Coppice
Primary Partnership
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Consultation on proposed changes to the admission arrangements at Staplehurst School from September 2028

At a glance: Coppice Primary Partnership is consulting on reducing Staplehurst School's Reception PAN from 75 to 60, with effect from September 2028. In addition, Staplehurst are adding 'Children of Staff' to the school's oversubscription criteria

Staplehurst School is an academy within Coppice Primary Partnership. The Trust is the admission authority for the school and is consulting on a proposal to reduce the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) for Reception from 75 to 60, with effect from September 2028.

The PAN is the number of pupils the school would normally admit into Reception each September. The proposed change would not remove places from pupils already attending Staplehurst School and would not change the size of existing year groups.

The addition of the Children of Staff criteria would give priority to the children of staff, where the conditions set out in the School Admissions Code are met. This is in line with other schools in Coppice Primary Partnership.

The proposal

- Reduce the Reception PAN at Staplehurst School from 75 to 60 for admissions from September 2028.
- Plan the school sustainably as a two-form-entry school, with two Reception classes of up to 30 pupils.
- Make no change to pupils already on roll. Existing year groups with more than 60 pupils would continue through the school as normal.

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- Add a children of staff criterion to the school's oversubscription criteria, giving priority in the circumstances permitted by the School Admissions Code. The proposed wording is set out in the draft admission arrangements published alongside this consultation.
- Make no change to the school's oversubscription criteria or the way parents apply for a Reception place through Kent County Council.
- Keep demand for places under review. The Trust can review the PAN again in future if local circumstances change.

Why is the Trust proposing this change?

Current pupil numbers and school organisation. Although Staplehurst School currently has a PAN of 75, the school is operating predominantly as a two-form-entry school. The year groups that require three classes are only slightly above 60 pupils. A PAN of 75 therefore no longer reflects the school's normal operating model.

Current pupil numbers

Year Group	Current number on role	Class structure
Reception	55	2
1	67	3
2	54	2
3	50	2
4	65	2
5	58	2
6	44	2

Local demand for primary places. Kent County Council places Staplehurst School within the Marden and Staplehurst primary planning group. Its current Commissioning Plan forecasts surplus Reception capacity in this planning group throughout the forecast period. This indicates that the area has sufficient capacity to meet forecast demand even if Staplehurst School reduces its PAN by 15 places.

Forecast Reception surplus places – Marden and Staplehurst planning group

Admission year	Forecast surplus Reception places
2025/26	7
2026/27	16
2027/28	11
2028/29	22
2029/30	13
2030/31	13
2031/32	13
2032/33	14
2033/34	17
2034/35	19

Source: Kent County Council, Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-2030, Maidstone forecasts.

Alignment between capacity and demand. The proposed reduction is 15 places. KCC's forecasts show a continuing surplus of a broadly similar scale across the Marden and Staplehurst planning group, including 16 surplus places in 2026/27, 22 in 2028/29 and between 13 and 19 places in each year from 2029/30 to 2034/35. The Trust considers that reducing the PAN to 60 would better align the school's published capacity with forecast local demand.

Educational and financial sustainability. A PAN of 75 creates a risk that a cohort only marginally above 60 pupils requires an additional class, particularly in Key Stage 1 where infant class-size requirements apply. Operating three classes for a cohort only slightly above 60 can create significant additional staffing costs without a corresponding level of pupil funding. A PAN of 60 would provide a clearer and more sustainable basis for staffing, curriculum planning and the use of school resources.

Future demand will continue to be monitored. The Trust recognises that pupil-place demand can change. Kent County Council's Commissioning Plan notes that housing and inward migration can affect demand across Maidstone. The Trust will therefore continue to review local forecasts and application patterns and can consult on a future change if additional capacity becomes necessary.

Children of staff criterion

As part of this consultation, the Trust is also proposing to add a children of staff criterion to Staplehurst School's oversubscription criteria. This would allow priority to be given to children of staff where the conditions set out in the School Admissions Code are met. The full wording of the proposed criterion is included in the draft admission arrangements published alongside this consultation.

What would the change mean for families?

- Children already attending Staplehurst School would not be affected.
- Existing year groups with more than 60 pupils would continue at their current pupil size as they move through the school although number of classes may change.
- From September 2028, the school would normally admit up to 60 children into Reception.
- Parents would continue to apply for Reception places through Kent County Council in the usual way.
- The school's admission criteria would continue to apply where there are more applications than places available.

Who are we consulting?

In line with the School Admissions Code, the Trust is consulting with relevant stakeholders, including parents and carers, the local community, Kent County Council, neighbouring schools and admission authorities, and those with an interest in school admissions in the area.

How to respond

The consultation will run for six weeks from Monday 5 October 2026 until Monday 16 November 2026.

Online response form: Staplehurst School – Consultation on Admissions Arrangements for Sept 2028 – Fill out form

Alternatively, email office@coppicepp.org with "Staplehurst PAN consultation" in the subject line.

We would particularly welcome views on:

- Do you support the proposal to reduce the PAN at Staplehurst School from 75 to 60 from September 2028?
- Do you support the proposal to add a children of staff criterion to the school's oversubscription criteria?

- What are the reasons for your view?
- Are there any implications of the proposed change that you believe the Trust should consider before reaching its decision?

What happens next?

- Following the consultation, all responses will be considered by the Trust Board before it determines Staplehurst School's admission arrangements for September 2028.
- Admission arrangements must be determined by 28 February 2027 and the determined arrangements will be published by 15 March 2027.
- The outcome of the consultation and the final decision will be published on the Trust and school websites.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal and provide your views.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Chatley
CEO