



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Determination

Case reference: VAR2788

Admission Authority: East Riding of Yorkshire Council for Longcroft School and Sixth Form College

Date of decision: 7 August 2026

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by East Riding of Yorkshire Council for Longcroft School and Sixth Form College for 2026/27.

I determine that the published admission number for the admission of external applicants to Year 12 in 2026/27 shall be zero.

The referral

1. East Riding of Yorkshire Council (the Admission Authority; the Local Authority) has referred to the adjudicator a proposal for a variation to the admission arrangements (the Arrangements) for Longcroft School and Sixth Form College (the School) for 2026/27.
2. The School is a community school for children aged 11 to 18 years in Beverly, about ten miles north-west of Hull city centre. It is a co-educational school with no designated religious character.
3. The governing body of the School, supported by the Local Authority, has decided to withdraw the provision of the School's Year 12 for 2026/27. The School, therefore, will not provide Year 12 places for any of its 2025/26 Year 11 pupils (i.e. internal students due to move into the School's sixth form in 2026/27). In this circumstance, the proposed variation is that the published admission number (PAN) of the School, which applies only to the admission of external applicants to Year 12, be reduced from ten, as determined, to zero for 2026/27. This determination will not affect the School's PAN for admission to Year 7 in 2026/27.

Jurisdiction and procedure

4. Section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) makes provision for variations to determined arrangements. Paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 of the School Admissions Code (the Code) say (insofar as is relevant here):

“3.6 Once admission arrangements have been determined for a particular school year, they cannot be revised by the admission authority unless such revision is necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement of this Code, admissions law, a determination of the Adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements. Admission authorities may propose other variations where they consider such changes to be necessary in view of a major change in circumstances. Such proposals **must** be referred to the Schools Adjudicator for approval, and the appropriate bodies notified. Where the local authority is the admission authority for a community or voluntary controlled school, it **must** consult the governing body of the school before making any reference.

3.7 Admission authorities **must** notify the appropriate bodies of all variations”.

5. The Arrangements were determined by the Local Authority on 28 January 2025.

6. The Local Authority has provided me with confirmation that the appropriate bodies have been notified of the proposed variation in line with the Code. I find that the appropriate procedures were followed, and I am satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction.

7. In considering the variation request, I have had regard to all relevant legislation and the Code.

8. The information I have considered in reaching my decision includes:

- the referral from the Local Authority dated 20 July 2026 and supporting documents;
- the determined Arrangements, and the proposed variation to those Arrangements;
- responses from the Local Authority and the School to my requests for further information;
- maps, including Google Maps and those showing the location of the School;
- the Department for Education’s guidance document ‘Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools: Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers’ (issued in August 2025) (the DfE’s guidance document); and

- information available on the websites of .gov.uk. (including the ‘Get Information About Schools’ (GIAS) and ‘Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool’ (FBIT) websites), the Local Authority, and the School.

9. There is no formal consultation required for a variation and so parents and others might not have the opportunity to express their views. Clearly it is desirable that changes to arrangements are made via the process of determination following consultation as the consultation process allows those with an interest to express their views. It also allows for objections to the adjudicator. None of this is afforded by the variation process.

10. I note here that the Arrangements for 2027/28 have been determined, and the PAN for the admission of external applicants to Year 12 is set at ten. This means that if I agree to the Admission Authority’s request to vary the Arrangements for 2026/27 by reducing the PAN as proposed, it will be for that year only and will not have a bearing on subsequent years.

11. The proposal for temporary withdrawal of Year 12 provision at the School referred to in this variation request falls within the meaning of a ‘temporary change’ in accordance with the DfE’s guidance document. Page 33 of this statutory guidance document (insofar as is relevant here) says:

“Local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools can make limited changes to their schools without following the statutory process, including some temporary changes (e.g. enlargement of premises anticipated to be in place for no more than 3 years, or a change of age range anticipated to be in place for no more than 2); local authorities and governing bodies are nevertheless required to adhere to the usual principles of public law.

Local authorities and governing bodies **MUST**:

- act rationally and within their powers;
- take into account all relevant and no irrelevant considerations; and
- follow a fair procedure.”

