



Midlothian Council  
Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate  
**Statutory School Consultation**  
**THIS IS A PROPOSAL DOCUMENT**

**This consultation is on the following proposal:**

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

Subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise, Midlothian Council proposes that:

- The variation to the School Admission Policy will be implemented from September 2025.

The following schools are **directly** affected by the proposal:

- All Midlothian schools will be directly affected by the proposal, excluding Saltersgate, which will remain unaffected by the proposed changes to the admissions policy.

In accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, Midlothian Council wants to hear your views on the proposal to vary the admissions arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.

Within this consultation paper you will find information about the proposal, the reasons behind it, its likely impact and how you can tell us what you think about it. A short questionnaire is included within the proposal.

Midlothian Council hopes that as many of you as possible will complete the questionnaire and would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to share your views as they are extremely important to us.

*We would like to be as open as possible with the results of this consultation so please note that your response will be anonymised and made public at the end of the consultation period. You may wish to ensure that you do not give any identifying details in your response. If you don't wish your response to be made public, you can specify this in the questionnaire and within any written response.*

**Distribution**

A copy of this document is available on the Midlothian Council website:

<https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/admissions-policy-consultation>

A summary of the proposals will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools;

- The parents/carers of the children at the affected schools;
- Parents/carers of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal document;
- The pupils, deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal, at the affected schools;
- The teaching and ancillary staff at the affected schools;
- The trade unions and professional association representatives of the above staff;
- Midlothian Councillors;
- Community Councils
- Community Planning Partnership;
- Relevant users of the affected schools;
- Constituency MP and MSP;
- Education Scotland.

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Danderhall Library & Leisure Centre, 59 Edmonstone Road, Danderhall, EH22 1QL
- Gorebridge Library, 98 Hunterfield Road, Gorebridge, EH23 4TT
- Lasswade Library, 19 Eskdale Drive, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LA
- Loanhead Library, The Loanhead Centre, George Avenue, Loanhead, EH20 9LA
- Midlothian House, 40 – 46 Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN
- Newbattle Library, 1 Newbattle Way, Easthouses, Dalkeith, EH22 4SX
- Newtongrange Library, St Davids, Newtongrange, EH22 4LG
- Penicuik Library, Carlops Road, Penicuik, EH26 9EP
- Roslin Library, 9a Main Street, Roslin, EH25 9LD

This document can be made available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please call 0131 270 7500 or email: [enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk)

To be taken into consideration, responses to the consultation must be received by **02 June 2025**. These can be made electronically through the online consultation questionnaire at <https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/admissions-policy-consultation> or emailed to [EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk).

**Written responses can be returned to:**

Admissions Policy Consultation, Freepost SCO 622, Midlothian Council, Dalkeith EH22 1DN

**The affected consultees are:**

- The children and young people attending Midlothian Schools, excluding Saltersgate.
- The parents / carers of pupils and children expected to a Midlothian School.
- The staff employed by the Council and based within Midlothian Schools.
- The Trade Union and Professional Associations Representatives of the above staff.

- Community Councils.
- Community Planning Partnership.

### **Consultation with Children and Young People**

Children in the directly affected schools will be consulted on this proposal in accordance with the Children's Commissioner Guidance and further information will be provided to parents/carers via their child's school/setting.

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## **Section A: Summary of Process for this Proposal Document**

### **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

1. The Council has a number of statutory duties relating to the provision of education in its area including the statutory consultation that must be undertaken when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools, including Nursery Schools, such as closure, relocation or change of catchment area. The *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* principle purpose is:

*“to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools.”*

2. This Proposal Document has been prepared in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, having regard to the statutory guidance published by the Scottish Government on 14 May 2015 and the complementary guidance published by Education Scotland (revised July 2023), which are available for reference at the following websites:

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/2/contents>

Statutory Guidance (14 May 2015):  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/05/4615>

Education Consultation Guidance for Local Authorities (revised July 2023)  
<https://education.gov.scot/media/rh0jzhvo/external-schools-consultation-education-scotland-guide-for-local-authorities-july-2023.pdf>

3. The process for consultation, summarised in this section, details how the Council is undertaking this consultation.

### **Consideration by Council**

4. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a legislative duty on the Council to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand. In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.
5. This Proposal Document has been issued to seek views on the proposals in this paper and report back to Midlothian Council on the outcome of the consultation in order that the Council can make a decision on any proposed changes.

