

Secondary Admissions Review –Executive Summary

The working group identified six key factors in formulating its recommendations

- Access to preferred schools
- Travelling distance
- Links between schools and communities
- Importance of meeting parental preference
- Increased opportunity for Y6 children to transfer to a secondary school with their peers
- A better balance in the spread of children from deprived wards attending secondary schools

The working group considered models of Feeder Primary Schools, Nodes, Single Catchment Areas and Double Catchment Areas. The group concluded that the best model to address the key points was a fixed catchment area system; with double catchments for Dorothy Stringer and Varndean, Hove Park and Blatchington Mill, and Falmer and Patcham High; and with single catchment areas for Portslade Community College and Longhill.

In creating the catchment boundaries high priority was given to better balancing schools intake of children from a variety of backgrounds. The catchment model recommended uses Free School Meals (FSM) as the major statistical indicator of deprivation and provides all secondary schools with a potential FSM intake of between 18% and 27% in 2008 and 18% and 23% in 2009.

Overall the group has delivered a set of proposals that create a new secondary selection process for B&H, to be introduced for children moving to secondary school in September 2008. The proposed system creates local schools for local children and offers parents priority within their local area. The system is clear and transparent in linking postcodes with identified secondary schools.

The risk of variables changing the number of applicants for places within a catchment area is no greater than the risks of not getting any of three preferences within the present system. That risk must be judged alongside the desire to create community schooling, local schools for local children, and the likelihood that once the system has 'bedded down' fluctuations of these variables will considerably reduce.

Recommendations

- Brighton and Hove adopt the fixed catchment areas proposed by the Working Group for its secondary admissions process from September 2008.
- Patcham High and Falmer are identified as a dual catchment area until Falmer becomes an academy. This catchment area will then be reviewed.
- The sibling link is changed to only apply within the designated fixed catchment areas from September 2013. After 2013 should families move out of a catchment area then the sibling link will cease. Should families be directed out of their catchment area then any sibling link, established by that move, will be retained.
- Brighton and Hove adopt an equal preference system as part of the oversubscription criteria from September 2008.
- A ballot is used in the event of oversubscription within catchment areas, rather than distance measurement
- A subsequent ballot is used in the event of oversubscription from outside of the catchment areas.
- In the event of a ballot being required, twins and other same age sibling combinations will be treated as a single ballot entry should their parents or carers wish it.
- This system will be reviewed in 2012 or earlier *if* there is a substantial increase in the number of young people living in City requiring secondary school places, or there is a significant shift in numbers within catchment areas.
- The CYPT should negotiate with secondary schools annually to ensure that limited oversubscription (up to 15 students per school) within any catchment area should be addressed by the addition of extra places, for that year, rather than necessitate local students having to leave their identified catchment area.