

Gwynedd Schools Admission Forum Minutes

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Monday, 7 July 2025 at 10.00
Microsoft Teams meeting

Present: Gwern ap Rhisiart, Alison Halliday, Debbie Jones, Ffion Edwards Ellis, Owain Dewi Hughes, Ffion Griffith (minutes), Joanna Thomas, Colette Owen, Aimee Jones

Apologies:

1. Welcome and Apologies

Everyone was welcomed to the Forum. It was noted that the Forum had not met for several years so it was now being re-established.

2. Election of Chair

Proposed and seconded that Gwern ap Rhisiart serve as Chair of the Forum.

3. Election of Vice-chair

Proposed and seconded that Debbie Jones serve as Vice-chair of the Forum.

4. Membership of the Gwynedd Schools Admission Forum

The table setting out the membership of the Forum was part of the Terms of Reference which had been shared previously. DAWJ noted that this table set out the statutory membership within the Admission Code, but that the Authority could decide how many would represent each sector. This Forum required representation from the Governors Forum and also a Primary Headteacher. She added that it was possible to have up to 3 community representatives e.g. to represent a specific group (such as if there was a large number of refugees within a particular area for example). It was agreed, as the Forum evolved, to consider inviting community representatives, but not to include them for the time being. Similarly, the Cabinet Member or a member of the Education Scrutiny Committee could be invited if required, but for the time being 5 Education officers had been identified.

5. Presentation on the Draft Terms of Reference

A draft version had already been shared, and the members went through it section by section. No comments were received. DAWJ was thanked for drawing up the terms of reference and it was agreed to accept it as is. It was noted that it could be further amended or developed at any time.

6. Presentation on the Admission Code

A presentation was given by ODH. A link had already been shared to the admission code as well.

7. Parents Handbook / School Prospectus

The most up-to-date copy had been shared with the meeting papers. ODH noted that the style of the document had changed this year and had been modernised somewhat. It was a Word document so that it could be easily modified as needed. ODH noted that he had shared it with Officers that week to ask if they were happy with this version before sharing it on the Council website for the start of the next educational year. It was available on the Council website for parents to read. When parents applied for admission to a school there was a space for them to tick a box to indicate that they have read the handbook. AJ noted at a meeting among Catholic School Headteachers that there had been talk about modifying the access policy somewhat **and she agreed to send any changes to ODH for inclusion in the Gwynedd policy.**



With the handbook referring to things such as the Transport Policy, Empty Seats Policy etc., GapRh asked if these were easily accessible for parents? ODH noted that there was a link to the parents handbook on the transport page on the website, but it was necessary to ensure that everything matched.

FfEE noted that the information about Statements could now be removed from the ALN section on the handbook.

DAWJ noted that transport guidance needed to be adapted as the Gwynedd guidance was being adapted to be clearer - the statutory requirement would remain the same. It would also be necessary to ensure that any changes to the transport site on the Council website were reflected in the handbook.

8. Gwynedd Schools Admission Forum Forward Programme

The forward programme had already been shared with today's meeting papers, and it gave an idea of the items that needed to be discussed next year. An Excel document had also been shared which gave an illustration of the flow of work timetables attached to school admission arrangements. It was noted that the forward programme could be adjusted as time went on. CO stated that it would be an idea to include an item to discuss the Authority's appeals situation at this meeting as well.

The content of the forward programme for the next meeting was agreed.

9. Any Other Business

ODH noted that in terms of submitting draft information from the usual rounds, the normal round for Nursery, Reception and Year 7 was around 1000 for each year – this is a reduction from what it used to be (around 1300) due to the birthrate situation in Gwynedd. It was noted that 100% had been given their first choice from the Secondary Schools, with fewer than 10 pupils still having not made their choice. It was noted that all Nursery and Reception children had been given their first choice except for around 10 children who had applied to attend Ysgol Cae Top. Admission was not a very controversial topic in Gwynedd compared to many other areas perhaps. Having to refuse an application in Gwynedd was an exception. He added that this data did not include admission data for Our Lady's School and Ysgol Santes Helen. He noted that new legislation was coming into force which meant that Catholic schools and Authorities must work together so that the application came through the Authority, with the Authority passing applications to the Schools. The Authority would then inform the parents of the outcome. CE asked with the new law if these schools could still request additional information from parents? It was noted that that was still possible.

JT, as Headteacher of Y Faenol, noted that the school figure had risen to 45. There were 32 applications for the Reception class this year and the school had accepted all of them in the hope that spaces would become available at Cae Top. An admission figure of 45 was difficult as the school did not reach the required number of applications in terms of getting a class and a half for the year. It was agreed that the situation in the Bangor catchment area was complex.

ODH added that new admission software was being introduced nationally. It was a commercial system, and we would benefit from that – the only downside was that we would lose some flexibility.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the dates had been included on the forward programme and FMG would send a meeting request to everyone.

Everyone was thanked for attending the first meeting.