### **Proposal Document issued to consultees and published on Midlothian's website**

6. An information leaflet setting out details about the proposal and consultation meetings will be issued to the consultees listed on page 3. Advice on where the complete Proposal Document can be obtained will be included and published on <https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/admissions-policy-consultation>

7. If requested, copies of the Proposal Document will also be made available in alternative formats or translated for readers whose first language is not English.
8. A “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs) document has also been prepared which is also available on <https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/admissions-policy-consultation>

### **Publication of advertisement**

9. An announcement will be made on the Council’s website and social media platforms.

### **Length of Consultation Period**

10. The consultation period will commence on **02 April 2025** and will last until **02 June 2025** being a period of 8 weeks, which also includes the minimum 30 school days.

### **Format of Public Meetings**

11. Public meetings will be held on:
  - Tuesday 22 April 2025 at 6:30pm in Dalkeith Schools Community Campus.
  - Thursday 24 April 2025 at 6:30pm in Penicuik High School.
  - Thursday 01 May 2025 at 6:30pm in Beeslack Community High School.
  - Monday 12 May 2025 at 6:30pm in Bonnyrigg Primary School.
  - Thursday 22 May 2025 at 6:30pm in Easthouses Primary School.

### **Involvement of Education Scotland**

12. When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will be sent to Education Scotland by Midlothian Council. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period, or if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Additionally, Education Scotland will receive a summary of any oral representations made to the Council at the public meetings and drop-in sessions that will be held and, as available, a copy of any other relevant documentation.
13. Education Scotland require three weeks within which to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal after the Council has sent them all the representations and documents as mentioned above. The three-week period will not start until after the consultation period has ended. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries of such people there as they consider appropriate.

### **Preparation of the Consultation Report**

14. The Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting, drop in sessions and consultation activities with key stakeholders. It will then prepare a Final Consultation Report. The report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available on the Council website, from the affected schools and by request from Council Headquarters, Midlothian House, Dalkeith. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The Consultation Report

will include a record of the total number of written representations made at the public meetings and drop-in sessions, the Council's response to the Education Scotland report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with the Education Scotland report and other relevant information. It will also set out the actions the Council has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it. The Consultation Report will also contain a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the Education Scotland Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published and be available for further consideration for a period of 3 weeks.

### **Decision**

15. The Consultation Report, together with any other documentation, will be considered after the end of the 3-week period by the Council who will come to a final decision on this matter.

### **Scottish Ministers Call-in**

16. At the end of the consultation process, Section 15 of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* enables ministers to call-in a decision a proposed closure.
17. This consultation for varying the schools admission arrangements for primary and secondary education does not constitute a closure.

### **Note on Corrections**

18. If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal Document either by the Council or any person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or there has been an inaccuracy. It may then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of a Proposal Paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised. The person, or persons who have raised concerns will receive an individual response to their submission.

### **Public Meeting and Drop-In Session**

19. A formal in person public meeting and virtual public drop-in sessions will be held to discuss the proposal. The public meeting, which will be convened by Midlothian Council, will be addressed by the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate and other senior officers of the Council, and chaired by an independent person.
20. The public meeting will be an opportunity to:
  - Hear more about the proposal
  - Ask questions about the proposal
  - Have your views minuted so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process

21. The public meeting will be held in person on:

- Tuesday 22 April 2025 at 6:30pm in Dalkeith Schools Community Campus.
- Thursday 24 April 2025 at 6:30pm in Penicuik High School.
- Thursday 01 May 2025 at 6:30pm in Beeslack Community High School.
- Monday 12 May 2025 at 6:30pm in Bonnyrigg Primary School.
- Thursday 22 May 2025 at 6:30pm in Easthouses Primary School.

