

## Appendix E – Consultation Responses

Commentor	Comment		Theme	Response	Amendment to arrangements proposed? (Y/N)
	Number	Detail			
1	1	<p>I find that having siblings in a school should be a higher priority. Mainly because this could mean two children attending two separate schools. This is always going to make one child late, cause missed opportunities for teacher/parent interaction and building that bond with the school, other parents and friendships for children. Also having more than one sibling in the school but only allowing to add one child on the application process.</p> <p>Having allowances regarding lateness with siblings in separate schools. Making arrangements so this doesn't cause ongoing issues for all</p>	Sibling priority	<p>Oxfordshire County Council is committed to the principle that schools should serve their local communities. Our admissions arrangements therefore give priority to children living within the catchment area over those who live outside it. However, we also recognise the importance of keeping families together, so within each priority group, children with siblings already attending the school are placed ahead of those without siblings.</p> <p>Policies around lateness should be discussed with individual schools.</p>	N
2	2	<p>I think Flexischooling would be a phenomenal addition to the school admissions option. It allows schools to get FUL funding for all 5 days ,but on a set number of days, agreed by the school and working collaboratively with parents it would allow children to have targetted time with their families, and reduced numbers in each day to give maximum concentration. Working collaborativley would be key, with parents following similar activities, and being actively present in their</p>	Flexi schooling arrangements	<p>This comment relates to matters that must be addressed after a place has been offered. However, Oxfordshire County Council may wish to consider developing a policy on Flexi-schooling in collaboration with headteachers.</p>	N

## Appendix E – Consultation Responses

		<p>childrens education.</p> <p>more flexible admissions process for those who would like part time schooling options</p>			
3	3	<p>These admission arrangements operate alongside recent PAN reductions across several community and VC schools. Reduced PANs lead to fewer available places overall, which has three direct implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased oversubscription in previously stable schools.</li> <li>• Greater displacement to non preferred or distant schools.</li> <li>• Limited flexibility for in year admissions something Armed Forces families rely on more than any other group.</li> </ul> <p>Even with strengthened Code protections (e.g., early processing of applications), no mechanism can compensate for a reduction in available school places. This is likely to lead to more appeals, longer travel distances, and siblings attending different schools.</p>	Published Admission Number reductions	The proposed reductions in Published Admission Numbers (PANs) are informed by birth rate data, demographic trends, and detailed forecasting methodologies. The PANs included in this consultation have been adjusted following discussions with the Place Planning and Sufficiency teams to ensure that there remains adequate capacity across the surrounding areas.	N

## Appendix E – Consultation Responses

3	4	<p>The deletion of the clause stating:          “The end point of the straight-line distance will be determined by the Admission Authority for each school.”          creates ambiguity around how distances are calculated.          For Service families many of whom must rely on intended future addresses or a Unit address prior to arrival distance-based ranking is often the make or break factor. Reduced clarity makes it harder for families to understand allocation outcomes, challenge errors, or make informed school choices before relocating.</p>	Distance Measurements	<p>This was removed for clarity, as Oxfordshire County Council is not the admissions authority for all schools within Oxfordshire. The policy advises parents that Own Admission Authorities (OAA) will provide the end point to the Council. The end point must be included within each OAA policy for clarity in line with the school admissions code. Oxfordshire County Council has challenged non-compliance this year.</p> <p>For schools where the Council is the Admission Authority the end point is the nearest open gate of the school first arrived at from the direction of travel that is officially available for use by students for entry and exit to the school site at the start and end of the school day. The Council consults with each individual school annually to ensure accurate placement of gates and their availability for use.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Location of gates for all Oxfordshire County Council schools added to policy.</p>
3	5	<p>The new approach, where the LA uses the child’s GP-registered address if parents disagree, may unintentionally disadvantage Service families because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many children are still registered to a GP at a previous station, sometimes hundreds of miles away.</li> <li>• Families posted at short notice may be unable to update GP details before the application deadline.</li> <li>• Some families remain unregistered due to</li> </ul>	Contested applications	Will be removed due to updated legal guidance.	<p>Y</p> <p>New policy and wording developed based on legal advice.</p>