12. As the Adjudicator I do not have jurisdiction to consider the decision of the governing body of the School to withdraw temporarily its provision of Year 12 class(es) in 2026/27. My jurisdiction is only to determine whether a variation should be made to the Arrangements, as determined by the Admission Authority, in respect of the admission of external applicants to Year 12 of the School. Paragraph 1.2 of the Code reads:

“As part of determining their admission arrangements, all admission authorities **must** set an admission number for each ‘relevant age group’.”

13. Footnote 11 of the Code defines ‘relevant age group’ in paragraph 1.2 as follows (emphasis added):

“This is the age group at which pupils are or will normally be admitted to the school e.g. reception, year 7 and **year 12 where the school admits external applicants to the sixth form** (Section 142 of the SSFA [School Standards and Framework Act] 1998).”

14. In the interest of dealing speedily with this and other requests for variations for schools, I have not considered other aspects of the Arrangements. Therefore, nothing in this determination should be taken as indicating that other aspects of the Arrangements do or do not conform with the requirements relating to admissions.

Consideration of proposed variation

15. Paragraph 3.6 of the Code (as above) requires that admission arrangements, once determined, may only be revised, that is changed or varied, if there is a major change of circumstance or certain other limited and specified circumstances. I will consider below whether the proposed variation is justified by the change in circumstances.

16. The Local Authority has proposed that the PAN of the School, which applies to the admission of external applicants to Year 12, be reduced from ten to zero in 2026/27. The governing body of the School has supported the proposal.

17. As I said, I do not have any jurisdiction to review the decision of the School to withdraw temporarily its provision of Year 12 in its sixth form in 2026/27. I can only set out the evidence I have gathered insofar as it is relevant to the proposed PAN variation which I am considering here.

18. The Local Authority summarised in the referral form the reason for it seeking a variation to the Year 12 PAN for the School as follows:

“The Governing Body has consulted on a proposed temporary pause [sic] of the sixth form provision for the following periods:

No year 12 intake in September 2026. All year 13 pupils will continue through to the end of their programmes and will be unaffected by the change. Year 12 intake returns in September 2027.

This request to reduce the PAN of the sixth form for the above temporary period is due to:

- An extraordinary Year 7 intake five years ago (now Year 11) created a significantly smaller number of pupils in Year 11 and an atypical attainment profile. This has suppressed internal progression and impacted on how well the curriculum is able to meet the needs of the current cohort.

- The financial deficit that would be created by maintaining a Year 12 intake in September 2026 given the above circumstances and the associated impact on student numbers would have a profound and long-lasting impact on the financial viability of the whole school. Statutory funding for 11-16 pupils would have to be redirected and over the recovery period resources that should be available to the whole school would have to be reduced / removed. This places pupils at an unfair disadvantage.”

19. The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient places for the children in its area. There are only three secondary schools in the relevant planning area. Apart from the School, Beverley Grammar School and Beverley High School operate a joint sixth form as they are both single sex schools. The Local Authority noted that:

- “The number of children that would not be offered a place at the Longcroft Sixth Form are 20 internal Year 11 transitioning into Year 12 for 2026-27.
- These pupils could attend the Joint Sixth form which is located at Beverley High School and Beverley Grammar School, East Riding College located in Beverley, and a number of post 16 providers who provide transport via Beverley.
- The Headteachers of both Beverley Grammar School and Beverley High School are supportive of this proposal and have confirmed that they would be able to accommodate additional pupils if required. There were no applications from external pupils wishing to join the Longcroft sixth form in September 2026.
- The walking distance between Longcroft School and Beverley High School is 1.04 miles, the walking distance between Longcroft School and Beverley Grammar School is 1.78 and the walking distance between Longcroft School and East Riding College is 1.6 miles.”

20. In response to my request for further information, the Local Authority stated on 3 August 2026:

“The Local Authority has carefully considered its statutory duty under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for young people within its area and is satisfied that this duty can be discharged whether the proposed variation is approved or not approved.

If the proposed temporary pause [sic] to Year 12 admissions at Longcroft School and Sixth Form College is approved, the Local Authority is confident that there remains sufficient post-16 capacity across the Beverley place planning area and the wider East Riding to meet anticipated demand. The evidence available to the Authority demonstrates that there is currently a surplus of post 16 places locally.

