

COMMITTEE:	Education & Children's Services Committee
MEETING DATE:	17 March 2026
BY:	Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities
REPORT TITLE:	Reserving Places in Schools for Catchment Pupils Who Move into the Catchment Area during the Academic Year 2026/27
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain Committee approval for reserving places for incoming catchment pupils at the schools detailed in 2.1 for session 2026/27.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Agree to hold in reserve places for incoming catchment pupils for session 2026/27 in the following schools:

i. Primary Schools

We recommend that Education and Children's Services Committee approves the service to reserve the number of places detailed below in each year group between Primary One and Primary Seven. The class organisation may be a mixture of non-composite and composite classes.

School	Number of reserved places per stage						
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Aberlady Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Campie Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Cockenzie Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Dunbar Primary School	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
East Linton Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gullane Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Haddington Primary School	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Law Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Letham Mains Primary School	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Longniddry Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Loretto RC Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Macmerry Primary School	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Musselburgh Burgh Primary School	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ormiston Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Pencaitland Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Pinkie St Peter's Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sanderson's Wynd Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
St Gabriel's RC Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
St Martin's RC Primary School	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Stoneyhill Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Wallyford Primary School	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Windygoul Primary School	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Yester Primary School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
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We recommend that the Committee approves the service to reserve the number of places detailed below in each class within the school.

School	Number of reserved places per class
Athelstaneford Primary School	1
Blindwells Primary School	5
Craighall Primary School	5
Elphinstone Primary School	3
Innerwick Primary School	1
St Mary's RC Primary School	2
Stenton Primary School	2
West Barns Primary School	2
Whitecraig Primary School	2

ii. Secondary Schools S1 and S2

We recommend that Education and Children's Services Committee approves the service to reserve the number of places as detailed in the table below.

School	Maximum number of places in S1 including reserved places	Number of reserved places in S1	Maximum number of places in S2 including reserved places	Number of reserved places in S2
Dunbar Grammar School	180	5	200	5
Knox Academy	200	8	180	8
Musselburgh Grammar School	160	6	160	6
North Berwick High School	180	8	200	8
Preston Lodge High School	200	6	260	6
Rosehill High School	160	8	140	8
Ross High School	220	5	240	5

iii. Secondary Schools S3 and S4

We recommend that Education and Children's Services Committee approves the service to reserve the number of places as detailed in the table below.

School	Maximum number of places in S3 including reserved places	Number of places reserved in S3	Maximum number of places in S4 including reserved places	Number of places reserved in S4
Dunbar Grammar School	220	5	220	5
Knox Academy	180	6	180	6
Musselburgh Grammar School	150	6	150	6
North Berwick High School	200	6	200	6
Preston Lodge High School	210	6	240	6
Rosehill High School	150	6	150	6
Ross High School	220	5	220	5

Details of the factors considered when determining the appropriate number of reserved places for both primary and secondary schools are detailed in 3.2.1 of the report.

- 2.2 We request that Education and Children’s Services Committee delegates any changes to the number of places held in reserve to the Head of Education in consultation with the Education Convener, should the number of pupils requiring a place at the school significantly increase or decrease.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Acts and regulations

The Education (Scotland) Act 1996 Placing Requests Part IV: Section 33, allows education authorities to reserve places for incoming pupils into catchment areas of schools. This has helped education authorities to manage their schools and prevent them being at capacity at commencement of an academic year and furthermore enabling them to accommodate incoming catchment pupils at their catchment schools when they move into the area during the academic year.

Section 28A (3A) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended) provides a general principle that, “so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents”. This is what we strive to do, whilst also ensuring that we can accommodate new pupils in their catchment schools. Acceptance of a placing request for a child who is resident outwith the catchment area of a specified school could prevent the education authority from retaining reserved places:

- at the specified school, or
- in relation to any particular stage of education at the school.

It is for this reason that the education authority may refuse to grant a placing request that would impact on the ability to reserve places in schools.

Section 28A (3C) of the 1980 Act notes that “reserved places” means those “places (not exceeding such number or, as the case may be, such percentage of places at the school or relating to a particular stage of education as may be prescribed by regulations) as are in the opinion of the education authority reasonably required to accommodate pupils likely to become resident in the catchment area of the school in the period from the time of consideration of the placing request up to and during the year from 1 August to which the placing request relates”.

Therefore, when establishing the number of reserved places required for a school, we have to consider the likely number of pupils becoming resident in the catchment area of the school during the coming academic year. We analyse various factors when deciding how many places should be reserved. These are detailed in Sections 3.2.1 to 3.2.3.

3.2 Factors influencing the decisions on reserving places

3.2.1 The following factors have to be considered for both primary and secondary schools when we are determining the appropriate number of reserved places that are likely to be required for pupils moving into the catchment area of the school during 2026/27:

- a) The proposed level of capping at the school and number of expected pupils
- b) Local development plans
- c) Current and planned house builds within those plans
- d) Projected school rolls
- e) Projected migration into the catchment area
- f) Information about reserved places from previous years
- g) School capacities
- h) Information known to us, for example, about families moving into the area before/after commencement of the academic year.

