

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Please refer to the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Guidance when completing this form.

Basic Details

1. Title of proposal (include budget reference if applicable)

Proposed variation to the admissions arrangements for Primary and Secondary education

2. Service(s)

Education – Children, Young People and Partnerships.

3. Lead officer (name, job title and date of IIA training)

Craig Murrin, Business Support Officer. Date of IIA Training: 17 April 2024

4. Other officers/partners involved (name, job title and date of IIA training)

Katy Johnstone, Learning Estate Resource Officer.

Date of IIA Training: 17 April 2024

5. Date IIA completed

14/05/2025

6. Nature of proposal

Review of an existing strategy or policy

Other (please specify)

7. Brief description of proposal

What are its main aims and objectives? What, if anything, will change as a result of this proposal?

The proposal is to vary the admissions arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education for Midlothian Council. The variation will see a change to the priority order and how places are allocated, ensuring Midlothian catchment children and young people are given the highest priority.

If approved by Council/elected members in September 2025, the new school admission policy will take effect for the August 2026 intake. The changes will not impact admissions for August 2025. This decision follows a statutory consultation process being undertaken from April to June 2025. Overall, the proposal is designed to provide a fair, inclusive, and equitable admissions process.

Equality and Rights

8. Could the proposal have an impact on any of the following groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010? (select all that apply)

Protected characteristics	
Age (older people, young people and children)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability (people with disabilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment (trans people, anyone whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership (people who are married or in a civil partnership)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity (women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race (people defined by their colour, ethnicity or nationality – e.g. Asian and black people)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion and belief (people with different religions and beliefs, including no belief)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sex (men or women)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

9. Could the proposal have an impact on children and young people under the age of 18?

Yes

10. Could the proposal have an impact on **human rights**?

See pages 14-15 of the IIA Guidance.

Yes

11. Is the proposal a 'strategic decision' under the **Fairer Scotland Duty** to actively consider how to reduce socio-economic disadvantage (i.e. poverty)?

Please select from the list below. The proposal is strategic if it falls under any of the headings.

Development of significant new strategies, policies or proposals

Yes

No

Don't know

If you answered yes to any of questions 8-11, you must also answer questions 12-15.

If you were unsure about any of questions 8-11, it is advised that you answer questions 12-15.

If you answered no to all of questions 8-11, please advance to **question 16 (Environment)**.

Equality and Rights

12. What kind of impact could the proposal have on groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act? (please explain your answers)

Protected characteristic	Potential impact	Explanation
Age	Positive	Prioritising catchment area children and young people ensures younger children can transition smoothly with their peer group. This is supported by the proposal's emphasis on enhancing the primary to secondary transition process for pupils attending feeder primary schools. (Section C, Educational Benefits Statement)
Disability	Positive	The proposal prioritises children and young people with exceptional circumstances, ensuring their needs are met. This aligns with the proposal's commitment to providing appropriate priority to children and young people with additional support needs (ASN). (Section B, Proposal for Consultation)
Gender reassignment	Neutral	The proposal does not specifically address gender reassignment but aims to ensure a fair admissions process. The focus is on prioritising catchment children and young people and managing placing requests effectively, which should benefit all children and young people regardless of gender identity.
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	The proposal does not directly impact individuals based on marital or civil partnership status. The admissions policy is focused on school placements for children and young people.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	The proposal does not directly address pregnancy and maternity but aims to ensure a fair admissions process. Ensuring local children and young people attend their catchment schools can indirectly support parents and carers, including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave.
Race	Neutral	The proposal does not specifically address race but aims to ensure a fair admissions process. By prioritising catchment children and young people, the policy seeks to provide equitable access to education for all children and young people.