The Authority is also satisfied that pupils in Beverley continue to have access to a broad range of high-quality post-16 options through school sixth forms, further education colleges and other local providers. The Beverley Joint Sixth Form

partnership and neighbouring post-16 providers have capacity to accommodate students who would otherwise have sought a place at Longcroft. The Authority has identified no evidence that the temporary pause [sic] would result in a shortage of post-16 places or restrict access to suitable courses for young people within the area.”

21. The School has confirmed that there were only 89 pupils on roll of Year 11 in 2025/26, and that only a maximum of 19 students would have entered Year 12 (if provision for Year 12 were not withdrawn) in September 2026. The governing body of the School provided me with the following context:

“In 2021, at a particularly challenging time for the school and in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, only 84 pupils arrived into Year 7 and 17 into Year 12. The school at this time was already presenting a deficit position.”

22. The FBIT website shows that for the financial year ending March 2025, the School had an in-year deficit of about £137,000, and a negative balance of £542,000 in its revenue reserve. The governing body of the School has shown me budgetary information to prove why the Year 12 provision in 2026/27 would otherwise aggravate the worsening deficit of the School.

23. The governing body of the School stated in its reply of 3 August 2026 to my request for further information:

“It is important to highlight that governors are unanimously committed to a Longcroft Sixth Form and support this application for a temporary adjustment with deep regret. Having made every effort to mitigate this action, in order to secure the school's current trajectory and long term future, it is recognised that a temporary pause [sic] is required.

Over recent years, the school has moved from attendance and outcomes in the bottom 10% in the country and the worst performing in the local authority to some of the highest academic outcomes anywhere in the region ...

The reputation of the school has been hugely enhanced and we have moved from 84 children enrolling in Year 7, 5 years ago, to 174 enrolling into Year 7 for September - against a reported demographic decline in the local area ... However, the situation remains vulnerable and there are clear strategic risks ahead alongside the many exciting opportunities.

Parents tell us that the option for post 16 study remains a key factor in their decision to join our community. Following the consultation process we are clear that our commitment to the sixth form long term is unwavering, but that in the short term, failure to act places a serious risk to the school which has sustained many years of constraint due to the inherited financial position - a direct impact of this extraordinary year group moving through the school. We have already engaged in discussions, which will continue, to explore various models for collaboration to our offer across the

locality, but have a secure and financially viable offer within the existing model regardless.

If the decision to pause recruitment is supported, this will enable us to mitigate a further degradation of the whole school's financial position and remove the need for funding for Year 7-11 pupils to be redirected to offset a post 16 offer for a small number of students. The school acted swiftly to support families in securing alternative placements with other providers in the event that this decision was upheld, so all pupils for September now have planned progression and are not expecting an offer at the school. Returning Longcroft to a balanced budget position will enable appropriate investment in the learning infrastructure that will benefit all children pre and post 16 moving forward and play a key role in sustaining improved outcomes, recruitment and the long-term success of the school."

24. Even though the temporary withdrawal of its Year 12 provision would affect only a small number of eligible applicants, this caused understandable disappointment. I have been shown a feedback summary report which sets out the process undertaken to consult the affected parties and their feedback. The School made a conscientious effort to consider possible alternatives, and I believe it must have been a difficult decision to make to withdraw its provision of Year 12 for 2026/27 in order to ensure the provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources for the School as a whole. While this would undoubtedly cause some frustration of parental preference for those within the School hoping to progress to Year 12 at the same school in 2026/27, it has nothing to do with the Year 12 PAN which is the subject of this variation request.

25. The Local Authority has confirmed that there were no applications from external pupils wishing to join the School's sixth form in September 2026, and so the proposed reduction of the Year 12 PAN to zero is unlikely to have caused frustration for those from outside of the School who would otherwise want to seek a Year 12 place at the School for September 2026.

26. Taking everything into consideration, I find that the proposed variation is justified by the circumstances and I approve it.

Determination

27. In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the proposed variation to the admission arrangements determined by East Riding of Yorkshire Council for Longcroft School and Sixth Form College for 2026/27.

28. I determine that the published admission number for the admission of external applicants to Year 12 in 2026/27 shall be zero.

Dated: 7 August 2026

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Jackie Liu