



Consultation Report
Proposed Changes to the Admissions Arrangements 2019/20
8th January 2018

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1. Introduction

This report is for the Governing Body of The Reach Free School and is in response to the consultation on proposed admission arrangements for the 2019/20 academic year.

From September 2018, the school will move to its permanent location off Long Lane, Rickmansworth. The Governing Body has consulted about changing the oversubscription criteria from the Mill End Sports and Social Club (WD3 8QN).

From 2019 onwards, the fourth oversubscription criteria is proposed to be the distance from the child's home address to the main entrance of the school, Long Lane, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 8AB, calculated using a straight line distance measurement provided by AddressBase Premium.

The reason for the proposed change is based solely on the fact the school will have moved to its permanent location and brings the oversubscription criteria in line with the standard admissions arrangement for schools who use distance as an oversubscription criterion.

2. Background

The Reach Free School was established in 2013 under the free schools initiative, providing 120 places per year group.

The school opened in temporary accommodation on Tolpits Lane in 2013. This was approximately three miles away from the area the school intended to serve. If the entrance to the school had been used for admissions, it meant that some families, particularly those from the Mill End and Maple Cross communities, may not have been able to access the provision the school was intended for. Therefore the decision was taken to use the Mill End Sports and Social Club as a central point for admissions. This admission arrangement is currently in place. The oversubscription criteria is currently:

1. Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plans where The Reach Free School is named on the plan
2. Children Looked After or Previously Looked After
3. Children who currently have a brother or sister as a pupil on roll at The Reach Free School and who would reasonably be expected to be still attending at The Reach Free School at the time of admission.
4. Children living nearest The Mill End Sports and Social Club, Penn Road, Mill End, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 8QN

2. The Consultation Proposal

The Governing Body have proposed one change to the admission criteria as outlined below. There are no other proposed changes to the admissions arrangements.

1. Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plans where The Reach Free School is named on the plan
2. Children Looked After or Previously Looked After

3. Children who currently have a brother or sister as a pupil on roll at The Reach Free School and who would reasonably be expected to be still attending at The Reach Free School at the time of admission.
4. Children living nearest The Reach Free School, Long Lane, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 8AB

3. The Process of Consultation

The consultation ran for six weeks from Friday 6th October 2017 to Friday 19th November 2017. The consultation was communicated as follows:

1. Notification to all parents, guardians and carers of The Reach Free School via its management information system, text message, Twitter and the school's website
2. Notification to Hertfordshire County Council and County Councillors
3. Headteachers and the Chair of Governors of primary and secondary schools in the local area were emailed a copy of the proposed admissions arrangements
4. Notification to neighbouring councils.

Recipients were asked to email comments relating to the proposed admissions arrangements to consultation@reachfree.co.uk.

This report and any subsequent decision on the changes to the admissions arrangements will be published on the school's website and emailed to the stakeholders listed above.

4. Responses to the Consultation

The school received seven responses to the consultation. The table below outlines the respondents:

Response from	Number
County Council	1
Local Academy Trust	1
Member of Staff	1
Parent, Guardian or Carer	4
Total	7

Three responses to the consultation were in favour of the proposed changes and two requested clarification regarding the impact the changes would have on existing pupils. One provided areas where the admissions arrangements could be improved and one was neutral. There were no objections to the proposed changes to the admissions arrangements.

Responses to questions raised during the consultation:

Question 1: I have 2 children currently at Reach Free. My youngest child will be starting secondary school in September 2019. Would he still get in based on the sibling rule?

Response: The sibling rule is the third oversubscription criteria ahead of the distance, which is the fourth. Therefore as long as you still have a child on roll in September 2019, the youngest child will meet the sibling criteria.

Question 2: Just to confirm this does not apply to existing pupils when the school moves?

Response: Pupils currently on roll at The Reach Free School are not affected by the proposed changes to the admissions arrangements.

The following are suggested changes to the admission arrangements as provided by a respondent to the consultation.

Suggestion 1: There is an element of duplication in the arrangements eg. A2 - A2.3 are similar to A5.1.1 - A5.1.3. It is suggested that these are combined.

Suggestion 2: Section A.7.2 - A.7.3 should be amended to ensure it complies with the School Admissions Code. A parent must be given a further opportunity to respond and that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not.