22. Virtual drop-in sessions will be held on:

- Thursday 17 April 2025 via Microsoft Teams.
- Monday 28 April 2025 via Microsoft Teams.
- Monday 19 May 2025 via Microsoft Teams.
- Tuesday 27 May 2025 via Microsoft Teams.

There will be 20-minute time slots available from **2pm to 4pm** and **5pm to 7pm** please contact [EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk) to book a time.

23. A minute will be taken at the public meeting of comments, questions and officer responses. A summary of the points raised and responded to will be added to the FAQs published on the Council website. The minute will be forwarded to Education Scotland along with all other submissions and comments that are received by the Council during the consultation process as explained above.

## **Section B: Proposal for Consultation Introduction**

### **Introduction**

1. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a legislative duty on the Council to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across its area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand.
2. Section 3D of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (as inserted by Section 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016) introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework. It is, therefore, the duty of the education authority to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children to their fullest potential.
3. A National Review of the implementation of additional support for learning in schools was carried out by Angela Morgan (2020) on behalf of the Scottish Government. It considered the implementation of additional support for learning legislation and how this applied to practice across authorities. In seeking to take forward improvements to the education provision for learners with additional support needs, the Education

Service undertook a review of Additional Support for Learning including specialist provisions within its schools (Midlothian Council > Meetings (cmis.uk.com))

4. In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* by continuous improvement in performance of the local authority's functions, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities and the achievement of sustainable development. To achieve best value and optimum efficiency, the organisation of the school estate is therefore kept under regular review, including the need for school provision and other factors, such as altering catchment areas.

### **Midlothian's Vision for Education**

5. The Council is ambitious for the future of Midlothian. By working together as a Community Planning Partnership, individuals and communities will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener and successful lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.
6. Our outcomes for the next 4 years are:
  - Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work
  - No child or household living in poverty
  - Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030
7. We continue to aspire to deliver a world-class education system through equity and excellence. Our vision is to provide the highest quality inclusive education, learning and employability service for all individuals and families in Midlothian. To realise this vision we will support the priorities set out in the Single Midlothian Plan, Getting it Right for Every Child and will:
  - give all our children the best possible start in life, providing an inclusive learning environment that builds resilience;
  - ensure that every young person has the opportunity to be a successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen and an effective contributor who is healthy and happy, especially those who are care experienced;
  - work with our communities to promote high expectations which deliver the best educational outcomes for all learners; and
  - celebrate diversity, reduce inequalities and remove barriers to learning.

### **Background and context**

8. At a meeting of Midlothian Council on 12 November 2024, approval was granted for officers to undertake a review followed by a statutory consultation to update Midlothian Council's admission policy for all schools (excluding Early Learning and Childcare and Saltersgate) in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and for a report on the outcome of the consultation exercises to be brought back to council for consideration and a decision.



9. As a local authority, Midlothian Council has a legislative duty to provide suitable educational opportunities for children and young people within its boundaries. Midlothian Council's approach to pupil placement is to ensure a place for every pupil at one of their catchment schools and to review and grant placing requests whenever possible. The impact of parental choice and the demand for places at specific schools have highlighted the need to review the current School Admission Policy to ensure it remains effective and relevant.
10. Each home address in Midlothian is assigned a catchment school for both primary and secondary education. The designated catchment schools are determined based on the pupil's home address. While Midlothian Council strives to ensure there are sufficient places for all children within a catchment area to attend their designated school, residing within a catchment area does not guarantee a child a place at that school. Where catchment schools are over-subscribed, Pupil Placement seeks to allocate places at neighbouring schools to ensure every pupil is afforded the opportunity to attend a local school.
11. All parents and carers have the right to request a place for their child at a school outside their designated catchment area; this is known as a placing request. It is the Council's statutory duty to approve placing requests when there are available places, except in specific circumstances outlined in The Education (Scotland) Act 1980. Midlothian Council's current school admissions policy can be found on: [Pupil registration and placing requests | Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools policy guidelines](#)
12. Midlothian Council is recognised as Scotland's fastest-growing local authority. This rapid growth has brought significant challenges, particularly for education. This growth has led to heightened pressures on schools which includes applying intake limits at several schools to safeguard places for pupils to be able to attend their catchment school.
13. The increasing population and housing developments within Midlothian continue to generate growth in pupil numbers. There is a significant risk that the council will not have a place for every pupil at their catchment school and the Council's Learning Estate Strategy considers this from a strategic perspective. In the short term this risk is mitigated by the application of limits on pupil intake, reviews of placing requests, and, in the case of denominational schools, by giving first priority to those who are baptised Roman Catholic.
14. The Pupil enrolment for the 2025/26 school session is well underway. 1,326 Midlothian primary pupils and 1,194 Midlothian secondary pupils registered as of 14 March 2025 for the August 2025 intake. This included 202 who have advised they intend to defer entry to primary school.
15. In the 2024/25 school session, 264 placing requests were received, including 28 from outside Midlothian, marking a decrease from the previous year's total of 302 requests. The Education Appeal Committee will be convened in May and June to consider any appeals received in respect of placing requests which have been refused.

