

**Shetland
Islands
Council**



Children's Services

**Admissions
Halls of
Residence**

Policy

August 2023

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Summary of changes to document			
Date	Version Updated number	New version number	Brief description of changes

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Shetland Islands Council has the legal power to provide accommodation where it is required to ensure that children and young people are not disadvantaged in their educational opportunity due to the remoteness of their home. Where accommodation is provided to enable those in remote areas to attend school, the accommodation must be provided free of charge.
- 1.2 The Anderson High School Halls of Residence (hereinafter referred to as “the Halls of Residence”) provides co-educational accommodation for eligible pupils aged 11 to 19 years who attend the Anderson High School in Lerwick.
- 1.3 The Halls of Residence is a registered, “School Care Accommodation Service” with the Care Inspectorate and is subject to their regulation and inspection regime. As a registered School Care Accommodation Service provided by a local authority, the Halls of Residence must also be compliant in a number of laws and regulations including, “Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020” as well as numerous Health and Safety Executive requirements.
- 1.4 A team of dedicated professionals within the Halls of Residence provide a nurturing, safe, caring environment where children receive encouragement and support which helps sustain them to reach their full academic potential in their secondary education.

2. Admission Criteria

- 2.1 Shetland Islands Council has identified catchment areas for all its primary and secondary schools, primarily to facilitate transport arrangements. Shetland Islands Council aims to provide a place for each pupil in their local catchment school and to meet requests from parents for a place at an alternative (non- catchment) school, but there may be occasions when this is not possible – if for example the school cannot meet that particular pupil’s needs.
- 2.2 To be eligible for admission to the Halls of Residence, pupils must reside within a catchment area for the Anderson High School for their secondary education. The Anderson High School catchment areas include feeder primary schools where pupils transfer at secondary 1 and secondary departments where pupils transfer at secondary 5. The catchment areas are detailed within Shetland Islands Council Admissions Policy: <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/downloads/file/2541/admissions-policy>
- 2.3 Only those pupils residing in Anderson High School catchment areas within the outer isles and Sandness are eligible for a free place in the Halls of Residence. The Halls of Residence eligible catchment areas are therefore as follows:-

Transfer from Primary 7 to Secondary 1

- Fair Isle
- Foula
- Papa Stour
- Skerries
- Fetlar

Transfer from Secondary 4 to Secondary 5

- Unst
- Yell
- Whalsay
- Sandness

3. Placing Requests & Admission to the Halls of Residence

- 3.1 Where a parent/young person has submitted a successful placing request to attend the Anderson High School instead of their catchment area school, they may wish to apply for a place in the Halls of Residence.
- 3.2 All such applications will be determined by the Director of Children's Services in accordance with the priority order for the award of places in the Halls of Residence at paragraph 5.2 below.
- 3.3 In these circumstances, where there is no geographical requirement for the pupil to reside in the Halls of Residence, Shetland Islands Council has a discretionary right to charge for hostel accommodation. The charge for a place in the Halls of Residence will be set each year by Shetland Islands Council and approved as part of the annual budget setting process. The charge will be published on the Council's website as part of the Schedule of Council Charges and on Children's Services webpage. In line with the Council's Financial Regulations the Executive Manager – Finance will make the decision if, due to exceptional circumstances, charges can be waived.

4. Application Process

- 4.1 To apply for a place in the Halls of Residence, parents/young person must make the request in writing to:

Director of Children's Services
Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
ZE1 0QD

- 4.2 All applications should be received by the 15 of March each year and where there is a corresponding placing request for the pupil to attend the Anderson High School instead of their catchment area secondary school, a copy of that placing request must be attached to the application form.
- 4.3 Prior to any placement being approved in the Halls of Residence, the applicant must be registered on the school roll of a Shetland Islands Council school.

4.4 The completed school placing request form should also be returned to:

Director of Children's Services
Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick ZE1 0QD

Alternatively the school placing request form can be completed and returned online at:
https://my.shetland.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?mode=fill&consentMessage=y&form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-0f43ccae-086f-4e9c-a9e7-2526557d35d7/AF-Stage-2e78990a-5ae2-4f6a-bffe-f93fdf1f067b/definition.json&redirectlink=%2Fen&cancelRedirectLink=%2Fen&consentMessage=yes

4.5 All applications received by the 15 of March will be determined by 15 May. All other applications will be determined as soon as reasonably practicable after receiving the completed form.

