

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 4 FEBRUARY 2003

RESERVATION OF PLACES AT CERTAIN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND STEWARTON ACADEMY

AMENDMENTS TO PLACING REQUEST LEGISLATION

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Education Committee on the reservation of places for pupils at Stewarton Academy, Fenwick, Gargieston, Ochiltree, Sorn, Loanhead and Annanhill Primary Schools in the academic year 2003/2004.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An amendment was made in 1996 to Section 28A of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 which deals with the matter of Placing Requests. A report was presented to Committee in September 1996 advising of the changes to the legislation.
- 2.2 The amendment was designed to help ensure that the children of families moving to a new area can be admitted to the school in the catchment area of which their home is situated. The legal change enables education authorities, in circumstances where no alternative schooling is available within walking distance, to refuse placing requests for children who live outwith the catchment area. This legislation has been further amended by the Standard in Scotland School's etc Act 2000 allowing Councils to retain places in any school.
- 2.3 This amendment addresses the particular difficulties faced by pupils who would have to travel some distance to the nearest equivalent school if they could not secure a place at their catchment area school. The amendment leaves unaffected the rights of parents already resident within the catchment area to secure a place at the school.

3. PROPOSALS FOR CALCULATING THE NUMBER OF RESERVED PLACES

- 3.1 In considering the number of places to be held for pupils coming into the catchment area after placing requests have been processed it is important to achieve a balance which will not have a school with many empty places but will allow reasonable access to pupils moving into the area. The number of reserved places may alter year after year dependent on new housing and/or job opportunities in the area. It is proposed that the number of places to be reserved will be reviewed each year.

- 3.2** After considering the anticipated rolls for August 2003 and the available information about the number of pupils who have moved into the catchment

areas it is recommended that the undernoted spaces be reserved for pupils in the academic year 2003/04. Stewarton Academy 5 places and 2 places each for Fenwick, Gargieston, Ochiltree, Sorn, Loanhead and Annanhill Primaries.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1** It is proposed to implement the proposals in conjunction with applications for placing requests which will be administered in March 2003.

- 4.2** It is further proposed that to increase flexibility of administration the responsibility for dividing the number of reserved places in individual schools be delegated to the Director of Educational and Social Services.

5. FINANCIAL/POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Nil.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) note the implications of amendments to placing request legislation in respect of reserved places;
- (ii) agree that, in respect of Stewarton Academy 5 places be reserved for S1 for the academic year 2003/2004 in order to accommodate pupils who move into the catchment area for that school;
- (iii) agree that in respect of Fenwick, Gargieston, Ochiltree, Sorn, Loanhead and Annanhill Primary Schools 2 places be assured in Primary 1 for the academic year 2003/2004 in order to accommodate pupils who move into the catchment area for the school;
- (iv) agree that the Director of Educational and Social Services monitor and review the situation regarding the reservation of places under the amended legislation;
- (v) agreed that the Scheme of Delegation be amended to allow the Director of Educational and Social Services to divide the number of reserved places in individual schools with effect from March 2003; and
- (vi) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

EC/AF/JBS
17 January 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

Members wishing further information should contact Alex Fraser, Transport Manager, tel: (01563) 576121.

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