Protected characteristic	Potential impact	Explanation
Religion or belief	Unknown	The proposal aims to priorities Roman Catholic children and young people in denominational schools, which supports and strengthens religious education within the community. The prioritisation can create a cohesive religious environment that enriches the faith-based experiences of Roman Catholic pupils. Non-Roman Catholic children and young people who have not been baptised may still obtain a place within a Roman Catholic school, but only after all baptised Roman Catholic children and young people have been placed. While this approach ensures that the religious needs of Roman Catholic families are met, it may also limit the diversity of religious perspectives and experiences for all pupils. This could affect the educational opportunities and sense of inclusion for non-Roman Catholic children and young people. Additionally, the proposal may raise concerns about equitable treatment and the balance between supporting religious education and ensuring fair access for pupils of all faiths or none. (Section B, Proposal for Consultation).
Sex	Neutral	The proposal does not specifically address sex but aims to ensure a fair admissions process. The focus on catchment children and young people and managing placing requests should benefit all children and young people regardless of sex.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	The proposal does not specifically address sexual orientation but aims to ensure a fair admissions process. Ensuring equitable access to education for all children and young people should benefit children and young people regardless of sexual orientation.

Equality and Rights

13. What kind of impact could the proposal have on children and young people in terms of the requirements of the [UNCRC \(Scotland\) \(Incorporation\) Act 2023?](#)

A full list of the UNCRC Articles can be found on pages 12-13 of the IIA Guidance.

UNCRC Article	Particular groups of children affected	Potential impact	Explanation
Article 3 (<u>best interests of the child</u>)	All children and young people	Positive	The proposal ensures that the best interests of the child and young person are a primary consideration in all decisions regarding admissions, aligning with the statutory guidance's emphasis on the best interest's principle.
Article 6 (<u>life, survival and development</u>)	All children and young people	Positive	By varying admissions arrangements, the council aims to provide an environment conducive to the development of all children and young people, ensuring their right to life, survival, and development is upheld.
Article 12 (<u>respect for the views of the child</u>)	All children and young people	Positive	The proposal includes mechanisms for children and young people to express their views on admissions, ensuring their voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.
Article 19 (<u>protection from violence, abuse and neglect</u>)	All children and young people	Positive	<p>All Midlothian Schools offer a secure and structured environment, staffed by trained professionals. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to ensure safety and order.</p> <p>By varying the admissions arrangements, we can better identify and support vulnerable children and young people, safeguarding them from violence, abuse, and neglect.</p>
Article 23 (<u>children with a disability</u>)	All children and young people	Positive	The proposal includes provisions to ensure that children and young people with disabilities have equal access to education, aligning with the statutory guidance's emphasis on non-discrimination and inclusion.

UNCRC Article	Particular groups of children affected	Potential impact	Explanation
Article 27 (adequate standard of living)	All children and young people	Positive	By ensuring fair admissions processes, the council can help children and young people from low-income families access quality education, contributing to an adequate standard of living.
Article 29 (goals of education)	All children and young people	Positive	The proposal supports the development of the child's and young person's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, in line with the goals of education outlined in the statutory guidance.
Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)	All children and young people	Neutral	By providing equitable access to education, the proposal ensures that all children and young people have opportunities for leisure, play, and cultural activities, which are essential for their holistic development.
Other (please specify)		Choose an item.	Not applicable.

Equality and Rights

14. What kind of impact could the proposal have in terms of the Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)?

See pages 14-15 of the IIA Guidance.

Article of ECHR	Particular groups of people affected	Potential impact	Explanation
Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination)	Children from low-income families Children with additional support needs Children from single-parent households Families with multiple children Children and families from an ethnic minority	Positive	The proposal ensures non-discrimination by prioritising Midlothian children and young people within the catchment area, including those from low-income families, with additional support needs, from single-parent households, and ethnic minorities. This aligns with Article 14's prohibition of discrimination and promoting equality and inclusion.
Article 2 (right to education)	Children from low-income families Children with additional support needs Children from single-parent households Families with multiple children Children and families from an ethnic minority	Positive	The proposal supports the right to education by ensuring that all Midlothian children and young people within their catchment area have access to quality education. This aligns with Article 2, which guarantees the right to education for all children, promoting equal educational opportunities.
Article 8 (respect for private and family life)	All children and young people, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds	Positive	By ensuring that Midlothian children and young people can attend their local schools, the proposal supports family life and community ties. This aligns with Article 8, which protects the right to respect for private and family life, fostering a stable and supportive environment for children and young people.