## **Meeting National Outcomes**

16. The National strategy recognises the importance of the learning estate in supporting outcomes that are necessary for a more successful Scotland. This vision is for: *‘A learning estate which supports excellence and equity for all’*.
17. The National Learning Estate Strategy is aligned to the education policy aims set out in the *National Improvement Framework* (NIF) of achieving excellence and equity for all children and young people and closing the poverty related attainment gap.
18. The National strategy sets out ten guiding principles which are:
- Learning environments should support and facilitate excellent joined up learning and teaching to meet the needs of all learners;
  - Learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners, meet varying needs to support inclusion and support transitions for all learners;
  - The learning estate should be well-managed and maintained, making the best of existing resources, maximising occupancy and representing and delivering best value;
  - The condition and suitability of learning environments should support and enhance their function;
  - Learning environments should serve the wider community and where appropriate be integrated with the delivery of other public services in line with the place principle;
  - Learning environments should be greener, more sustainable, allow safe and accessible routes for walking, cycling and wheeling and be digitally enabled;
  - Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environments should be maximised;
  - Good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all;
  - Collaboration across the learning estate, and collaboration with partners in localities, should support maximising its full potential; and finally,
  - Investment in Scotland’s learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

### **The proposed variation to the School Admission Policy**

19. Midlothian Council is undertaking a review of the current School Admission Policy to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose and provides flexibility. This will allow appropriate priority to be provided to children and young people who are resident in Midlothian, and to those pupils transitioning to secondary school who are attending feeder primary schools.

20. The proposed variation to the School Admission Policy aims to prioritise Midlothian children and young people, living within the designated catchment area of a Midlothian School, ahead of placing requests and exceptional circumstances.
21. Priority for places in a Midlothian School will be considered and, where possible, granted to those eligible to attend a local school based on their residential address. These places will be granted ahead of placing requests and exceptional circumstances.
22. For denominational schools, Roman Catholic children and young people within the catchment area will be given priority over non-Roman Catholic children based on their residential address. These places will be granted ahead of placing requests and exceptional circumstances.
23. In schools where the intake is not oversubscribed, there would be no change to the ability to grant placing requests. Places remaining after all catchment children are enrolled will be available for non-catchment Midlothian children and young people. However, in schools where the intake is oversubscribed, places would continue to be granted in accordance with the agreed capacity. Refused placing requests would be maintained on a waiting list as additional classes will not be created for non-catchment children.
24. Although Midlothian Council is proposing to vary the admission policy, this will not result in a change in the number of placing requests being granted. The priority order for allocating places will be adjusted after all catchment Midlothian children are placed, and these details can be found in Appendix 2
25. In varying the current School Admission Policy to prioritise pupils who reside in Midlothian and those transitioning to secondary school from a feeder primary school, it is important to note that this proposal will not impact the majority of Midlothian schools.
26. As the majority of children and young people attend their designated catchment schools, the proposed limited variations should not result in an increase or decrease with the number of placing requests that can be granted. The only potential change would be a pupil's position on a waiting list for an available place in a Midlothian School.
27. A review of the current admissions policy will reflect and incorporate any recent changes to legislation, policies and procedures as well as schools' circumstances. This will ensure that the admissions process remains effective, clear and consistent to meet the enrolment requirements of the children and young people of Midlothian fairly and effectively.
28. For primary one enrolment, the Pupil Placement Team assesses registration data for each school to determine capacity for catchment children. If capacity is insufficient, priority will be given to children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances, children who are baptised Roman Catholic (Roman Catholic schools), children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time, and then all remaining catchment children. If there are more children than available places in any

