

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: **Education, Culture and Sport**

DATE: **15th April 2010**

DIRECTOR: **Annette Bruton**

TITLE OF REPORT: **Roll Capping in Aberdeen City Schools
(2010/2011)**

REPORT NUMBER: **ECS/10/025**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks approval from the Education, Culture & Sport Committee to:

- agree limits to the S1 intakes of the named secondary schools in Aberdeen City for the 2010/2011 school session;
- agree that where necessary capping limits are placed on identified primary schools to ensure those schools can accommodate the agreed lower class size regulations
- note the need to recommend the reservation of places in named secondary schools and identified primary schools within the powers given to Local Authorities by the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Agree the following limits upon the S1 intakes of the following secondary schools:

Aberdeen Grammar School	210;	Harlaw Academy	180
Oldmachar Academy	180;	Cults Academy	180;

- b) Agree that it may be necessary to cap a number of primary schools to accommodate any class size reductions in Primary 1- 3 to conform to class size regulations and local policy noting that the schools in question can only be identified once class configurations have been established.
- c) Agree the reservation of spaces in the above-named secondary schools and identified primary schools as appropriate, within the powers given to Local Authorities by the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000.

- d) Require the Schools and Children's Service Managers to closely monitor the number of pupils transferring to the identified capped schools in August 2010 relative to the roll limits being recommended.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications. As schools are funded through staffing formulae they will be staffed accordingly. Where staff excess is identified this will be managed through agreed policy and procedures.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

This report supports the Council's commitment to the principles of equality in relation to pupil access to schools, best value when considering the distribution of resources and the provision of the highest quality of service delivery.

Aberdeen City Council is committed to providing the best possible education for all our children, which is essential if we are to ensure that Aberdeen and its citizens have a prosperous future. We must therefore:

- Ensure expenditure on education delivers maximum benefit to pupils'
- Continue to involve parents and pupils in their schools
- Continue to improve attainment across city schools
- Ensure education is appropriate to pupils' needs and ensure pupils leave school with skills essential for living
- Review best teaching practice and trial projects in Aberdeen and beyond to identify the best ways of delivering an even higher quality education to all pupils.
- Allocate resources to support for learning, targeted to areas of greatest need.
- Continue work to raise the achievement of vulnerable children and close the attainment gap across the City.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

People:

Since a school's basic staffing complement is allocated according to a very sensitive roll related formula, the decision to raise or lower a roll cap will have a consequential impact upon the staffing level of a particular school.

Systems and Technology:

There are no systems and technology implications

Property:

There are no property implications if the recommendations of this report are agreed and implemented. If a schools intake were not capped there is the possibility that additional accommodation would be required.

Risk Management:

It is important to reach agreement on the appropriate number of pupils to be admitted to a school for the forthcoming session to ensure that the school is capable of making all necessary arrangements within an appropriate timescale. Failure to do so might incur the risk of the school not being able to make decisions regarding the admission of pupils within the statutory requirement and in compliance with the Council's Policy of Local Schooling for Local Children.

Equal Opportunities:

Equal opportunities issues are addressed within the arrangements in place for admitting pupils to schools including those arrangements which pertain to pupils who cannot be immediately admitted due to the school being at capacity at a given time.

6. REPORT**Roll Capping
Secondary Schools**

The current position is that certain secondary schools are roll capped, i.e. a decision is taken annually to limit pupil numbers which, experience has shown, could otherwise exceed capacity. This decision is informed by the working capacity of a school which takes into account the availability of both non-practical, and specialist practical, teaching areas within the building.

A limit is fixed for each stage between S1 and S4; in the case of S1 this is guided by the number of P7 children known to be ordinarily resident in the area zoned by address to a secondary school, regardless of which primary school they attended. These children will, under normal circumstances, transfer to their zoned secondary schools, although their parents/guardians may choose another school under the Parents' Charter Legislation.

The secondary schools that are currently roll-capped are Aberdeen Grammar School, Cults Academy, Oldmachar Academy, Harlaw Academy and St Machar Academy. It is however proposed to lift the cap on St Machar as they have been able to accommodate all pupils wishing to attend the school in recent years.

It is proposed that the following limit S1 for session 2010/2011:

Aberdeen Grammar School	210
Cults Academy	180
Harlaw Academy	180
Oldmachar Academy	180

Reserved Places In Roll Capped Schools For Incoming Families

The report on *Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Admissions to Schools and Parental Placing Requests* approved by the Education and Leisure

Committee on 29th August 2000 was predicated on the fundamental principle that local schooling will be provided for local children.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000 empowers Local Authorities to reserve places in school stage and session have been made. In such circumstances, Education Authorities are permitted to retain a number of places and to refuse placing requests for children who live outwith the area zoned to that school, in order to allow this to happen.

Places for incoming families had been reserved at Cults Academy under the previous legislation, Education (Scotland) Act 1996, since August 2000. Session 2001/2002 was the first year that this provision was extended to the other capped schools with 4 places being reserved in each year S1 to S4. A further two additional reserved places were agreed for Aberdeen Grammar School, Cults Academy and Harlaw in session 2009/2010. This mechanism allows the Education Authority to fulfil, as far as is practically possible, its commitment to providing local schooling for local children.

Roll Capping Primary Schools

Historically only a small number of primary schools have ever had to be capped. This decision being taken as it was not possible to create additional classes within the school building. It therefore has not been normal practice to request reserved places for any of our primary schools.

However due to the increasing demand for places in certain schools, the Councils decision to reduce class size to a maximum of 18 pupils in all P1 classes in schools within areas of deprivation will be determined by each school's ability to accommodate the increase in classes. It is however proposed to maintain a maximum of 25 for all other Primary 1 classes. This may require some schools to reserve places for pupils who may move in-zone during the school year. This would allow Aberdeen City to maintain its policy of local schools for local children.

The 10 Primary Schools potentially affected are:

Manor Park School
Bramble Brae School
Riverbank School
Tullos School
Kittybrewster School
Seaton School
Walker Road School
Woodside School
Heathryburn School
St Peter's RC School

Parents will be informed of the result of their request no later than 30th April 2009, as per our legal requirements.

The decision to cap a primary school will be based on the number of primary classes the school can accommodate rather than the number of pupils. This is related to the optimum class configuration schools have to adopt.

To ensure that the numbers of excess staff are kept to a minimum, some staff may be employed on a fixed term basis until pupil figures can be confirmed at the start of the new session.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000