



Admissions arrangements for 2014/15

Agreed by Chair of Governing Body April 2013

Approved by Governing Body safeguarding committee April 2013

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Recommendation

1. That the Governing Body approves the admission arrangements for 2014/15 as outlined in Annex 1.
2. Delegate to the Headteacher to undertake the actions required in paragraph 24.

Background

1. The Governing Body, as the admissions authority for the academy, is required by law to determine its admission arrangements for 2014/15 by 15 April 2013.
2. In autumn 2012 the Governing Body approved undertaking consultation on draft admissions arrangements for 2014/15 academic year, and delegated authority to the Headteacher to manage the consultation in accordance with the School Admissions Code requirements.
3. This report outlines the consultation process, the responses, and the changes that have been made between the consultation version and the version that is recommended for adoption.
4. The recommendations for over-subscription criteria are identical for each of the seven academies who converted in August 2011. The Headteachers believe that the schools should adopt the same criteria.
5. The School Admissions Code requires consultation to be undertaken for a minimum of eight weeks between 1 November and 1 March with a specified range of stakeholders. The academies co-ordinated their consultation, which ran between 17 December 2012 and 22 February 2013. The consultation admissions arrangements for each school were issued to every state funded school in Harrow (with a specific request to primary schools to raise awareness of parents via newsletters / emails etc), to Harrow Council, the three colleges in the borough, and Director's of Children's Services of the surrounding council areas. The consultation requirements of the School Admissions Code were complied with.
6. Under the School Admissions Appeal Code the Governing Body (as the admissions authority) is required to:
 - a. Ensure arrangements are in place for individuals to appeal against an admissions decision [Note – this is achieved through the Admissions SLA and the Legal SLA with Harrow Council]

- b. Publish information by 28 February each year about the appeals process for that September's entry [Note – this information is on the website for the 2013 entry appeals]

Harrow Council arrangements for Whitmore High School for 2014/15

- 7. Harrow Council consulted on two changes to the over-subscription criteria for Whitmore High School:
 - a. Extending and changing the sibling link so that it applies to all students in Y7 – Y11 at the time of application
 - b. Extending the 'exceptional needs' criteria to cover social as well as medical needs of a child.

Consultation responses

- 8. The following consultation responses were received:
 - Five staff at Nower Hill High School in support of the proposed new criteria for children of staff
 - Whitmore High School in opposition to the new criteria for children of staff, and strong opposition to the methodology proposed for extending the sibling link and a preference for the methodology proposed by Harrow Council
 - Harrow Council proposing an alternative methodology for extending the sibling link, requesting that the academies adopt the same change to the 'exceptional need' criteria as the Council has proposed, and stating that they would not adopt a children of staff criteria.
 - One member of staff at Bentley Wood High School querying how the proposed extension of the sibling link to those 'expected to be on roll' would operate for external applications to sixth form who also had younger siblings seeking a Y7 place
 - One response to Bentley Wood High School regarding the operation of the random selection tie-breaker.
 - One parent at Park High School who supported the proposed arrangements.
 - Jackie Mace (Principal of Stanmore College) who had no objections and felt that the proposals appeared "very fair and sensible".

Proposed over-subscription criteria

- 9. The following table summarises the over-subscription criteria that are in use in 2013/14, that were proposed for 2014/15 in the consultation, and that are now proposed for 2014/15 following the consultation. The text below the table explains the rationale for changes.

2013/14 actual	2014/15 – consultation proposal	2014/15 – recommended policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are, or were previously, looked after by the local authority • Medical reasons relevant to pupils • Medical reasons relevant to parents • Siblings of children who will be in Y8 – Y11 the following year • Distance (random allocation is used for Bentley Wood instead of distance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are, or were previously, looked after by the local authority • Medical reasons relevant to pupils • Medical reasons relevant to parents • Siblings of children expecting to be attending the school the following year (i.e. Y8 – Y13 the following year) • Children of staff • Distance (random allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are, or were previously, looked after by the local authority • Medical or social reasons relevant to pupils • Medical reasons relevant to parents • Siblings of children on roll in Y7 to Y11 at time of application • Children of staff • Distance (random allocation for Bentley

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Note: placing current or previously looked after children first is a Government requirement.

Extending the 'exceptional need' criteria

10. The 'exceptional need' criteria (priority 2) in 2013/14 is restricted to medical needs of pupils. Any children seeking admission under this criteria must provide compelling medical evidence from a hospital consultant at the time of application, which must provide information about the child or parent(s) medical condition, the effects of this condition and why, in view of this, the child needs to attend the school (especially if it is not the child's nearest school).
11. Harrow Council consulted on an amendment to this criteria so that it also included exceptional social needs, with a requirement for those to be evidenced in writing with a letter of support from a Divisional Director of Children's Services from the child's home local authority. It is known that several other Council's include medical and social needs within their 'exceptional needs' criteria.
12. This criteria affects a small number of children each year. It is recommended that the academy adopts the same wording as Harrow Council to keep consistency amongst the secular high schools.