15. What kind of impact could the proposal have on people experiencing or vulnerable to socio-economic disadvantage (i.e. poverty)?

An explanation of the different features of socio-economic disadvantage and information on vulnerable population groups can be found on page 18 of the IIA Guidance.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Potential impact	Explanation
Low income	Positive	Ensures local Midlothian children and young people from low-income families have access to local education. The proposal aims to provide equitable access for all children and young people, including those from low-income families.
Low and/or no wealth	Positive	Supports equitable access to education for children and young people from low-wealth backgrounds. The proposal prioritises Midlothian catchment children and young people, ensuring they have access to local schools.
Material deprivation	Positive	The proposal addresses material deprivation by ensuring that children and young people from deprived backgrounds, have access to local schools, reducing the need for additional expenses related to education and supporting their overall wellbeing.
Area deprivation	Positive	By prioritising children and young people from their catchment area, the proposal supports those living in historically deprived areas, ensuring they have access to quality education and opportunities for social mobility.
Socio-economic background	Positive	The proposal helps mitigate the effects of socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that children and young people from various vulnerable groups, including those from low-income families, single-parent households, and ethnic minorities, have equal access to education.

Environment

16. What impact could the proposal have on the environment?

Considerations relating to the environment, climate change and sustainability are described on pages 19-20 of the IIA Guidance.

Potential impact	Affected populations	Explanation
Not applicable	Not applicable	The proposal is not expected to have a significant impact on the environment. This is stated within the proposal document and reads that, “there will be no environmental impact as a result of the limited variation to the School Admission Policy”.

If the proposal is likely to have a significant impact on the environment (positive or negative), it is advised that you undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Further information on when an SEA is required can be found on page 19 of the IIA Guidance and on the [Scottish Government website](#).

If you have identified any impact (positive, negative or neutral) on protected characteristic groups, children and young people, human rights, socio-economic disadvantage or the environment, you must complete all of the remaining sections.

If you have not identified any potential impact on protected characteristic groups, children and young people, human rights, socio-economic disadvantage or the environment, please advance directly to **question 29 (Recommendation)**.

Evidence

17. What data, research and other evidence informed the proposal?

Evidence can include, for instance, surveys, databases, census and population figures, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints, user feedback, academic publication and consulting reports.

Evidence source	Explanation (what does the evidence tell us about nature and scale of the potential impact?)
Research/ Council Reports and pupil rolls	<p>Midlothian Council is recognised as Scotland’s fastest-growing local authority. This rapid expansion has posed significant challenges, especially in education. Schools are under increased pressure, leading to the implementation of intake limits at several schools to safeguard places for pupils to be able to attend their catchment school.</p> <p>The increasing population and housing developments within Midlothian continue to generate growth in pupil numbers. There is a significant risk that the council may not be able to provide a place for every pupil at their catchment school and the Council’s Learning Estate Strategy considers this from a strategic perspective. In the short term this risk is mitigated by the application of limits on pupil intake, reviews of placing requests, and, in the case of denominational schools, by giving first priority to those who are baptised Roman Catholic.</p>
Research	<p>The Pupil enrolment for the 2025/26 school session is well underway. 1,326 Midlothian primary pupils and 1,194 Midlothian secondary pupils registered as of 14 March 2025 for the August 2025 intake. This included 202 who have advised they intend to defer entry to primary school.</p> <p>In the 2024/25 school session, 264 placing requests were received, including 28 from outside Midlothian, marking a decrease from the previous year’s total of 302 requests.</p>

Consultation and Engagement

18. How has the proposal been informed by consultation and engagement?

Please explain who was consulted/engaged during the development of the proposal, the extent of their involvement, what their views were and how these have been taken into account.

A statutory consultation process is currently underway to consider varying the admission arrangements for primary and secondary education. This process is informed by various data, research, and evidence, allowing stakeholders to provide their input based on the information within the proposal document.

To facilitate community engagement and gather diverse perspectives, public meetings and virtual drop-in sessions are scheduled. Additionally, a digital survey will be sent to all Midlothian Schools to collect feedback and qualitative insights from pupil focus groups on the potential impacts of the proposed changes.

