

Mr P Finnis
Assistant Director Strategy and Democracy
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Geoff Evans
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A&T/GTE

Dear Mr Finnis

Secondary school admissions

I refer to my letter dated 4 October.

The School Admissions Forum has now considered the motions previously passed by Eastbourne Borough Council and has decided not to suggest that any changes be made to the current admission arrangements which apply in the county. I am attaching for your information a copy of the paper which the Forum considered. In particular you will note from the paper (paragraph 8) that the number of parents who are not offered one of their three stated preferences is relatively small being 0.6% of the total applications. A comparison can be made with Kent where the admissions booklet states that 94% of parents receive one of their three stated preferences – the intake into Kent schools is also about three times that of East Sussex. Furthermore I did discuss the Eastbourne Borough Council motions with DfES officials who confirmed my belief that there is no system which will guarantee parents one of their three stated preferences.

You will note from the paper the principles which are adopted by the County Council in developing admissions policies. The Forum has reconfirmed its commitment to those principles. Most importantly is that the authority looks to place children at schools local to the home address and parents are encouraged to consider the local school when they decide on their preferences. If parents decide to give three preferences, none of which are the local school, the likelihood of any of the preferences being met is reduced.

We are now consulting schools about the admission arrangements for the 2006/07 school year based on there being no significant changes to the current arrangements. It is open to schools and their Governing Bodies to suggest any changes they would like to see made for 2006/07. Any comments will be considered by the Forum before the County Council adopts the arrangements at the Cabinet meeting on 15 March.

I should be grateful if you would let Councillor Harris have a copy of this letter and any other Councillors who are interested in this response. I will also be advising the Scrutiny Committee for Education of the content of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Evans
Head of Admissions and Transport (client)