



Consultation on the changes to the admission policy for community secondary schools and non-faith academies in Bury

These proposals would seek to remove the catchment area priority from the existing secondary admissions policy

The proposed changes would be effective from September 2024

The consultation document tells you about the proposed changes and explains the decision-making process. We welcome all your views and encourage you to respond by the deadline of 5 December 2022

Consultation dates: 3 October until 5 December 2022

THE PROPOSAL

Bury Council, as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, is proposing the admission policy below, which would apply to applications for school places for the academic year 2024/25 for all community and voluntary controlled Secondary Schools and all non-faith academies on behalf of their multi academy trusts.

We are consulting on the following proposals which would remove the catchment area priority from the community secondary school admissions policy. We would like to hear your views and comments about this, so that we can decide whether to include these changes in the admissions policy for 2024/25:

For the following secondary schools, the proposed new policy is as follows:-

SCHOOL NAME	ADMISSION AUTHORITY
Hazel Wood High School (Academy)	Oak Learning Partnership
Parrenthorn High School	Local Authority
Philips High School	Local Authority
The Derby High School	Local Authority
The Elton High School	Local Authority
The Heys (Academy)	Rowan Learning Trust
Tottington High School (Academy)	Shaw Education Trust
Unsworth Academy (Academy)	Shaw Education Trust
Woodhey High School (Academy)	Shaw Education Trust

The proposed new admissions policy would be: -

- **Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be given a place at the school named in their plan.**

When schools are oversubscribed, priority for allocation of places will be as follows: -

- **Children in public care (Looked after children) and previously looked after children. (1) (2)**
- **Children who have an older brother or sister in the school in the September of the year of admission. For this purpose, a brother or sister may be a full or step-brother or a full or step-sister, living at the same address at the time of admission.**
- **Other children**

1. A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions, in England.

2. A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after (in England), but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or become subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order, as well as a child who appears to have been in state care outside of England care (i.e. In the care of/or accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation or any other provider whose sole/main purpose is to benefit society) but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted.

If there is over-subscription in any category, places will be offered using straight line distance from the child's home address to the school as a tiebreaker. The distance will be measured using the Local Authority's computerised mapping system, which measures from the address point of the home to the address point of the school using the local land and property gazetteer. Those living closer to the school will receive the higher priority.

As part of this consultation process, we are also consulting on behalf of Rowan Learning Trust to reduce the planned admission number (PAN) at The Heys to 130 from September 2024. The School Admissions Code states that they must carry out a consultation if they intend to lower their PAN for September 2024 onwards. Schools do not have to consult if we intend to increase or maintain the PAN. The table below shows the existing admission numbers at all Secondary Schools.

SCHOOL NAME	ADMISSION NUMBER
Hazel Wood High School (Academy)	120
Parrenthorn High School	210
Philips High School	176
The Derby High School	180
The Elton High School	200
The Heys (Academy)	172 (reducing to 130 from 2024)
Tottington High School (Academy)	195
Unsworth Academy (Academy)	200
Woodhey High School (Academy)	210
Bury Church of England High School (Faith Academy)	162
St Gabriels RC (Faith Academy)	210
St Monicas RC (Faith Academy)	230
Manchester Mesivta (Jewish VA)	40

HOW CAN I MAKE MY VIEWS KNOWN?

All comments and suggestions are invited, and you can provide these by e-mailing schoolorganisation@bury.gov.uk with your comments or if you do not have access to email, this can be done in writing to the School Admissions team, 3 Knowsley Place, Duke Street, Bury, BL9 0EJ by the deadline of 5 December 2022.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process will last from 3 October 2022 until 5 December 2022.

The statutory School Admissions Code states that when changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements that will apply for admission applications the following school year.

Consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. Admission authorities must consult with:

- a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
- b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions;
- c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
- d) whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority;
- e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority; and

f) in the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.

For the duration of the consultation period, the admission authority must publish a copy of their full proposed admission arrangements on their website together with details of the person within the admission authority to whom comments may be sent and the areas on which comments are not sought. Admission authorities must also send upon request a copy of the proposed admission arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed above inviting comment. Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals.

We are asking you to tell us:

- Whether you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the catchment area priority from the community secondary school admissions policy.

All responses to the consultation will be reviewed and considered from 6 December to mid-January 2023. The recommendations will be made to Bury Council's cabinet by 28 February 2023 for determination (approval) of admissions arrangements for the academic year 2024/25.

Following determination of arrangements, any objections to those arrangements must be made to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.

It is important to note that the Local Authority is not the admission authority for any of the faith schools (Bury Church of England, St. Gabriels RC, St. Monicas RC or Manchester Mesivta). If these schools decide to make changes to their own admission arrangements, they will undertake their own consultation with stakeholders.

FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Bury Council proposes to remove catchment areas and the associated catchment area priority for the Community Secondary Schools and non-faith academies in the borough. Please see map at Appendix 1. showing the current catchment areas and the location of the schools.

Why are we proposing the change?

Catchment areas in Bury have not been reviewed for many years and as a number of schools have closed over the years, their previous catchment areas have been absorbed within other school's current catchment areas. As new housing developments have been constructed over the years and are continuing to be developed, this now means some catchment areas are very large and each school may not have the capacity for the growing number of children residing within its designated catchment area. In some cases, children are located in a catchment area of a school which is further and less accessible than their nearest geographical school.

The current admissions policy for community secondary schools has given higher priority to children who reside within the catchment area than children with siblings in the school and children who may live closer, but not within the specified catchment area. The proposed change will remove the barrier for admission at the most geographically local school, due to the locally set historic boundaries of a catchment area.

A number of secondary schools have converted to Academies, or are in discussions about conversion, and as such are/will be free to determine their own admissions arrangements. Furthermore, there is currently a proposal to establish a free secondary school in Radcliffe, which would also impact on the current catchment areas.

GLOSSARY	
Cabinet	The decision-making body of Bury Council, formed by the Leader of the Council and other executive members.
Catchment Areas	A catchment area is a defined geographical area around a School. Once the area has been defined, a priority can be Given in the oversubscription criteria to children living within that defined area. Living within a catchment area does not guarantee that a place will be offered.
Stakeholder	Someone who has an interest in the proposal e.g. parent, member of staff, member of local community group, local residents.

APPENDIX 1.

MAP TO SHOW CURRENT CATCHMENT AREAS AND LOCATION OF COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND NON-FAITH ACADEMIES