Extending the sibling link

13. The policy for 2013/14 entry provides a sibling link where the elder sibling will be in Years 8 – 11 the following year (i.e. in Year 7 to 10 at time of application).
14. The 2012 School Admissions Code allows an admissions authority to include priority of siblings of students expected to be part of the sixth form at the time that the younger sibling would join the school (paragraph 1.12 of the 2012 School Admissions Code). This was the policy consulted upon. The rationale for proposing extending sibling priority to cover expected sixth-form students was that it reflects the changing nature of families with younger children from second relationships so a larger age-gap.
15. Harrow Council proposed an alternative approach for extending the sibling link, namely by reference to all pupils who are on roll in Y7 to Y11 at the time of application.
16. The consultation responses of Harrow Council and Whitmore High School both preferred the approach proposed by the Council. There was one response from a member of staff at Bentley Wood querying how the proposed policy would work in practice for external applicants to a sixth form and whether a younger sibling seeking a Y7 place would still get it if the potential sixth former then withdrew. Whitmore's response argued that the academies proposed approach:
 - Raised potential equality issues due to many of the sixth forms being predominately A Level/Level 3 courses and so restricting the link to siblings of higher achieving students, which could disadvantage unfairly any social or racial group of students who are underachieving in our schools and therefore less likely to achieve the entry criteria for A Levels/Level 3.
 - Would give the siblings of out-of-borough students who join our sixth forms priority over local families.
 - Could place undue pressure on an older sibling to remain in the sixth form when their preference would be to continue to college or start an apprenticeship.
 - Could place undue pressure on an older sibling to move schools to a 'higher achieving' school for the sixth form when their preference would be to remain at their current school.
17. Following the consultation responses, it is recommended to adopt the approach suggested by Harrow Council and Whitmore High School. This approach:
 - Would extend the link to Y11 pupils at the time of the application for Y7 entry the following year compared to the current policy

- Is more objective than the approach proposed by the academies in the consultation since it is based on where the elder sibling is currently on roll rather than whether they might be on roll at the school the following year
- Is considerably simpler to administer because the information about students on roll is held on SIMS and available to the Local Authority whereas information about whether students would be on roll the following year if they were joining a sixth form year group would be required to be collated by the Head of Sixth Form.

Establishing a priority for children of staff

18. The 2012 School Admissions Code allows an admissions authority to include priority for children of staff at the school, where the staff must either have been employed by the school for at least two years at the time of application or where the member of staff has been recruited to a vacant post where there is a demonstrable skills shortage (paragraph 1.39 of the 2012 School Admissions Code).
19. The rationale for including this criteria was that it:
 - Reflects contribution of staff to the school's success
 - May act as a recruitment incentive
20. Harrow Council did not include this criteria in their consultation for Whitmore, and their consultation response states that they do not envisage including it in the future.
21. There were five consultation responses received in favour of this criteria from staff at Nower Hill High School. There were no responses received at any other school. The response from Whitmore High School was opposed to this new criteria on the grounds that the profile of staff may not reflect local populations accurately and so raise a potential equality issue, and that this criteria would create incentive for staff to apply to and move to 'higher achieving schools' when otherwise they would apply to/work at/remain at another school.

Recommended policy

22. Annex 1 outlines the recommended policy for 2014/15. The differences compared to the 2013/14 policy are:
 - Changed definition of over-subscription criteria 4 (siblings) to reflect children on roll in Years 7 to 11 at the time of application
 - Addition of a new over-subscription criteria 5 to give priority to children of staff
 - New definition of parent to relate to the new criteria 5 regarding priority to children of staff
 - Minor wording changes elsewhere, include changing the dates to fit the 2014/15 academic year etc and ensuring the definitions of terms such as 'home' 'distance' and 'looked after' exactly match Harrow Council's definitions.
23. It is proposed to request that the LA continues to co-ordinate in-year admissions (which is a choice for admissions authorities).

What happens next

24. Following determination of the admissions arrangements, the School Admissions Code requires an admissions authority to:
 - a. Notify the 'appropriate bodies' – i.e. all school Governing Bodies and the local authority within the 'relevant area'
 - b. Publish the determined arrangements on their website
 - c. Send a copy of the determined arrangements to their local authority by 1 May

25. Any individual or organisation can object to the determined arrangements by 30 June. Objections must be made to the Schools Adjudicator, who is independent of the DfE. Their decision is final and binding. There are, however, restrictions on which objections can be made – these are set out in paragraph 3.3 of the Code and relate to admission arrangements that are unlawful or not in compliance with the Code.
26. Admissions arrangements that have been determined can only be varied by the admissions authority in very particular circumstances (outlined in paragraph 3.6 of the Code). In any other situation, if the admissions authority did wish to alter its arrangements after they have been determined to take account of a “major change in circumstances” they would have to seek agreement with the Secretary of State (paragraph 3.6 and footnote 56).