Midlothian Council is conducting a survey to gather views from a wide range of consultees, including parents/carers, staff, pupils, community councils, trade unions, professional associations, and the broader community. The feedback collected will help understand the impact of the proposal and will be included in the final consultation report.

Education Scotland will also engage in a three-week consultation period on the proposed changes to admission arrangements. As part of the statutory consultation process required under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Education Scotland will review the proposal and provide an independent report on its educational aspects. They will gather and consider feedback from various stakeholders to ensure all perspectives are taken into account.

After the consultation period, Education Scotland will provide a report to Midlothian Council summarising their findings and recommendations. This report will be made available to the public as part of the decision-making process and included in the final consultation report.

Mitigating Actions

19. Could the proposal, in its current form, discriminate against people in a protected characteristic group? No

20. Could the proposal, in its current form, violate the rights of children and young people under the UNCRC Act? No

21. Could the proposal, in its current form, violate human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)? No

22. Could the proposal, in its current form, entrench or increase inequality of outcome due to poverty? No

23. If applicable, please describe any actions which could be taken to remove or mitigate the potential negative impact of the proposal.

Please provide estimates of the resource implications of adopting these actions.

Not applicable

24. If you have identified any potential negative impact which cannot be removed or mitigated, please clearly state your justification for continuing with the proposal.

Not applicable

NOTE: If the proposal could be deemed discriminatory under the Equality Act, UNCRC or ECHR, you must revise the proposal to ensure that the Council acts lawfully.

Monitoring and Review

25. How will the implementation and impact of the proposal be monitored? How frequently and by whom?

The implementation and impact of the proposal to vary the admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education in Midlothian will be monitored through a structured and systematic process. This will involve collecting and analysing data on various aspects of the admissions policy to ensure it achieves its intended goals and addresses any emerging issues.

26. How will the results of this monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

By systematically utilising the results of the monitoring process, Midlothian Council can develop future proposals that continue to be effective, equitable, and responsive to the needs of children, young people, and their families. This approach ensures that the admissions policy continuously improves and evolves to better serve the community.

27. When will the proposal be reviewed?

The feedback from consultations and the assessments by Education Scotland are used to refine and finalise the final report for consideration. This ensures that the proposals are well-informed and consider the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.

The final proposals/considerations are then presented to Council/elected members for approval. If approved, the changes will take effect from September 2025 for the August 2026 intake.

28. If the proposal is to be delivered wholly or partly by contractors, what arrangements are in place to ensure equality, human rights and environmental issues are properly considered?

Not applicable

Recommendation

29. What is your recommendation for the proposal?

- Adopt proposal with no amendments
- Adopt proposal with mitigating actions (outlined above)
- Reject proposal due to disproportionately negative impact on equality, human rights or the environment

30. Please give the reasoning behind your recommendation

- Include reference to any potential impact you have identified during the IIA process.
- **If you have not conducted a full impact assessment by completing all sections of this form, please explain why.**

The proposal to vary the admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education in Midlothian is recommended for adoption with no amendments. This proposal ensures equitable access to education by prioritising children and young people, living within a designated Midlothian catchment area, addressing socio-economic disadvantage, and supporting children and young people with disabilities. It promotes religious inclusivity by prioritising Roman Catholic children and young people in denominational schools while maintaining fairness for non-Roman Catholic pupils. The proposal aligns with key articles of the UNCRC and ECHR, supporting the best interests and rights of children and young people.

Extensive consultation with stakeholders, including parents, carers, children, young people, school staff, and community representatives, will inform the outcome and decision of this proposal, ensuring it is responsive to community needs. The identified impacts during the IIA process, such as positive effects on age, disability, and socio-economic disadvantage, and neutral effects on other protected characteristics, further support the recommendation for adoption. Overall, the proposal is designed to ensure fairness, inclusivity and equity, making it a well-rounded and beneficial variation to the existing admissions policy.

Authorisation by Director/Chief Officer/Head of Service

Name and job title

Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships

Date

16/04/2025

Signature