Suggestion 3: The definition for Children Looked After should be updated to include the full definition as outlined in the School Admissions Code.

Suggestion 4: Clarification regarding whether Children Looked After and children previously looked after are recognised as siblings.

Suggestion 5: Section B.2.2 should be amended to clarify exactly what/ how many "additional GCSEs or equivalent at a minimum grade 5" are required.

Suggestion 6: Amendments to C1 and C2 to clarify that the school will, if necessary, admit children through Fair Access over the PAN and before children on the continuing interest list.

Suggestion 7: Section C.3.1 should refer to an "in year application form" and not an "Expression of Interest"

Suggestion 8: Section C.3.3 should state that parents are informed of the reason why their child has not been offered a place in the letter rejecting their application and offering the right to appeal.

Suggestion 9: Sections D.3 and D.7 contradict each other and clarification is required on the difference between in year and transfer appeals. It should also inform parents that they need to appeal online.

Suggestion 10: Clarification on the role of the Deputy Headteacher. If they are a member of the school's Governing Body or Academy Trust then they are a member of the school's admissions authority and it can remain as it is. If they are not a Member or Trustee then this section needs updating.

Suggestion 11: Review section E.2 as there is no entitlement for pupils to remain on the waiting list until year 11.

Suggestion 12: Section E.4 should be amended to ensure it complies with the School Admissions Code. A parent must be given a further opportunity to respond and that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not.

Suggestion 13: The admission arrangements should clarify the school's policy and process for applications for children out of year group.

6. Decision

The school has carefully considered the consultation responses and is recommending that the suggestions outlined in section 5 are agreed. The revised admissions arrangements are contained as appendix 1.

7. Next Steps

The admissions arrangements for 2019/20 was recommended for approval at the Full Governing Body on Thursday 30th November 2017. They will be distributed to the stakeholders and be placed on the school's website at <http://www.reachfreeschool.co.uk/policies/>. They will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1 - Admission Arrangements 2019/20

1. Introduction

1.1 The Admissions Arrangements for The Reach Free School have been designed to reflect its ACE ethos of achievement, community and enjoyment. The school is committed to an inclusive culture and will admit pupils non-selectively, without reference to their ability or aptitude. For admissions in 2019/20 distance places will be allocated on the basis of proximity to the school. The distance from the school to an applicant's home address is calculated using a straight line distance measurement provided by AddressBase Premium.

2. Published Admissions Number

2.1 The Published Admissions Number (PAN) is 120 pupils.

3. Admissions Arrangements Introduction

3.1 The Admissions Arrangements of The Reach Free School determined by the Governing Body have been approved by the Secretary of State for Education.

3.2 The Admissions Arrangements contained within this document are divided into the following sections:

4. Year 7 Secondary Transfer
5. Admissions to the Sixth Form
6. In-Year Admissions
7. Children Out of Year Group
8. The Appeals Process
9. The Waiting List
10. Successful Applications

4. Admissions Arrangements

4.1 Year 7 Secondary Transfer

4.1.1 This section covers pupils wishing to join The Reach Free School transferring from primary education (September entrants to Year 7).

4.1.2 If there are fewer than 120 applications for places, all pupils will be admitted.

4.1.3 If there are more than 120 applications for places, the school will use the criteria, in the order shown in section 4.1.4 to decide which children to admit.

4.1.4 After the admissions of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan where The Reach Free School is named on the plan, the oversubscription criteria for admissions will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:

Rule 1: Children Looked After or Children Previously Looked After¹

Rule 2: Children who currently have a brother or sister² as a pupil on roll at The Reach Free School

¹ 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) at the time of making an application to a school.

² This includes legally adopted brothers/sisters, half brothers/sisters, foster brothers/sisters and step brothers/sisters living at the same address. It does not include cousins or any other children or family members living at the same address

and who would reasonably be expected to be still attending at The Reach Free School at the time of admission.

Rule 3: Children living nearest to the main entrance of the school (Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system is used for all home to school distance measurements. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences³).

4.2 For Hertfordshire residents

4.2.1 Parents, guardians and carers must complete the form provided by Hertfordshire County Council as part of their coordinated schemes of admission.

