



Dear Blatch families,

We wanted to follow up on Brighton and Hove City Council's current consultation process in respect of changes to catchment areas and school preference criteria. As a general statement of position, the school supports the Council's efforts to provide choice for families, create inclusive and diverse schools, improve attainment and outcomes for all, reduce inequality, and support educationally disadvantaged students. We share the same ethos of working together to provide families with a good choice of schools in the city that meet their child's needs.

We also believe it is important that the Council ensures it provides clear and relevant information that is easily accessible, understandable, and evidence-based and sets out how these proposals support those efforts, as well as the consequences, implications and impact they have on schools, families, staff and, above all, children. This is a sentiment echoed by other schools in the city.

Before Christmas, we set out our intention to make sure that as many parents and carers in the West of the city, and in our current catchment area, are able to meaningfully engage with the consultation process. To that end, we were pleased to partner the Council in hosting an in-person school admission consultation in our theatre on Tuesday evening. We would like to thank the Council for their support and for the many families, staff, governors and councillors from across our catchment area and the city who attended and for the questions, comments and observations.

The session provided several takeaways and action points for the Council including:

- Recognition of the Council's stated aims, especially those around choice, access, inclusivity and addressing educational disadvantage.
- Recognition that the open admission policy which is part of the proposals creates the possibility that a child within our catchment area would not receive a place at Blatchington Mill School or Hove Park ([see attached presentation](#)).
- Concerns from families as to the perceived complexity of the proposals and uncertainty they create.
- The need to ensure all primary schools are informed about the consultation and encourage parent/carer family participation.
- A commitment to review home-to-school transport policy and bus routes to address potential environmental impacts of open admissions.
- A need to assess the potential impact of open admissions on school budgets, staffing, and provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Provide more detailed information to families on the potential impacts of the proposals before the final decision is made.

- A need to engage directly with students and youth groups to incorporate their feedback into the consultation process.

The consultation also includes a proposed reduction in Blatchington Mill's Published Admission Number (PAN), which, if approved, will see Blatch's Year 7 intake for 2026-27 reduce from 330 to 300. With each reduced Year 7 intake, the school's overall PAN will fall from 1650 to 1500 (a reduction of 150 students). As we explained in December, the school is funded by pupil numbers, and a reduction in PAN will have implications for our income and financial modelling. Over the five years it would take for the full impact of PAN reductions to be felt this would represent a cumulative loss of income to the school of approximately £2.7 million.

The Council's proposals seek to "deliver schools which are sustainable and able to thrive", however, we believe the proposed reduction in PAN does not achieve this for Blatch. Indeed, it represents significant implications for our income, financial modelling, budgeting and planning. It would make us a slightly smaller large school with none of the cost savings commensurate to the loss of income. We are already focused on ensuring prudent financial management, and balancing our budget, and believe a reduction in PAN would necessitate cost savings that would adversely impact our offering, experience and outcomes for all students at the school.

Last week, we met with the Council to set out our thoughts and concerns, especially those in relation to PAN. Following a Full Board of Governors meeting later this month, we will formally respond to the proposals set out in the consultation. We continue to encourage all families, staff and stakeholders within our catchment and across the city to engage with the consultation process before it closes on the 31 January 2025: <https://yourvoice.brighton-hove.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/school-admission-arrangements-public-consultation/1>

We also wanted to share with you information we have received from PaCC (Brighton and Hove Parent Carers' Council):

'As part of Brighton & Hove City Council's (BHCC) consultation around proposals to change the existing secondary school admission arrangements, a listening event for parent carers has been arranged between PaCC and BHCC. This will be a safe space for parent carers to share concerns about how the proposals could impact on their child's education and life because they have SEND.'

When: Thursday 23rd January, 10.00am - 12.00pm

Where: Hanover Room, BRIGHTHELM CENTRE, North Road, BN1 1YD

This listening event will be facilitated by PaCC, with representatives from BHCC in attendance to listen to the views and concerns raised by parent carers.

To allow us to prepare for the number of attendees, please email admin@paccbrighton.org.uk if you plan to attend.'

We recognise that the consultation raises important concerns, issues and questions with differing points of view. You may wish to look at the work and thoughts on the proposals

of other organisations, groups and forums in helping you to reach your own conclusions and in completing the consultation as you think best:

<https://www.classdivide.co.uk/>

<https://www.parentsupport.group/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/969541229829506>

<https://paccbrighton.org.uk/>

Best wishes,

Ms Claydon, Mr Henderson and Mr Tulley.