3.2.2 For secondary schools, where it has been identified that reserved places are likely to be required, we propose that a minimum of one place be reserved for every 30 pupils (rounded to the nearest 30 where the class intake has been capped). Pupils are timetabled in secondary schools in groups of 20 for practical classes and 30 for non-practical classes. In addition, rooms in schools are only furnished to accommodate a maximum of 30 pupils per non-practical class. The factors noted above shall then be considered to confirm whether this number is reasonable and reflects the number of pupils likely to become resident in the catchment in the coming academic year. The number of reserved places can then be increased or decreased accordingly. This method allows an immediate number of reserved places to be identified and then adjusted to ensure it fairly reflects both the education authority's requirements and the legislation.

3.2.3 The number of reserved places can be affected by pupils moving into and out of East Lothian, late applications and pupils being withdrawn from schools. This can mean the demand for places in a school for pupils in the catchment area can change before the academic year begins. The number of reserved places in this report reflects our current understanding of the likely number of pupils that we think will be in each catchment area or moving into it during the next academic

year. Should some of the reserved places at schools not be required or the situation change, the Committee is asked to delegate any increase or decrease in reserved places to the Head of Education, who will consult with the Convener. If the reserved places detailed in this report are agreed by the Committee, they will be protected for incoming catchment pupils. If it is not possible to reserve all these places before the academic year begins, then we still intend to protect them so that they are there as reserved places for catchment pupils who come in during the year. Committee members will be contacted where changes to reserved places are made in their wards.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications in this report.

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance: None

5.2 Human Resources: None

5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None

5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 ***Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.***

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

7.1 None

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

Name	Leanne Ayton
Designation	Principal Officer Equity & Inclusion
Tel/Email	01620 827485 layton1@eastlothian.gov.uk
Date	17 March 2026

Head of Service Approval

Name	Nicola McDowell
Designation	Head of Education
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	17 March 2026

Supporting Good Decisions

**Promoting Equality and Human Rights;
Reducing Poverty; and
Protecting the Environment**

Integrated Impact Assessment Form

Integrated Impact Assessment Form

Promoting Equality and Human Rights; Reducing Poverty; and Protecting the Environment

Title of Policy/ Proposal	Reserving Places in Schools for Catchment Pupils Who Move into the Catchment Area during the Academic Year 2026/27
Timescale for Implementation	March 2026
IIA Completion Date	13/2/26
Completed by	Leanne Ayton
Lead officer	Leanne Ayton

Section 1: Screening

1.1 Briefly describe the policy/proposal/activity you are assessing.

The reserving of places is in accordance with The Education (Scotland) Act 1996 Placing Requests Part Four: Section 33, which allows education authorities to reserve places for incoming pupils into catchment areas of schools. This helps education authorities to manage their schools and prevent them being at capacity at commencement of an academic year, and furthermore enabling them to accommodate incoming catchment pupils at their catchment schools when they move into the area during the academic year.

Section 28A (3A) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended) provides a general principle that, “so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents”. This is what we strive to do, whilst also ensuring that we can accommodate new pupils in their catchment schools. Acceptance of a placing request for a child who is resident outwith the catchment area of a specified school could prevent the education authority from retaining reserved places at the specified school, or in relation to any particular stage of education at the school. It is for this reason that the education authority may refuse to grant a placing request that would impact on the ability to reserve places in schools.

Section 28A (3C) of the 1980 Act notes that “reserved places” means those “places (not exceeding such number or, as the case may be, such percentage of places at the school or relating to a particular stage of education as may be prescribed by regulations) as are in the opinion of the education authority reasonably required to accommodate pupils likely to become resident in the catchment area of the school in

the period from the time of consideration of the placing request up to and during the year from 1 August to which the placing request relates”.

Therefore, when establishing the number of reserved places required for a school, we have to consider the likely number of pupils becoming resident in the catchment area of the school during the coming academic year.

The number of reserved places can be affected by pupils moving into and out of East Lothian, late applications and pupils being withdrawn from schools. This can mean the demand for places in a school for pupils in the catchment area can change before the academic year begins. The number of reserved places in this report reflects our current understanding of the likely number of pupils that we think will be in each catchment area or moving into it during the next academic year.

The recommended places for incoming catchment pupils at the schools are detailed in the report.

1.2 What will change as a result of this policy?

There will always be reserved places in a school. However, we analyse various factors when deciding how many places should be reserved. Therefore the number of places held in reserve for incoming catchment pupils at schools may change annually or more frequently but this is detailed in the report.