4.3 For non-Hertfordshire residents

4.3.1 Parents, guardians or carers are required to complete the application in their own local authority's admissions guide, stating The Reach Free School as a preferred school. The form should then be returned in line with that local authority's requested procedure. The local authority will then inform Hertfordshire County Council of the choice to apply to The Reach Free School.

4.4 Tiebreaker

4.4.1 In the event of two or more pupils having equal priority, the decision on the allocation of the place will be determined through random allocation, which will be conducted by an independent third party.

4.4.2 In the case of twins/multiple births from the same household if only one twin qualifies for admission, the school will allocate places to both children, conditional on both twins attending the school. If the original qualifying twin withdraws their application of a place, then the second place is forfeit. This principle will apply to other multiple births such as triplets. Additional place(s) will be counted as sibling admissions.

4.5 Notes to Parents, Guardians and Carers

4.5.1 In the event that an application is unsuccessful the child's parents, guardians or carers would have the right of appeal to an independent panel (see section 8).

4.5.2 Once places have been offered applicants must return their acceptance of a place by the published date.

4.5.3 Parents, guardians or carers will be given a further opportunity to respond and it will be explained what will happen if there is no response.

4.5.4 If parents, guardians or carers do not respond following the second opportunity the offer will be withdrawn and offered to applicants on the waiting list. These are known as late offers.

4.5.5 Applicants are advised at all stages of the admissions cycle to hold only one offer of admission at any one time.

³ This must be that of the child's permanent home with his/her parents, guardians or carers. If a child spends time at two addresses, the residence which is registered with the General Practitioner will be used.

5. Admissions to the Sixth Form

5.1 The capacity for Year 12 is 120. Open evenings for The Reach Free School's Sixth Form will take place in the 2018/19 academic year. Application forms will be available from and returnable to The Reach Free School and online at www.thereachfreeschool.co.uk.

5.2 The Published Admission Number for external applicants will be dependent on the number of The Reach Free School's Year 11 pupils who apply to continue to Year 12 and meet the entry requirements outlined in B.2.

5.2.1 If all pupils progressing from Year 11 in The Reach Free School to Year 12 fill all 120 places, then The Reach Free School will not admit external applicants. If the number of pupils progressing from Year 11 to Year 12 is less than 120 then places will be available to external applicants.

5.2.2 In the event that an application is unsuccessful the child's parents, guardians or carers would have the right of appeal to an independent panel (see section 8).

5.3 Entry requirements

5.3.1 The Reach Free School will publish its minimum academic entry requirements for the Sixth Form and academic progression criteria relevant to the course of study to be followed in the Sixth Form Options Brochure and on the website. As a minimum all pupils applying for a place in the Sixth Form must meet the entry requirements outlined in 5.3.2.

5.3.2 Pupils who have attained GCSEs in English and Mathematics, achieving at least a grade 5 in both, as well as three additional GCSEs or equivalent courses at a minimum of grade 5.

5.3.3 After the admissions of pupils with Education, Health and Care plans where The Reach Free School is named, the criteria for admissions will be applied in the order in which they are set in 5.4.

5.4 The Oversubscription Criteria

5.4.1 If there are more than 120 applications for places at The Reach Free School Sixth Form, the school will use the following oversubscription criteria for external candidates only, in the order shown, to decide which children to admit:

Rule 1: Children Looked After or Children Previously Looked After⁴

Rule 2: Children who currently have a brother or sister⁵ as a pupil on roll at The Reach Free School and who would reasonably be expected to be still attending at The Reach Free School at the time of admission.

Rule 3: Children living nearest to the main entrance of the school (Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system is used for all home to school distance measurements. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium is a nationally recognised method of

⁴ 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) at the time of making an application to a school.

⁵ This includes legally adopted brothers/sisters, half brothers/sisters, foster brothers/sisters and step brothers/sisters living at the same address. It does not include cousins or any other children or family members living at the same address

identifying the location of schools and individual residences⁶).

6. In-Year Admissions

6.1 For pupils transferring to The Reach Free School from other secondary schools during the academic year, the school coordinates its own in-year admissions and is part of Hertfordshire County Council's Fair Access Protocol.

