

18-19/14  
AP**Phillips, Rosalie**

**From:** Andrew Skinner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 January 2017 13:52  
**To:** School Responses  
**Subject:** Response to the Council's proposed schools' admission arrangements for 2018/19

**Importance:** High

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of the Governing Body in response to the council's consultation on proposed school admission arrangements for 2018/19. Specifically the section on admissions to secondary schools.

Following a meeting with parents, we are concerned that the current oversubscription criteria unfairly penalises families resident in the partner secondary school catchment area who live in the primary school catchment area around the school by virtue of their geographic distance to the secondary school when compared with the other three partner primary schools who are closer to the secondary school.

We would propose that in advance of proximity from home to the secondary school (proposed oversubscription criteria 6) that family longevity of residence (or other similar criteria that removes the unfairness of proximity) should take precedence to proximity.

Further we are also concerned that whilst parents attention was drawn to the consultation on Co-ordinated Secondary School Admission, they were not equally advised by the Local Authority of the consultation on proposed school admission arrangements for 2018/19.

I would welcome your feedback on this e-mail.

Regards,  
Andrew Skinner

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13/11/21

Letter to Mr. [Name]

Dear Mr. [Name],

I am writing to you regarding the [Subject] of your letter dated [Date]. I have reviewed the information you provided and I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject].

The [Subject] is a [Description] and it is designed to [Purpose]. It is a [Type] and it is [Location]. It is a [Type] and it is [Location]. It is a [Type] and it is [Location].

I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject]. I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject]. I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject].

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Mr. [Name]  
[Address]  
[City]

Dear Mr. [Name],

I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject]. I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject]. I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject].

I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject]. I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject]. I am pleased to hear that you are interested in [Subject].

**Phillips, Rosalie**

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**From:** Boyle, Joe (Cllr)  
**Sent:** 23 January 2017 16:07  
**To:** School Responses  
**Cc:** Kelloway, Bill (Cllr); Burfoot, Patricia (Cllr)  
**Subject:** Admissions policy 2018/19 consultation

**Re. Response to the School Admissions Policy 2017/18**

We are writing, as elected members for Penylan, to request an amendment to the School Admission Policy 2017/18.

We believe that the current system of allocating places on the basis of proximity as a tie-breaker in the case of over-subscription is unfair.

Our opinion is shaped by the current over-subscription problem faced by many Penylan residents as they seek a place for their children at Cardiff High School. However, this is not a unique problem and is one faced elsewhere in the city.

The use of proximity alone means relying on one arbitrary measure, enshrines unfairness and is open to abuse. There is enough evidence to show that parents play the school admissions system by moving into the catchment area of a popular school late in their child's time at primary school. Although this may not break any current rules, it is unfair on families who have lived in a community all their lives and who have an expectation that their child will be able to attend their local community school.

In the current consultation regarding a co-ordinated secondary school admissions process, the council makes the following, valid point in justifying those proposals:

**Considering Community Impact:**

There is a need for a fairer, more equitable system of allocating school places in Cardiff without impacting adversely on the community.

We agree with this. However, this is an acknowledgement that the council needs to deal with broader problems within the current admissions process, with the proximity criteria being the most glaring example of how unfairness is built into the system.

In addition, one of the guiding principles of the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code is that admissions must not be based on criteria that are 'arbitrary in nature'. We would argue that distance (proximity to school) is an arbitrary measure and certainly no more nor less arbitrary than another fundamental measure, namely time (length of residence). There is nothing inherent in the concept of 'distance' that makes it more or less arbitrary than 'time'.

For those who would argue that distance is a better measure than time, paragraph 2.29 of the Code, relating to undesirable over-subscription criteria, makes no mention of time or, for that matter, distance. To give preference to one or the other is, therefore, an arbitrary decision. The Code, it could be argued, presents a skewed argument by giving added weight to distance in paragraphs 2.48 – 2.50. The claim that 'distance between home and school is a clear and objective oversubscription criterion and is useful as a tie-breaker' could easily be rewritten as 'length of residence in a catchment area is a clear and objective oversubscription criterion and is useful as a tie-breaker'.

If this argument is accepted, then it is surely right to reconsider the use of distance as the tie-breaker in cases of over-subscription. Returning to the council's own words, the key factor should be the matter of fairness. The point is a

familiar one: is it fair that families who have lived in a catchment area all their lives should be 'gazumped' by a family that moves in a week before the cut-off point for submitting an admission? We believe it is not fair.

Therefore, we suggest the council rewrites the admissions policy ahead of its ratification by the council's cabinet. We believe there are two options:

1. Length of residence in a catchment area becomes the tie-breaker in the case of over-subscription.
2. Recognising that, on the basis of the argument above, time is as arbitrary a measure as distance, the council could introduce a points-based tie-breaker, based on an aggregate of both proximity to the school and length of residence. Mathematically, this is not complicated. In crude terms, it might look something like this (the gradations would, of course, have to be a great deal finer):

		Distance from school (metres)							
		500m	1000m	1500m	2000m	2500m	3000m	3500m	4000m
Length of residence (years)	0	93	92	91	90	89	88	87	86
	1	94	93	92	91	90	89	88	87
	2	95	94	93	92	91	90	89	88
	3	96	95	94	93	92	91	90	89
	4	97	96	95	94	93	92	91	90
	5	98	97	96	95	94	93	92	91
	6	99	98	97	96	95	94	93	92
	7	100	99	98	97	96	95	94	93

So, for example, Family A lives 1000m away and has been there for 5 years. They would accrue 97 points. Family B lives 500m away and has lived there for two years. They would accrue 95 points. In the situation of a tie-break, the place would be given to Family A. [This is purely illustrative.]

A system such as this could deter families from parachuting into a catchment area, while avoiding the trap of replacing one arbitrary measure with another.

In conclusion, we believe the policy as currently stated is not fit for purpose. We believe it does not meet the council's own stated aims of a fair admissions policy. We are therefore asking for amendments to be made to the policy before it is presented to cabinet for approval, removing the reliance on proximity alone as a tie-breaker in cases of over-subscription. We believe we have presented two options that could help remove unfairness from the admissions process.

Regards,

Joe Boyle, Bill Kelloway, Tricia Burfoot  
Councillors for Penylan