category, proximity to the school will be considered. Note that siblings attending Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) at the same time will not be prioritised.

29. The allocation of catchment secondary school places is assessed by the Pupil Placement Team and the Council will normally give the highest priority to children living in the catchment area of a school. If there are more catchment children than available places, priority will be given to children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances, children who are baptised Roman Catholic (Roman Catholic schools only), children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time, children who attend an associated primary school, and then all remaining catchment children. If there are more children than places in any category, proximity to the school will be considered.
30. Appendix two outlines the proposed changes to the priority order for allocating places after all catchment Midlothian children are placed. It ensures that children living within a Midlothian catchment area are prioritised over other children residing in Midlothian and those submitting out-of-catchment placing requests.
31. Children and young people living outside of Midlothian will be required to submit out of catchment placing requests. Midlothian Council will aim to grant these requests if places are available after enrolling all Midlothian children and retaining reserved places within the agreed intake limit. However, additional classes will not be created for non-catchment children and young people.
32. The historical arrangement between Midlothian Council and Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian dates back to the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994, which led to the disaggregation in 1996. This informal arrangement allows children attending Loretto RC Primary School to attend St David's RC High School, and it has continued up to the present academic year. This arrangement does not apply to any other Roman Catholic primary school in East Lothian.
33. Should the proposed variations to the School Admission Policy be adopted, giving priority to catchment children then Midlothian children before non-Midlothian children, pupils from Loretto RC Primary School will be treated as out-of-authority placing requests. If a parent or carer wishes their child to attend St David's RC High School, they will need to submit a placing request.
34. If the proposal is approved, the variation to the School Admission Policy will be implemented from September 2025 with a revised version being shared as soon as possible thereafter.
35. The proposal to vary the school admissions policy will directly affect all Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate, as admissions to special schools are managed through the Education Resource Group (ERG).
36. There are no schools indirectly affected by the proposal.
37. The factors which have been considered in the development of this Proposal Document are:

- The responsibilities associated with the National Improvement Framework and the new duties imposed on Education Authorities by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 as amended by the 2016 Act.
- The agreed principles underpinning the development of an empowered school led system set out in the 'Education Bill Policy Ambition- Joint Agreement', June 2018  
<https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/8745/downloads>
- The duties placed on local authorities in relation to the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area
- The duties placed on local authorities to secure best value in the delivery of services

38. If approved, implementation of the proposal will mean:

- The variation to the School Admission Policy will be implemented from September 2025.

## **Section C: Educational Benefits Statement**

### **Assessment of Likely Educational Benefits on Pupils**

- A. The Educational Benefits Statement for this proposal has been prepared having regard to the guidance and explanatory notes published by the Scottish Government in association with the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and which are available for reference at the following websites respectively:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/91982/0097130.doc](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/91982/0097130.doc)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/2/contents>

*'An education authority shall endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them; and they shall exercise their functions in relation to such provision with a view to raising standards of education.'*

- B. As required by the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 this Educational Benefits Statement is written from the perspective of benefits, should the proposal be implemented. Additionally, the self-evaluation tool provided by Education Scotland is used to ensure compliance with the amended procedures now in place from the Act.

### **C. Transition Programmes**

The proposed variation to the School Admission Policy will not affect existing transition programmes. However, it will enhance the primary to secondary transition process for pupils attending feeder primary schools through placing requests. By giving these pupils appropriate priority, the proposal supports a more effective and inclusive transition experience, ensuring continuity for those seeking to continue their education with their peer group.