1.3 Deciding if a full Impact Assessment is needed.

Please answer the following questions:

	Yes	No
1. The policy/ proposal has consequences for or affects people e.g. how they can access a service?		X
2. The policy/proposal has potential to make a significant impact on equality and human rights, socio-economic disadvantage, the council’s role as a corporate parent, children’s rights, or the council’s commitment to tackling climate change?		X
3. The policy/proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005?		X
4. The policy/ proposal involves a data processing activity (storage / collection of personal data) that is likely to result in a high risk to individuals as determined by Article 35 of the General Data Protection Regulation?		X

- If you have answered yes to questions 1 and 2 above, please proceed to complete the Integrated Impact Assessment. If you have answered No then an IIA does not need to be completed. Please keep a copy of the screening paperwork.

- If you have answered yes to question 3, you will need to consider whether you need to complete a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
 - If you have answered yes to question 4, you will need to consider whether you need to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment. Please seek further advice from the Team Manager Information Governance.
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Section 2: Integrated Impact Assessment

- 2.1 Have those who are directly affected by the policy had the opportunity to comment on new proposals?
- 2.2 What information/data have you used to inform the development of the policy to date?
- 2.3 What does the evidence/ research suggest about the policy's actual or likely impact on equality groups and those vulnerable/ or experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?

Evidence	Comment
Which groups are in particular need of this service?	
What level of service uptake/ access is there from protected and vulnerable groups?	
Can you identify positive outcomes for service users	
What is the service user experience of those from protected or vulnerable groups?	
What opportunity have those from protected groups had to co-produce or comment on the service/ plans?	

2.4 How does the policy meet the different needs of groups in the community? Please note that where children will be affected by the policy or activity a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact assessment must additionally be completed. [Children’s Rights and Well-being Impact Assessment - completion guidance and template | East Lothian Intranet](#)

Equality Groups	Comments
Older people, people in the middle years	
Children and young people children	
Women, men and transgender people (includes issues relating to pregnancy and maternity)	
Disabled people (includes physical disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, long-term medical conditions, mental health problems)	
Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers, migrant workers)	
Refugees and asylum seekers	
People with different religions or beliefs (includes people with no religion or belief)	
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people	
People who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership	
Those vulnerable to falling into poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • People on benefits • Lone Parents 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care experienced children and young people • Carers (including young carers) • Homeless people • Those involved in the community justice system • People with low literacy/numeracy • Families with 3 or more children • Those with a child/ children under 1 	
<p>Geographical communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural/ semi rural communities • Urban Communities • Coastal communities • Those living in the most deprived communities (bottom 20% SIMD areas) 	
<p>People with communication needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaelic Language Speakers {refer if necessary to the Council’s Gaelic Language Plan} • British Sign Language (BSL) users {refer if necessary to the Council’s BSL Plan} • English as a Second Language • Other e.g. Deafblind, Plain English, Large Print 	

2.5 Are there any other factors which will affect the way this policy impacts on the community or staff groups?

2.6 Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?
If yes, how have you included equality and human rights considerations into the contract?

2.7 Have you considered how you will communicate information about this policy or policy change to those affected e.g. to those with hearing loss, speech impairment or English as a second language?

2.8 Please consider how your policy will impact on each of the following?

<p>Equality and Human rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotes / advances equality of opportunity e.g. improves access to and quality of services• Promotes good relations within and between people with protected characteristics and tackles harassment• Promotes participation, is inclusive and gives people control over decisions which affect them• Preserves dignity and self-respect of individuals (does not lead to degrading treatment or stigma)• Builds support networks, resilience, community capacity
<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Socio-Economic Disadvantage / reducing poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximises income and/or reduces income inequality• Helps young people into positive destinations• Aids those returning to and those progressing within the labour market• Improves employability skills, including literacy and numeracy• Reduces the costs of taking part in activities and opportunities• Reduces the cost of living
<p>Comments :</p>

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Tackling Climate Change <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduces the need to travel or increases access to sustainable forms of transport• Minimises waste / encourages resource efficiency / contributes to the circular economy• Ensures goods / services are from ethical, responsible and sustainable sources• Improves energy efficiency / uses low carbon energy sources• Protects and/or enhances natural environments / habitats / biodiversity• Promotes the transition to a low carbon economy• Prepares and/or adapts communities for climate change impacts

Comments:

Corporate Parenting and Care Experienced Young People <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impacts on care experienced young people• Provides opportunities or reduces opportunities to participate in activities which are designed to promote the wellbeing of young people• Adversely affects the wellbeing of young people• Adversely impacts on outcomes for care experienced young people
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Comments:

Section 3. Action Plan

What, if any changes will be made to the proposal/ policy as a result of the assessment?

Changes to be made	Expected outcome of the change	Resources Required	Timeline	Responsible person

For consideration of the Head of Service

Can you identify any cumulative impacts on equality groups or vulnerable people arising from this policy, when considered alongside other changes across other services?

Sign off by Head of Service

Name: Nicola McDowell

Date: 19 February 2026