confirm for everyone what the actual current Admissions criteria was for Alsager School and in which order v the proposed Admissions criteria in the 2020-2021 Policy.

EWa – gave an overview of both.

Formal agreement was then reached by the governing body of Alsager School to accept this policy as well as including a section to cover ‘late entries/applications’ as recommended by the admissions team at the LA. This was proposed by one governor and seconded by another.

**Vote:** One against with the remaining members of the governing body all in agreement to accept the policy as discussed. A vote of 13:1 was recorded in favour of accepting the Admissions Policy 2020-2021.

#### **FORMAL AGREEMENT**

Formal agreement to accept and adopt the Admission Policy 2020-2021 was then reached by the governing body of Alsager School. It was also agreed that this policy was to include a section to cover ‘late entries/applications’ as recommended by the admissions team at the LA. This was proposed by Governor A and seconded by Governor B.

**Vote:** A vote of 13:1 was recorded in favour of accepting this policy. One vote recorded was against adopting this policy with the remaining 13 governors all in agreement to accept and formally adopt the policy as discussed.

**END OF MINUTES**