Background documents

2012 School Admissions Code and School Admission Appeal Code:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmissions/a00195/current-codes-and-regulations>

Annex 1: Recommended Admissions Arrangements for 2014/15 entry

The Academy will comply with the requirements of the Funding Agreement and the School Admissions Code, and recognises that its 'relevant area' is the London Borough of Harrow.

Number of places

The number of year 7 places available for September 2014 school year will be 180. Applications for September 2014 entry should be made via the Harrow co-ordinated admissions scheme. The academy will hold an open evening in September/October where prospective students and their parents are welcome to visit and find out more about the school.

Admissions Criteria

If there are fewer applicants than there are places available for Year 7 entry in September 2014, everyone who applies will be offered a place.

If there are more applicants than there are places available the following criteria will be considered, in order, to determine who will be offered a place:

1. **Children who are or were previously looked after** - A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. (See definitions below of children who are or were previously looked after)
2. **Medical or social needs of the child** – Children for whom it is essential to be admitted to a specific school because of special circumstances to do with significant medical needs and or social needs. (See definition below of medical or social needs of the child)
3. **Medical reasons relevant to parent(s)** - Parent(s) where there are special medical reasons for seeking a place for their child at the school. (See definition below of medical reasons relevant to parent(s) and parent)
4. **Siblings** - Children with a brother or sister attending the academy at the time of application. The sibling link does not apply to students who are attending the sixth form in September 2014. (see definition below of sibling)
5. **Children of staff of the school** – Children where their parent(s) has been employed at the school for at least two years at the date of application or where the member of staff has been recruited to a vacant post where there is a demonstrable skills shortage (see definition below of parent).
6. **Distance from home to school** - Places are allocated to applicants who live closest to the school. This must be the address where parents and child normally live and they must be living there on the closing date for receipt of applications. (See definition below of distance)

Tie-breaker: If more applications are received in any one criterion than there are places available the tiebreaker of distance from home to school, measured in a straight line, will be applied.

Children with special educational needs who have a Statement which names the Academy will be allocated a place at the Academy. This is a statutory entitlement under section 324 of the Education Act 1996.

Definitions

Distance – The home address is where a child normally lives. The distance is measured in a straight line from home to school, using a computerized mapping system based on Ordinance Survey data. The journey is measured in a straight line from the unique address point for the home address to the centre point for the school site. In cases where applicants live equidistant from the preferred school and places cannot be offered to both children, the available place will be allocated using a random computer selection.

Home address - This must be the address where parent and child normally live and they must be living there on the closing date for receipt of applications. Confirmation of address will be required. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for a part of a week, then parents will be asked to determine which residential address should be used for the purpose of admission to school. Where residence is split equally between parents, if no joint declaration by the closing date for applications, the home address will be taken as the address of the parent who receives child benefit; in cases where parents are not eligible for child benefit the address will be that of the parent where the child is registered with the doctor. If the residence is not split equally between both parents then the address used will be the address where the child spends the majority of the school week. Confirmation of address will be required.

Children who are or were previously looked after - A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). An adoption order is an order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

In order to be given highest priority for admission, a child has to fall within the definition of 'looked after' in section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989. This Act applies to England and Wales, therefore a child has to be looked after by an English or Welsh local authority in order to be given highest priority.

Paragraph 1.7 of the School Admissions Code gives equal highest priority to 'previously looked after children'. Given the definition of a looked after child, a child will have to have been looked after by an English or Welsh local authority in order to be considered previously looked after. Under paragraph 1.7 of the School Admissions Code, a child has to have been looked after immediately before they were adopted or became subject to a resident order or special guardianship order.

In addition, in order to fall within the definition of a previously looked after child, an adopted child must have been adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. This Act did not come into force fully until December 2005, so it is not possible for a child to have been adopted under that Act prior to then.

Medical or social needs of the child - Except in wholly exceptional circumstances such requests will only be considered for the school closest to the home address. The application must be supported by written evidence. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons why the academy is the most suitable school and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The recommendation for this specific school should demonstrate knowledge of the school in terms of resources and organisation which deems it essential that the named pupil be admitted to the academy. The academy can only consider entry under this criteria if the required documents have been produced.

