

## **Education response to comments received through the online survey in relation to criteria and rank order**

### **Catchment school – comments supporting view pupils should go to their catchment school unless there is a specific reason not to.**

Response: Most pupils do attend their catchment school, however the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended) gives parents the right to request a place at a school other than their local catchment areas school and education authorities have a duty to meet such requests if there is a space at the requested school. All West Dunbartonshire schools should be able to meet the needs of children, and where there are other factors, for example health & safety, or disability pupils will always be at a school that meets their specific needs.

### **Religious Belief – comments which indicated not agreeing that religious beliefs should be used as a criteria for placing requests and concerns that it is unfair and discriminatory.**

Response: There is a requirement under the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 for the Council to provide education provision for both denominational and non denominational education. Parents can request either the denominational or non denominational catchment school, and within West Dunbartonshire Council denominational schools are open to pupils of all denominations, all faiths and none. Placing requests are accommodated whenever this is possible and the criteria would only be used in the event that there were more pupils than places available within the denominational school as a means to determine priority for places.

### **Travel Distance - non-drivers should be taken into consideration, distance to nearest school should be by an actual route, and distance not just be walking route but any method of sustainable green transportation e.g. train or safe bicycle route, and children not in catchment area but on safe green sustainable travel route by given priority. Did not agree with the proposal that pupils nearest to schools are given priority especially in respect of secondary provision where schools can already be a distance away from home addresses.**

Response: The method of calculating home to school distance is calculated on the safest walking route in line with our school transport policy. The Council supports and encourages sustainable school travel such as walking; cycling and bus strategies, and pupils' resident within West Dunbartonshire are given priority for catchment schools/placing requests before considering non-resident pupils. This criteria is ranked low down the priority list and only used after others have been considered. The online survey indicated that 82.24% of those who responded agreed with the criteria and rank order.

### **Children with additional needs, who need support, should be able to be considered for the best school advised by consultants and by the parents, regardless of catchment area and in these circumstances /should get a place at the most equipped school before anyone else outwith West Dunbartonshire.**

Response: It is recognised that some children or young people may need extra

support, long or short term for a variety of reasons to help them make the most of their school education and to feel included in their learning. A decision is made on which children have additional support needs by using the Stepped Approach as outlined in Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and ensuring the child is in the most appropriate establishment.

**Siblings - Children applying to the same school as a sibling should be given automatic acceptance even if they are outwith the catchment area. The priority for siblings should be changed and families who live closest to the school and who have siblings/cousins attending the school should always get priority. The priority for siblings should be ranked higher.**

Response: Catchment children will always be given priority prior to considering placing request as this is the local school for those children. Placing requests are accommodated whenever possible and selection criteria is only applied where there are insufficient places available in the school, and whilst every effort is made to grant all placing requests, this cannot be guaranteed. Cousins are not regarded as siblings for the purpose of this policy. The sibling criteria is ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, and 93.46% of respondents agreed with the proposed wording and rank order for siblings.

**Comment that the respondent was unclear as how to put the criteria in rank order and another unclear what was being asked at Q10.**

Response: The consultation provided respondents with the opportunity to agree with the proposed ranking or to indicate the order of ranking that they would have preferred. Children from outwith West Dunbartonshire area are considered after children resident within the area. Question 10 asked whether respondents agreed with this and whether they also agreed that the same order of selection criteria be applied to non-resident children. Information relating to the consultation provided email address and telephone contact number for queries.

**Early Learning Childcare Centres -View that priority be given to children who attend an ELCC in the same setting as primary school before it goes to children outwith West Dunbartonshire as would be beneficial for transition to primary school, and clarity on whether the sibling policy means that priority nursery placements will be given to children who have siblings in the attached school.**

Response: West Dunbartonshire Council early learning and childcare settings are organised into 6 geographical communities, based on area and address. Parents are encouraged to apply to the settings within their community which offers the model they would like to choose for their child's early learning and childcare. Nursery settings do not have catchment areas and parents can apply to any nursery in their community whereas admissions to schools are different and are based on catchment areas based on home address. The proposed changes are in relation to primary and secondary mainstream schools and do not cover early learning and childcare which is covered by separate guidance.

**Completing the questionnaire - view that many parents in West Dunbartonshire may find it difficult to understand and fill out the questionnaire, and alienates many parents and therefore their opinion.**

Response: There were a variety of methods available to encourage inclusive

participation in the consultation exercise including: completing an online survey, providing a written submission which could be by letter or email, there was also the opportunity to attend one of our public consultation meeting, and provision to contact us through the designated telephone number to speak to an education representative.

**Moving outwith WDC – what happens if a child attending a school moves outwith WDC area and what support would be provided.**

Response: Where a family changes residence to a location outwith the catchment area of the school in which the child is registered and wish their child to continue to attend their current school a request can be made to remain at the school. Such requests will normally be granted provided the parent agrees to comply with the policy on transport arrangements and costs. Schools have processes in place to support pupils moving into the school and deal with any issues that arise.

**Early Learning Childcare registration – concerns in relation to the process for allocating places to children in early learning childcare centres and the ballot process that had been followed.**

Separate guidance is available in relation to places at ELCCs and proposal relates to mainstream primary and secondary schools only.

**Wrap around care needs significant investment and better provision.**

This proposal relates to admissions and placing request criteria and wrap around care is outwith the scope of the proposal.