#### **D. Flexibility in Admissions**

Introducing more flexibility in admissions will enable Midlothian Council to better manage priority placing for catchment children and young people, ensuring that pupils transitioning to a secondary catchment school with their peer group are given appropriate priority over those who are non-catchment to Midlothian. This approach provides better continuity for these pupils, reducing the likelihood of separation from their Primary 7 peer group at a critical transition stage

#### **E. Denominational Schools**

Pupils attending Midlothian denominational schools who are baptised as Roman Catholic will have clarity on the prioritisation of places. This ensures that these pupils are given appropriate priority to attend the only denominational secondary school in Midlothian, ahead of non-baptised pupils or those without a sibling at the denominational secondary school. This proposal supports pupils seeking to continue their denominational education at the secondary level.

#### **F. Fairness for Midlothian Pupils**

The proposal aims to eliminate the disadvantage for pupils living within a Midlothian catchment area when applying for school places, due to placing requests from pupils living outside Midlothian. This ensures that local pupils are not unfairly impacted by external placing requests.

#### **G. Pupils and Families**

For families whose children attend their catchment primary and secondary schools, this proposal will generally not affect them. It continues to ensure that pupils attending their designated catchment schools are always given priority for school places. In exceptional circumstances where not all catchment children can be allocated a place, the revised Admission Policy clearly sets out the priority for allocating school places. Primary 7 children will be given priority to transition to secondary school with their peer group, ensuring continuity and reducing separation at a key stage.

#### **H. Local Communities**

This proposal will not adversely impact local, social, or economic activities. The limited variation to the School Admission Policy will not affect the sustainability of communities or existing arrangements for community use of schools. Local children and young people will benefit from the agreed curriculum for their local school, reflecting the local community and opportunities available to all young people.

#### **I. Travelling Arrangements**

The limited variation to the School Admission Policy will not affect travelling arrangements for pupils or staff. Many staff travel throughout Midlothian to work in schools, and this proposal will not impact their travel arrangements.

**J. Environmental Impact**

There will be no environmental impact as a result of the limited variation to the School Admission Policy.

**K. Effects on Staff and School Management**

There will be no implications for teaching or support staff, nor any impact on school management arrangements. The proposal will allow for greater continuity of staffing across local schools, benefiting each child and young person.

**L. Inclusion**

The proposals will ensure that local children attend their local catchment school, growing up as part of their community. The process for allocating places to children with additional support needs will not be affected by the variation to the School Admission Policy.

**M. Learning, Teaching, and Assessment**

All children and young people in Midlothian follow the national Curriculum for Excellence, regardless of the school they attend. The proposals will allow local children to benefit from the agreed local curriculum arrangements, reflecting the local community and opportunities available to all young people.

**N. Learning and Teaching**

All Midlothian children have access to the Midlothian Learning and Teaching Frameworks, supporting their learning in Literacy, Numeracy, and Health and Wellbeing. Guidance and professional development are available to all Midlothian staff, ensuring consistent learning environments and quality universal provision for all children. This will not change as a result of the Admissions policy changes.

**O. Health & Wellbeing**

The proposals will prioritise local children for local schools, keeping young people close to their parents, carers, and local healthcare facilities.

**Section D: Consideration of Alternative Options and Other Implications**

1. With the proposed variation to the School Admission Policy, Midlothian Council will ensure that the policy continues to provide equitable access to high-quality education for all children and young people, fostering an inclusive environment that supports academic excellence, personal development, and holistic growth. By prioritising the needs of catchment area children and managing placing requests effectively, the Council aims to create a robust policy that benefits every child and young person.
2. As the fastest growing local authority, with significant house building and migration into the area, Midlothian Council will continue to face pressure on school rolls and the allocation of places for catchment children and young people. If the proposal is not

approved, Midlothian Council will maintain its current practice of setting annual intake limits and adjusting the number of reserved places in both primary and secondary schools. This approach will aim to safeguard places for catchment area children and young people while managing placing requests. If a place at a catchment school is not available, parents/carers will be offered a place at the nearest Midlothian school to their home address with available places.