5. Oversubscription

- 5.1 Shetland Islands Council undertakes annual planning with consideration to current and projected school roles for those pupils who may be eligible for a place in the Halls of Residence. This data is used to forecast demand on the service and make plans for adequate provision. On occasion, Shetland Islands Council may receive more applications for pupils to receive a place at the Halls of Residence than its capacity allows. Typically this will be known 1 year in advance and thus allow time for contingencies to be planned for.
- 5.2 In the event that there are insufficient spaces, the Shetland Islands Council will allocate places in the priority order listed below:-
01. Pupils from Unst, Yell, Sandness or Whalsay who are due to enter Secondary 5 at the Anderson High School and pupils from Fair Isle, Foula, Papa Stour, Skerries and Fetlar who are due to enter Secondary 1 at the Anderson High School.
 02. Pupils with no geographical entitlement to reside in the Halls of Residence, but the pupil is entitled to attend the Anderson High School (either due to residing in a relevant catchment area or a successful placing request) and an application has been made for a place within the Halls of Residence.
- 5.3 A pupil who has received a place under Priority 02) may need to relinquish their place in the Halls of Residence should another pupil move into the catchment area of Anderson High School who falls within Priority 01). The decision as to who should give up their place would be at the discretion of the Director of Children's Services, depending upon the age and stage of the pupils residing within the Halls of Residence at the time.
- 5.4 In the event that all pupils from priority group 1 and priority group 2 have been accommodated and there are still vacant rooms in the Halls of Residence. Children's

Services will offer to all parents of Anderson High School pupils the application process, to receive any additional applications.

6. Transport and Weekend Arrangements.

- 6.1 The Halls of Residence will close over occasional planned weekends, occasional holiday dates, or where public holidays befall certain weekdays whereby they result in school closures. Typically, Residents will not have access to the Halls on the weekends of planned closure and they will be expected to make use of arranged transport or make alternative arrangements. This will always be planned and only where it is safe for Residents to travel home. Where it is not possible for Residents to travel home, the Halls will accommodate those Residents under a duty of care
- 6.2 School transport to and from the Halls of Residence is only provided to those who are entitled to a free accommodation placement. Parents/young people who fall within Priority 02 may apply for vacant seats on school transport under the terms of the current School Transport Policy:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1279/school-transport-policy>

- 6.3 Travelling to the Halls of Residence during the school term:

6.3.1 Pupils travelling from:

- Yell
- Unst
- Fetlar
- Papa Stour
- Skerries
- Whalsay

Will be provided with transport so they arrive at the Halls of Residence on the Sunday evening of a school week and leaving to return home on a Friday afternoon.

6.3.2 Pupils travelling from:

- Sandness

Will be provided transport which will see them arrive at the Halls on the Monday morning of a school week leaving to return home on a Friday afternoon.

6.3.3 Pupils travelling from Foula and Fair Isle:

Due to the distances and increased possibility of travel disruption, Fair Isle and Foula residents have an entitlement to stay in the Halls over planned weekends during the school term. We will endeavour to have flights or ferries arranged every third weekend as far as is reasonably practicable. Booking flights for these pupils will generally be the preferred option for travel. However, where a flight is unable to go ahead due to weather or technical issues, arrangements will be made to travel the next available weekend or by boat where this is available.

Travel arrangements to Fair Isle and Foula will be made in advance of each school term in consultation with the respective families. The Halls of Residence will endeavour to accommodate travel requests but cannot commit to bespoke arrangements for Foula and Fair Isle travel. Should a parent or resident decline arranged transport, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make alternative travel and/or accommodation arrangements over those weekends, occasional holidays or term breaks, where the Halls of Residence are closed.

6.4 The Halls of Residence will always heed the advice of transport operators during times of inclement weather and make alternative arrangements that may deviate from routine where necessary.

6.5 In all cases, the Halls of Residence will maintain a level of staffing that will allow us to respond to travel disruption and ensure the safety and welfare of the pupils in our care during the respective school term. The Halls of Residence manager can also use discretion to allow weekend arrangements agreed with families in advance.

7. Transition Arrangements

7.1 There are two transition points for residents:

- (i) New residents coming to the Halls of Residence to start their education at the Anderson High School; and
- (ii) Existing residents who may be going through a transition phase while still on the Anderson High School roll, but attending further education in different settings as part of their timetable.