Applications made on medical grounds must be accompanied by compelling medical evidence from a hospital Consultant at the time of application. The letter from the hospital consultant must provide information about the child's medical condition, the effects of this condition and why, in view of this, the child needs to attend the academy. If the academy is not the school closest to

the home of the child, the consultant must set out in detail the wholly exceptional circumstances for attending the academy and the difficulties if the child had to attend another school. In assessing these applications advice may be sought from Harrow's Special Education Needs Service.

Applications made on social grounds must be accompanied by compelling evidence at the time of application. Social needs claims will only be considered where there is involvement from a social worker. The application will need to be supported with a letter from a Divisional Director from Children and Families or a person holding a similar role in another local authority. The director must set out in detail the wholly exceptional circumstances that in their view require attendance at the academy and the difficulties if the child had to attend another school.

Parent's can only make an application under this criteria (whether for medical or social need) to one school in Harrow.

Medical reasons relevant to parent(s) – Except in wholly exceptional circumstances such requests will only be considered for the school closest to the home address. Applications will only be considered for the parent(s) with whom the child lives and must be accompanied by compelling medical evidence from a hospital Consultant at the time of application. The letter from the hospital consultant must provide information about the parent's medical condition, the effects of this condition and why, in view of this, the child needs to attend the academy. If the academy is not the closest school to the home address, the consultant must set out in detail the wholly exceptional circumstances for attending the academy and the difficulties if the child had to attend another school. In assessing these applications independent advice will be sought as appropriate (e.g. Harrow Association of Disabled People or Harrow's Mental Health Service).

Medical claims relevant to parent(s) will only be considered for one school and this should be named by the consultant.

Parent(s) making a medical claim solely on the grounds of the young person's need to be accompanied on the journey to school will not be allowed.

Sibling - Where children live as brother and sister in the same household they are treated in the same way as siblings for admissions purposes. This includes a child's brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted/foster brother or sister, step brother or sister living in the same family unit at the same address. It does not include cousins or other extended family members who live in the same household. In the case of twins, triplets and other multiple-birth children, if one child can be offered a place in the school, other multiple-birth children will be allocated a place in the school. Where twins are concerned and one twin has a Statement of Special Educational Needs that names the school the other twin will be treated as having a sibling link for that academic year.

Parent – this means the parent who has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act 1989, or the person in the household who is defined as a parent for the purposes of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. This could include a person who is not a biological parent but who has responsibility for her or him (such as a child's guardians) but will not usually include other relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles etc unless they have all the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities and authority, which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and their property.

Notification and acceptance of places

In accordance with the co-ordinated admissions policy, on 1 March 2014 the Local Authority will make the formal offer of a place to parents or carers on behalf of the Governing Body of the School.

The onus is on parents to contact the Local Authority by 16 March 2014 to either accept or decline the offer of a place, using the acceptance form issued with the offer letter. This will in no way affect parents' right to appeal for a place at another school. Harrow Council will write to all parents who

have not accepted or declined an offer giving them a further 7 days. If no response is received a further letter will be sent to advise that the place has been withdrawn. Unaccepted places will be allocated to other applicants.

Appeals procedure

Parents who want to appeal against the governors' decision not to offer their child a place at the academy must appeal directly to the academy, not through the local authority. Appeals should be addressed in writing to the Admissions Officer at the school and must be received by the end of March. The envelope should be clearly marked "Admission Appeal".

The appeal will be heard by an independent appeals panel. Parents will receive written notification of the date and time of their appeal hearing, which they can attend to explain their case. If they wish, parents may be accompanied by an adviser or friend. Following the appeal, the Clerk to the appeals panel will write to parents with the decision.

Waiting list for the incoming Year 7

Parents / carers can ask for their child's name to be put on a waiting list for the academy if the academy was a higher preference than the school their child was offered a place at or if they submitted an on-time application and did not name the academy.

The waiting list will give priority in accordance with the admissions criteria. Any places that become available will be filled in priority order from the waiting list or late applicants.

If a child is on the waiting list, parents resident in Harrow will be asked at the end of October 2014 whether they wish to remain on the waiting list.

In-Year applications

All applications for places in schools should be addressed to the local authority. After contacting the school about the availability of places the authority will then write to the applicants with the result of their application.

Fair access protocol

As part of the co-ordinated admissions arrangements with Harrow Council the school may accept hard-to-place pupils onto the school roll from time to time in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access agreement.

Admission to the Harrow Collegiate for Sixth Form

All students may continue to study in the sixth form of their current school, providing they meet the academic entry requirements of their selected courses.

A collegiate system operates at sixth form level within Harrow and some courses are offered through this arrangement. As a result some students from other schools and/or colleges join courses at a particular sixth form and some students from the school may join sixth form courses in other schools and/or colleges.

Applications should be made to the school by the first Friday in February in the academic year preceding the year of entry.