### **Transition Arrangements**

3. There are no changes to current transition practices across Midlothian.

### **Staffing Implications**

2. If this proposal is implemented there will be no implications for teaching and support staff in any of the affected schools.

### **Financial Implications**

4. Midlothian Council does not envisage any financial impacts from varying the admissions policy.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

5. The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, and the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) to have due regard to their provisions when making strategic financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through an Equality Impact Assessment. The Council will undertake the process of assessment during the consultation process in respect of this proposal to ensure that due regard is given to such matters in the decision-making process.
6. The result of the Integrated Impact Assessment will be included in the final Consultation Report document.

### **Equal Opportunities**

7. Having regard to the proposed variation to the admissions policy for primary and secondary education for Midlothian, it is not believed that this will have a negative impact on any equality target groups.
8. The Council must also consider its duty in respect of socio-economic impact and as part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers and children and will address comments about equality during this consultation.
9. Under *the Equality Act 2010*, education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. The variation to the Schools Admission Policy will comply with accessibility requirements and therefore would positively promote equal opportunities for any child who has a disability.



## **Section E: Conclusion**

1. It is proposed that the variation to the Schools Admission Policy takes effect from September 2025 which aims to ensure that the policy remains fit for purpose and provides flexibility to allow appropriate priority when considering pupil placements.
2. A review of the School Admission Policy has been undertaken to and this proposal has been produced and published to facilitate informed consideration of the proposed variations to the School Admission Policy for primary and secondary schools, in accordance with Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
3. Overall, there are no environmental impacts as a result of this proposal.
4. Overall, there are educational arguments in favour of this proposal.

## Appendix 1: Admissions Policy Consultation Timeline

	<b>Date Beginning</b>	<b>Date Ending</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Statutory Consultation Period Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public meetings</li> <li>• Drop in sessions</li> <li>• Engagement with staff, pupils and parent councils</li> </ul>	02/04/2025	02/06/2025	8 weeks
Education Scotland Engagement Period	09/06/2025	29/06/2025	3 weeks
Publication of Consultation Report	18/08/2025		
Further Consideration after publication of report	18/08/2025	08/09/2025	3 weeks
Consideration of Consultation Report by Midlothian Council	09/09/2025	09/09/2025	1 day

## **Appendix 2: Changes to Priority Order**

### **MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL**

#### **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **PROPOSED REVISED SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY**

##### **Placing in Schools - Primary, Secondary and Special**

Catchment areas have been designated for all Midlothian primary and secondary schools. Every residential address has a catchment denominational school and a catchment non-denominational school for both primary and secondary education. The parents/carers of all children known to the Council to be due to enrol for the first time in a primary school or transfer from a primary to a secondary school shall be given information about their catchment school options and notified of their right to request an alternative school.

For all other stages, the onus is on the parent/carer to make enquiries regarding alternative school placement for their child(ren). A parent/carer may submit a placing request for their child in a school at any stage

With the fastest growing population of any local authority in Scotland, Midlothian Council continues to prepare to meet future demand in education. As a result, current school catchment areas may change during this period of growth. For information on open or completed school catchment area reviews, please visit the Council's website at [www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultations).

##### ***Variation 1 - Enrolment of catchment children.***

The Pupil Placement Team will collate the registration information for each school. This will be used to determine whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate all catchment children and all children (catchment and non-catchment) who have been offered a place at a school's Complex Needs Provision by the Education Resource Group (ERG).

Where there is insufficient capacity, priority will be given in the following order:

##### **Non-denominational schools**

1. Children who have been offered a place in the school's Complex Needs Provision class by the Education Resource Group (ERG).
2. Catchment children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.
3. Catchment children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
4. Remaining catchment children
5. Out of catchment placing requests.
6. Out of authority placing requests.

##### **Denominational schools**

1. Children who have been offered a place in the school's Complex Needs Provision class by the Education Resource Group (ERG)
2. Catchment children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.

3. Catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
4. Catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith
5. Catchment children, who are not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
6. Remaining catchment children.
7. Out of catchment placing requests.
8. Out of authority placing requests.