8. New Residents

8.1 Children's Services staff will visit all schools outlined at paragraph 2.3 above during terms 3 or 4 each academic year to begin early introductions and discuss the transition process with prospective residents. This will enable Children's Services staff to explore the needs of prospective residents, familiarise residents with staff as far as is practicably possible and help plan for successful transitions to the Halls of Residence.

9. Established Residents Attending Alternative Educational Placements

9.1 For those established residents that wish to undertake college study or alternative further educational placements that do not turn 16 before the end of the school year (otherwise known as "Christmas leavers"), the Halls of Residence commits to supporting their transition by providing accommodation as they transition from their existing school based education to an alternative further education.

9.2 To remain eligible for a place in the Halls of Residence, the resident must be on the Anderson High School roll and attend alternative further educational placements as part of their timetabled school curriculum.

10. Additional Support Needs

- 10.1 It is important that the process of admission to the Halls of Residence for pupils with additional support needs begins at least 12 months prior to transition to the Anderson High School.
- 10.2 Where necessary, a Children's Services Resource Based Planning Meeting will be held to determine whether the pupil's needs can be met within the Anderson High School and the Halls of Residence. This may include a Risk Assessment to identify whether the Halls of Residence can safely accommodate the child.
- 10.3 There must be clear communication between the pupil, parents/carers, school staff, support agencies and Halls of Residence staff to identify any additional support needs and to plan for these to be met within the Halls of Residence.
- 10.4 Shetland Islands Council is committed to ensuring that pupils with a disability are not treated less favourably than other pupils and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that those pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

11. Temporary or Permanent Exclusion

- 11.1 The Halls of Residence will always work in accordance with the Shetland Islands Council, Managing Exclusions in Shetland Schools Policy:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/downloads/file/2186/managing-exclusions-in-shetland-schools-policy>.

- 11.2 An exclusion is a means of corrective action whereby a Resident is not permitted admission to the Halls of Residence whether for a set period or permanently. In keeping with our duty of care towards Residents and staff it may be necessary to exclude Residents that pose a risk to others directly or indirectly as set out in the Residents Handbook. This decision will be made by the Halls of Residence Manager.

An exclusion from the Halls of Residence is not a school exclusion and does not lead to an exclusion from School. All exclusions will be considered on a case by case basis.

If a parent, carer or resident is dissatisfied with an exclusion from the Halls of Residence, they can use the Shetland Islands Council Complaint Handling Procedure.

- 11.3 Shetland Islands Council reserves the right to seek the cost of repair where damage through negligence or vandalism has occurred.

12. Termination of Placement.

- 12.1 Besides oversubscription as detailed in section 5, there may at times be a need to review a resident's placement when the resident is not regularly using the Halls of Residence.
- 12.2 A review of a placement in the Halls of Residence will be called when a resident has not used their room for 5 days (excluding weekends) in a 4 week period without prior

agreement (for instance, periods of agreed absence for study periods, work experience etc.).

12.3 Reviewing placements where they are not being fully utilised are necessary in order to ensure:

- Responsibility and risk - the Halls of Residence may not hold current information on a resident if they are not actively engaging with the service. The service cannot with any degree of confidence build working relationships, identify or manage without effective engagement and use of the service.
- Our responsibilities to other residents and welfare are protected and maintained.
- Value – the room may be better utilised by others that need it and this may reduce oversubscription.

12.4 In advance of any review, consultation will take place with the resident, parents or guardians and the position outlined in writing.

12.5 The review will seek to establish reasons for the placement not being utilised, outline concerns as well as form a plan of support with the aim of improving use.

In any review, mitigations and personal circumstances will be considered and accounted for. For example health or family circumstances.

12.6 Where there is no satisfactory reason for absence from the Halls of Residence provided during the course of the initial review, the resident and their parent/guardian will be advised of the need for use of their allocated room to improve and a further review date will be set within 8 weeks (excluding term breaks) of the initial review to monitor for improvement.

12.7 In the event there are insufficient mitigating circumstances and room use has not improved, a decision by the Manager of the Halls of Residence may be taken at this point to withdraw the access to the Halls of Residence for the young person.

13. Review

13.1 This Policy will be reviewed and monitored every three years or sooner if required due to any changes.

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