



**Our vision is a Perth and Kinross where everyone can live life well,  
free from poverty and inequality**

---

<b>Committee or Board:</b>	<b>Learning and Families Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>2 April 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Reserved Places in Schools 2025/2026 and Maximising Capacities Update</b>
<b>Report Number:</b>	<b>25/69</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Karen Robertson, Service Manager (Business Services) (<a href="mailto:FBSCommittee@pkc.gov.uk">FBSCommittee@pkc.gov.uk</a>)</b>
<b>Organisational Lead:</b>	<b>David Macluskey, Strategic Lead – Education and Learning</b>

---

## **1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the number of reserved places for session 2025/2026, within primary and secondary schools, in accordance with [Section 28A of the Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#), as amended. This allows places to be protected for local children to attend their catchment school. This report also informs Committee where primary class capacities have been maximised during school session 2024/2025.

## **1.2 Sections**

1. Purpose
2. Recommendations
3. Background/Main Issues
4. Operation of Criteria
5. Maximising Capacities
6. Impact Value Assessment
7. Appendices

## **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 Approves the number of reserved places, within schools which have classes with a limited number of spaces at specific stages, for session 2025/26, as shown in Appendix 1.

- 2.2 Requests the Strategic Lead – Education and Learning to revise these numbers each year to reflect historical or anticipated patterns of migration, information about known movements of families in to (or out of) an area, and any current residential developments.
- 2.3 Delegates responsibility to the Strategic Lead – Education and Learning to keep under review, the reserved places for all schools, in light of any building work in schools and in light of residential developments.
- 2.4 Notes the primary schools where class capacities have been maximised during session 2024/25.

### **3. Background/Main Issues**

Reserved places refer to the number of places which, in the opinion of the Education Authority, are reasonably required to accommodate pupils likely to become resident within the catchment area of a school during the period of considering placing requests and during that school year.

This allows the Education Authority to calculate and retain a certain number of places for children from families likely to move into the catchment area of schools which have classes with a limited number of spaces in some or all stages. The legislation allows the Education Authority to refuse some or all placing requests made for a particular school on the grounds that children from within the catchment area may become resident during the year. The purpose of Reserved Places in Schools is to support the Council's [School Admission Policy](#).

Places are reserved to try to accommodate these children, where possible, in their catchment school, allowing the Education Authority to take positive steps to protect places in schools for catchment pupils and avoiding having to zone pupils to another school which may incur home to school transport costs for the Council.

#### **3.1 Historic Information/Context**

- 3.1.1 The strategy for the implementation of reserved places within Perth & Kinross Council was approved by Committee in March 1997 for session 1997/98. Further annual reports to the then Lifelong Learning Committee and, thereafter, Learning and Families Committee have been approved for each subsequent academic session.
- 3.1.2 The factors considered in determining whether reserved places are required, and the number of reserved places within schools for the current session are:
  - Schools which have classes with a limited number of spaces at specific stages;
  - Historical or anticipated patterns of migration, information about known movements of families in to (or out of) an area and any current residential development in the area; and

- The possible pattern of movement indicated by the current session's trends and roll projections for 2025/26.

3.1.3 The scheme needs to be justifiable and operated fairly, particularly as parents can appeal to the relevant Education Appeal Committee and thereafter to the Sheriff Court.

### **3.2 Options Available to Elected Members**

3.2.1 Failure to establish an appropriate number of reserved places in schools which require them, increases the likelihood of families moving into catchment areas during the school session and not being able to enrol their children in their local catchment school. This can result in families being forced to have their children attend schools outwith the communities in which they live and can incur additional home to school transport costs for the Council. In light of this, having no reserved places or places set at an incorrect level, is not appropriate.

### **3.3 Conclusion/Rationale for Recommendations made in Section 2**

3.3.1 The reserved places procedure allows children moving into a catchment area of a school a greater likelihood of attending that school. Reliable historical and anticipated patterns have been established, as accurate information is collected.

3.3.2 The annual revision of the reserved places procedure ensures that pupil intakes are stringently managed for each school ensuring, where possible, that local children can attend their catchment school.

3.3.3 It is proposed that the reserved places required for session 2025/26 are accepted as outlined in Appendix 1. The Strategic Lead – Education and Learning will publish the Reserved Places in Schools 2025/26 report and implement this in full for session 2025/26.

3.3.4 In order to provide accurate and clear information, the Council publishes the [required reserved places on its website](#). The published information shows the reserved places at each individual stage for each school. This format allows parents/carers to clearly understand how many reserved places are being held at each/any stage in the school each session.