## Appendix E – Consultation Responses

		temporary accommodation or access issues. This could result in incorrect catchment assignments, miscalculated distances, or misallocation of places.			
3	6	<p>The deletion of “shortest safe route” risks excluding children from transport eligibility even when walking routes are unsafe or impractical. This disproportionately affects Service families who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are placed in temporary or substitute housing</li> <li>• Often rely on one car due to deployment</li> <li>• May lack informal local networks to support travel</li> </ul> <p>Transport uncertainty compounds stress for newly arrived families who may already be managing separation, deployment, or transition.</p>	Home to School Transport	This section has been removed as it is not pertinent to the admissions policy and has no influence on the determination of which children will or will not be offered a place. Information concerning Home to School Transport is outlined in the Home to School Transport policy, which is made available to all parents prior to the submission of their preferences.	N
3	7	The removal of the statement that the LA will notify parents when eligible for free transport may leave Service families unaware of entitlement until too late. Given the complexities of moving into SFA, arranging wraparound care, and balancing deployments, late discovery of transport ineligibility can have major operational and welfare impacts.	Home to School Transport	At present, all applications are assessed at the point an offer is made, which is not common practice and results in an inefficient use of the Council’s resources. We are therefore considering a transition to a parent-led application process.	N

## Appendix E – Consultation Responses

3	8	<p>The revised waiting list rules particularly the annual reset at the end of term create issues for mobile families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service children often arrive during July, August, or mid term.</li> <li>• If they join a waiting list late in the year, the list may reset before movement is possible.</li> <li>• This can trap children in non preferred schools for an entire academic year.</li> </ul> <p>For a highly mobile community, the ability to move schools during the year is not a preference — it is often a necessity.</p>	Waiting lists	<p>The waiting list currently resets annually as parents need to apply for places the following year. This amendment will mean that children stay on it for longer and was introduced to ensure that places will be offered up until the end of the school year.</p>	N
3	9	<p>Catchment areas remain a key oversubscription factor, but Service families cannot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move into catchment early enough,</li> <li>• Predict their posting date reliably,</li> <li>• Purchase housing close to preferred schools.</li> </ul> <p>Even when a Unit or intended address is accepted, distance still ranks local families above incoming military families, placing Service children at a systemic disadvantage compared to more settled peers.</p>	Service Families and catchment disadvantage	<p>All children eligible for Service Pupil Premium are given priority within each category.</p> <p>Were there to be an influx of service families into an area, Oxfordshire County Council would investigate the possibility of providing additional, extraordinary capacity in local schools, subject to relevant approvals.</p>	N

## Appendix E – Consultation Responses

3	10	<p>The arrangements explicitly state that no places will be reserved for Service children. While consistent with national policy, this has real-world consequences in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-mobility areas such as Carterton</li> <li>• Schools reliant on class based organisation</li> <li>• Years where multiple personnel rotate in simultaneously</li> </ul> <p>In these cases, Service children may be scattered across several schools, increasing travel burden and reducing stability.</p>	Service Families	<p>The School Admissions Code does not permit schools to reserve places specifically for service children. However, Oxfordshire County Council actively supports service families by approaching schools on their behalf when suitable places are unavailable within a reasonable distance, and by helping to negotiate placements for siblings wherever possible.</p>	N
3	11	<p>Due to the nature of military moves which frequently involve temporary accommodation, delayed SFA allocation, or incomplete documentation Service families have an elevated risk of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misunderstanding address rules</li> <li>• Using interim addresses</li> <li>• Being accused of “misleading address”</li> <li>• Having offers withdrawn</li> </ul> <p>Given that families must often make applications before they physically Oxfordshire County Council upy SFA, clarity and flexibility are vital.</p>	Service Families	<p>Oxfordshire County Council has added clarity around offering to children prior to a move into the area to its arrangements to avoid any misunderstanding regarding when an application can be processed. The Council is currently working on writing clear guidance for service families and would welcome input from military colleagues and the Civilian Military Partnership education working group to ensure that accurate terminology is used and the guidance is useful. Specific reference to the Armed Forces Covenant has been added to the policy for clarity.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Specific reference to the Armed Forces Covenant has been added to the policy for clarity.</p>

## Appendix E – Consultation Responses

3	12	<p>The requirement that children start within six weeks of an in year allocation may be unrealistic for families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still awaiting housing</li> <li>• Managing deployment changes</li> <li>• Lacking access to a car</li> <li>• Needing SEND adjustments before entry</li> </ul> <p>Service children should not be disadvantaged because of unavoidable relocation timelines.</p>	Time frame for applications.	For military families, there is no limit to how far in advance they can apply and a school must hold an offered place unless advised by the family that it is no longer required.	N
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