

RHONDDA CYNON TAF SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting of the School Admissions Forum held at Ty Trevithick on 3 February 2017

Present:-

Claire Christy	Admissions Officer, RCT (Chairperson)
Helen Cook	Governor Representative (Vice Chairperson)
Catrin Edwards	Head of Service Transformation and Data Systems
Anne Robertson	Diocesan Director of Education, RCT
Helen Griffiths	School Admissions Officer, Merthyr Council
Jessica Allen	Attendance and Wellbeing Service Manager
Hefin Gruffydd	Headteacher, YGG Garth Olwg
Mike Condon	SEN Co-ordinator (Behaviour)

In Attendance:-

Alex Page Graduate Officer

Rev Edwin Counsell to be replaced possibly by Ms Angela Atkins

Apologies:-

Those absent from the meeting with apologies were as follows:-

Angie Williams-Roberts

Those absent from the meeting without apologies were as follows:-

Huw Cripps/Steven Diehl
Alun Lewis
Andrea West
Nigel Hunt-Davies

1. Minutes

Noted

- 1.1.1 The minutes of the Admissions Forum Meeting held on 8 July 2017 were accepted as an accurate record with one amendment that min no. 7.4 should read Mrs Jessica Allen expressed the concerns that had been raised by Child Protection and Social Workers regarding Key Stage 2 children that have moved schools frequently (6 – 7 times).

2. Matters Arising

- 2.1 There were no matters arising.

3. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

- 3.1. It was agreed that Mrs Claire Christy remain as the Chairperson.
- 3.2.1 It was agreed that Mrs Helen Cook remain as the Vice Chairperson.

4. Membership

- 4.1 Reverend Edwin Counsell to be replaced possibly by Angela Atkins.
- 4.2 Mr Gareth Evans no longer wishes to remain on the Forum and it was agreed that the vacancy be filled by a Headteacher of another Dual Language School.
- 4.3 Mr A Lewis to be replaced. St John Baptist High School to be contacted for a replacement.

5. Consultation on RCT's Admissions Policy 2018/2019

Noted

- 5.1.1 CC informed Forum members that the consultation document has been sent out to all forum members and all neighbouring LA's to consult upon Rhondda Cynon Taf's Admission Arrangements for the 2018/2019 Academic Year.
- 5.1.2 CC also informed the members that further clarification regarding the new middle schools will be included in the consultation document.
- 5.1.3 CE mentioned the problems regarding pupil numbers at Hawthorn Primary School and made the forum members aware of the letter that has been received from the Chair of Governors, with regard to being oversubscribed. The situation is being addressed.
- 5.1.4 From 2018, there will be 100 more places available at YGG Llwynceilyn due to the school obtaining Llwynceilyn Infants School Site.
- 5.1.5 YGG Tonyrefail will be moving site in 2018, to Tonyrefail Primary School Site.
- 5.1.6 Mrs A Roberson informed the forum of the amalgamation of a school in the Vale.

6. Update on Online Admissions

Noted

- 6.1 The high uptake of online applications received for the 2017-2018 Academic Year.
- 6.2 The Citizen's Portal has been very successful and has been a lot clearer and easier for parents to use.
- 6.3 There have been no issues this year with parents applying using their mobile phones.

7. In Year Transfer Update

Noted

- 7.1 CC explained the high volume of In Year Transfers that School Admissions continues to receive. Already, there have been 477 primary transfer applications received to date since the start of September 2016.
- 7.2 A total of 146 Secondary transfer applications have been received to date since the start of September 2016.

8. Hard to Place Children

- 8.1 CC provided the forum with an update and explained that School Admissions work closely with colleagues in Access & Inclusion with regard to children with challenging behaviour etc.
- 8.2 HG explained that in Merthyr, they have seen an increase in the number of Bulgarian and Romanian children moving into the area and applying for schools within Merthyr.
- 8.3 They are also receiving as a lot more transfer requests for children with more complex needs.
- 8.4 Merthyr are developing places for intervention and school support for children with Aspergers.
- 8.5 JA informed the panel that she has become aware of the increasing trend of children within Secondary education transferring to Faith Schools.

9. Appeal Panel Training

- 9.1 Appeal Panel Training was held on 17th January 2017 undertaken by Mr Roger Butterfield and was very worthwhile.

10. Childcare Pilot

- 10.1 CE explained that ET took this report to Cabinet yesterday.
- 10.2 The Pilot will be for four area; Rhydywaun, Ferndale, Mountain Ash and Bryncelynnog.
- 10.3 The Pilot launches this September.
- 10.4 There are complications as to how the pilot will be administered in line with the School Admissions process.
- 10.5 Eligibility will be difficult to check. Welsh Government needs to confirm how such checks are to be carried out.
- 10.6 Only parents who are working 16 hours or more a week (National Minimum Wage) will be eligible to access the 30 hours free childcare.
- 10.7 The Authority are working with Registered Providers with regard to this pilot.
- 10.8 This is a huge piece of work that we are working our way through and CE will keep the forum updated when she knows more.

11. Any Other Business

Noted

- 11.1 Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements in Cardiff – AR informed the forum that they are undertaking a three year pilot, working closely with faith schools, to help where parents have currently been applying and holding more than one school place. This will hopefully prevent this from occurring.
- 11.2 CC made forum members aware of the situation regarding changing a child's surname.
- 11.3 Due to a situation that has arisen in one of our schools, we have received clarification from our Legal Department that a pupil should be registered on the school admission register with the name that appears on their Birth Certificate, even if they are known under a different name,
- 11.4 Although an adult may change their own surname informally or by deed poll, a parent who wishes to change the surname of their child must have the consent of all those who have PR for the child, or a Court Order specifically permitting them to have the child's surname changed. Such consent should be in writing.
- 11.5 The date of the next Forum Meeting to be confirmed in due course.