## **4. Operation of Criteria**

4.1 The operation of the criteria for session 2024/25, to date, has ensured that only four primary pupils have moved into an area and been unable to attend their non-denominational catchment primary schools as their first choice of school. The reason the pupils were unable to attend their catchment school was as a result of one of the required class stages being full to the legal maximum capacity which could not accommodate any further pupils.

In respect of secondary schools, no secondary school pupil has moved into an area and has been unable to be granted a place in their catchment non-denominational secondary school.

- 4.2 The application of reserved places is most commonly utilised during the process for managing the new P1 and S1 intakes each year where parents may choose to have their child attend a school other than their catchment school. For session 2024/25, 266 placing requests were made for P1 places in primary schools and 205 of these requests were granted and 61 were refused. 15 of the refusals related to children who live outwith Perth and Kinross. This represents a positive outcome for 77.06% of P1 parents who made a placing request for their child to attend the primary school of their choice outwith their catchment area.
- 4.3 Overall, 95.3% of the P1 intake for August 2024 were granted a place in their first choice school that they asked for.
- 4.4 In respect of S1 places, 105 placing requests were submitted and 90 of these requests were granted and 15 were refused. 11 of the refusals related to children who live outwith Perth and Kinross. This represents a positive outcome for 85.7% of parents who made a placing request for their child to attend the secondary school of their choice outwith their catchment area.
- 4.5 Overall, 98.9% of the S1 intake for August 2024 were granted a place in the first choice school that they asked for.
- 4.6 Where a placing request is refused, parents have a statutory right of appeal to the Education Appeal Committee and, thereafter, the Sheriff Court. For session 2024/25, 9 appeals were considered by the Education Appeal Committee, and no appeals were considered by the Sheriff Court.
- 4.7 The historical pattern of migration and house building continues to be monitored to ensure as accurate information as possible is used when considering the annual requirement for reserved places.
- 4.8 For session 2025/26, there are some fluctuations in the reserved places from the previous school session.
- 4.9 There are a number of schools whose reserved places have been altered in light of experience in administering placements throughout session 2024/25. In addition, where additional building work has been undertaken in schools or reconfiguration of class structures, this can lead to the reduction in the requirement for reserved places. Reserved places may be increased where residential build has taken place or is planned within school catchment areas. Reserved places have also been altered where school rolls have increased or decreased.
- 4.10 The total number of reserved places proposed for 2025/26 has been increased to reflect the factors outlined in section 4.9 of this report.

Reserved places fluctuate on an annual basis and the total number of reserved places each year has varied between 92 and 958 since their introduction in 1997.

## **5. Maximising Capacities**

5.1 On 16 May 2018, the then Lifelong Learning Committee approved the report Maximising Primary School Capacities ([Report No. 18/158 refers](#)). The report gave approval for the then Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to apply the Scottish Government space capacity metric of 1.7m<sup>2</sup> per pupil for primary schools, if required, to accommodate children living in the catchment area.

5.2 This provides an additional mechanism to manage the accommodation available in primary schools where there are challenges in accommodating catchment pupils in smaller classrooms which operate below the legal class size maximum. It also ensures that teaching staffing budgets are not exceeded while providing pupils with the best opportunity to attend their catchment school.

5.3 The report also agreed that Committee would be provided with an annual update on the use of this variation within primary schools.

5.4 During session 2024/25, the capacity of some primary school classrooms was temporarily maximised at the following primary schools to allow catchment pupils to be admitted:

- Grandtully Primary School.
- Robert Douglas Memorial (RDM) Primary School.
- St Dominic's RC Primary School.

5.5 At the time of this report, it is too early to report whether it will be necessary to apply the space capacity metric of 1.7m<sup>2</sup> to any classes for session 2025/26. The allocation of places for the new school session will be concluded by 30 April 2025 in line with the statutory timescales and will be reported to the Learning and Families Committee as part of the next annual Reserved Places in Schools report.

## **6. Impact Value Assessment**

6.1 The Impact Value Assessment (IVA) undertaken in relation to this report can be viewed on the PKC website via the link: [Reserved Places in Schools 2025-26 and Maximising Capacities Update – Learning and Families Committee \(2 April 2025\)](#)

6.2 The Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment (EFIA) undertaken in relation to this report can be viewed here: [Equality and Fairness Impact Assessments](#)

## 7. Appendix

### 7.1 Appendix 1 – Reserved Places 2025/2026.

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.