6.2 Applications for in-year admissions (pupils joining after the September of Year 7) are made directly to The Reach Free School. Places at The Reach Free School are open to all, irrespective of ability or aptitude. They are however limited by admission levels and the Fair Access Protocol, which ensure that the standards of educational provision are maintained. The Reach Free School does not take part in the Hertfordshire County Council's scheme of in-year coordination

6.3 The Reach Free School will, if necessary, admit children through the Fair Access Protocol over the PAN and before children on the continuing interest list.

6.4 The Procedure

6.4.1 Parents, guardians or carers complete an online 'in-year application form'. Paper copies are also available.

6.4.2 If a place is available and there is no waiting list then the school will contact parents, guardians and carers.

6.4.3 If there are no places available this will be conveyed to the parents, guardians and carers. Parents, guardians and carers will be informed of the reason(s) why a place cannot be offered and will be offered the right to appeal.

6.4.4 Parents, guardians and carers will be offered the opportunity of their child being placed on the waiting list (see section 8 for more information).

6.4.5 When a place becomes available the school will advise the parents, guardians or carers of the child who is top of the waiting list, that an offer is being made on behalf of the Governing Body.

6.4.6 The school will notify the local authority that a place has been offered.

7. Children out of Year Group

7.1 Hertfordshire County Council's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. It is also The Reach Free School's policy that pupils are admitted to the correct chronological year group.

7.2 The school will only consider an exception to this if there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

7.3 If parents, guardians or carers believe their child should be educated in a different year group they must, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort.

⁶ This must be that of the child's permanent home with his/her parents, guardians or carers. If a child spends time at two addresses, the residence which is registered with the General Practitioner will be used.

7.4 The school is responsible for the decision to accept such an application on the basis of the evidence submitted. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis.

7.5 If an application is not accepted on this basis, this does not constitute a refusal of a place, and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal.

8. The Appeals Process

8.1 The Reach Free School's appeals timetable will be published each year. In the event that a place at The Reach Free School is unsuccessful, parents, guardians or carers will be notified of their right to an independent appeals panel.

8.2 If an unsuccessful applicant wishes to appeal against the decision, they should do so in writing to The Reach Free School within 28 days of receiving notification:

8.3 The Reach Free School will adhere to the rules set out in the School Admissions Appeal Code.

8.4 Parents applying for secondary transfer, who wish to appeal and who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link 'register an appeal'. Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details, log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system.

8.5 For in-year applications – We will write to you with the outcome of your application and, if you have been unsuccessful, Hertfordshire County Council will write to you with registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals

8.6 Appeals for in-year admissions shall be heard in accordance with the Schools Admission Code. The school exercises its right not to consider further appeals for the same child within the same academic year.

8.7 For all appeals an independent appeals panel will be convened consisting of a chair, a clerk and at least one member who is a lay person and one member who has educational experience and is familiar with school management.

8.8 The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher responsible for Inclusion will present the school's case for refusing a place at the hearing.

9. The Waiting List

9.1 The Reach Free School will maintain a waiting list of applicants. Places on this waiting list will be allocated in accordance with the admissions arrangements and oversubscription criteria outlined in this document. No priority will be given in regard to the length of time that an applicant has been on the waiting list.

9.2 Late offers will be made to those parents on the waiting list in strict order. Applicants receiving late offers may decline previously accepted offers from other schools.

9.3 If a child on the waiting list is offered a place at the school, the parent, guardian or carer will receive a letter in writing confirming this. If a response to this offer of a place is not received in writing within 10 working days from the date of the letter then a further opportunity to respond is given together with an explanation of what will happen if there is no response.

9.5 If parents, guardians or carers do not respond following the second opportunity the offer will be withdrawn and offered to applicants on the waiting list. These are known as late offers.

9.6 Every year in June, the school will write to every parent, guardian or carer with a child on the waiting list requesting confirmation that the child's name should remain on the waiting list. If the school does not receive written confirmation that a child should remain on the list by the end of the December of the same year, then that child will be removed from the waiting list.

9.7 If they chose, parents can keep the names of their children on waiting lists up to the end of year 11.

10. Successful Applications

10.1 Once a place has been offered, parents, guardians and carers will be invited to complete the relevant paperwork and purchase uniform.

10.2 The school will also inform applicants of their start date and in consultation with staff, will develop a timetable and make necessary administrative arrangements. This may include special needs consultation and liaison with Form Tutors who will oversee pupils' successful integration into the school.