If there are more children than places available in any priority group, proximity of home to school will normally be used, measured using an online mapping tool. A sibling attending ELC at the same time will not be taken into account.

### ***Variation 2 - Allocation of Catchment Secondary School Places***

The Pupil Placement Team will collate the registration information for each school. This will be used to determine whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate all catchment children and all children (catchment and non-catchment) who have been offered a place at a school's Complex Needs Provision by the Education Resource Group (ERG).

Where there is insufficient capacity, priority will be given in the following order:

#### **Non-denominational schools**

1. Children who have been offered a place in the school's Complex Needs Provision class by the Education Resource Group (ERG)
2. Catchment children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.
3. Catchment children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
4. Remaining catchment children.
5. Out of catchment placing requests.
6. Out of authority placing requests.

#### **Denominational schools**

1. Children who have been offered a place in the school's Complex Needs Provision class by the Education Resource Group (ERG)
2. Catchment children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.
3. Catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
4. Catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith
5. Catchment children who are not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
6. Remaining catchment children.
7. Out of catchment placing requests.
8. Out of authority placing requests.

If there are more children than places available in any priority group, proximity of home to school will normally be used, measured using an online mapping tool. A sibling attending ELC at the same time will not be taken into account.

### ***Variation 3 - Restriction or limitation of places.***

The Council will give the highest priority to children living in the catchment area of a school. Places remaining after catchment children are enrolled will be available for non-catchment

children.

### Placing Requests

Non-catchment placing requests will be granted only if there are places available after all catchment children are accommodated and reserved places retained within the agreed intake limit.

Additional classes will not be created for non-catchment children.

### Non-denominational Schools

1. Children who are resident in the Midlothian Council area and have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances;
2. Children who are resident in the Midlothian Council area who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account;
3. Children who are resident in the Midlothian Council area.
4. Children who are resident outside the Midlothian Council area who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account;
5. Then all other applicants.

### Denominational Schools

1. Children who are resident in the Midlothian Council area and have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances;
2. Children who are resident in the Midlothian Council area, are baptised Roman Catholic and who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account;
3. Children who are resident in the Midlothian Council area, are baptised Roman Catholic, who will not have siblings attending the school at the same time.
4. Children who are resident in the Midlothian Council area, are not baptised Roman Catholic, who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account;
5. All other children who are resident in the Midlothian Council area.
6. Children who are resident outside Midlothian, are baptised Roman Catholic, who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account.
7. Children who are resident outside Midlothian and are baptised Roman Catholic.
8. Children who are resident outside the Midlothian Council area, are not baptised Roman Catholic, who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account.
9. Then all other applicants.

### ***Other relevant factors that may be taken into account***

Where a family moves out of the Midlothian Council area before the start of the school year we reserve the right to withdraw a school place in a Midlothian school.

Parents who have made successful placing requests for their children at other schools of their choice have to make their own transport arrangements and meet the costs thereof.

Any pupil who attends a primary school other than the one proposed by the Authority (i.e. as the result of a placing request) and who is due to transfer to a secondary school will be offered a place at the secondary school in whose catchment area they live.

### Appendix 3: SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

☐ I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Elected Members and Council Officers of Midlothian Council.

#### Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.

Further detailed information about the proposal, which you are encouraged to read to help inform your response, can be found at

<https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/admissions-policy-consultation>

Please note the closing date for submission of completed questionnaires is **02/06/2025**

You can return this electronically to [EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk) or by post to Admissions Policy Consultation, Freepost SCO 622, Midlothian Council, Dalkeith EH22 1DN

#### About You

1. Are you responding to this questionnaire as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Individual ☐

Organisation (please give details below) ☐

2. Which category best describes you?

	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Other
Parent/carer of current child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/carer of future child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please give details)

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to vary the Midlothian Schools Admission Policy?

- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No opinion        | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Please use this box if you wish to give a reason(s) for your view or if you wish to make any further comment on the proposal (if you need to continue on a separate sheet, please attach.)

Thank you for completing this Consultation Questionnaire.