Consultation on Admission Arrangements 2020/21

1. Introduction

1.1 This document provides background to the statutory consultation exercise for the admission arrangements to community primary and secondary schools, and seeks comments on the proposed changes.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Consultees are asked:

2.1.1 to consider the admission arrangements for community schools and, if they so wish, to comment on the proposed changes:

- to include a criterion to give priority to children of school staff, up to one child per class, in school sixth forms.

- to give the second highest priority to previously Looked After children from outside of England and Wales.

- to change the oversubscription criterion relating to siblings for primary school places to withdraw this criterion if the address has changed after the child on roll was offered their place, and the distance in now greater than one mile from the school.

- to remove the wording in section 1.7 of the admission arrangements which is covered in other sections of the arrangements.

- to reduce the published admission numbers from 120 to 90 at Cleveland Road Primary School and Mayespark Primary School.

2.1.2 to note that no changes, other than process dates, have been made to the coordinated schemes for primary and secondary admissions. We are not, therefore, consulting on these documents.

2.2 The consultation will close on 16 November 2018 and responses should be made by schools to admissionsandawards@redbridge.gov.uk under the title “Response to Admissions Consultation 2020/21”, please.

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3. **Background to Consultation Arrangements**

3.1 Consultation is required on five issues:

   a. to include a criterion to give priority to children of school staff, up to one child per class, in school sixth forms.

   b. to give the second highest priority to previously Looked After children from outside of England and Wales.

   c. to change the oversubscription criterion relating to siblings for primary school places to withdraw this criterion if the address has changed after the child on roll was offered their place, and the distance in now greater than one mile from the school.

   d. to remove the wording in section 1.7 of the admission arrangements which is covered in other sections of the arrangements.

   e. to reduce the published admission numbers from 120 to 90 at Cleveland Road Primary School and Mayespark Primary School.

3.2 There is no requirement to consult on the coordinated schemes for primary and secondary admissions for 2020/21, as the only changes proposed are to the process dates.


3.4 It should also be noted that all admission authorities – voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies, including free schools - are required to act in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014. This includes consultation on any proposed changes to their admission arrangements, including any supplementary forms used. Any own admission authority school that has not consulted in the last 7 years must consult on their admission arrangements even if there have been no changes during that period (see 1.42 of the School Admissions Code 2014). Schools can only change their arrangements if they consult, so without consultation they must remain unchanged.

4. **Basis of consultation – community schools’ admission arrangements**

The basis for consultation on admission arrangements for Redbridge primary and secondary community schools 2020/21 is:

*To amend the existing oversubscription criterion to include a criterion to give priority to children of school staff, up to one child per class, in school sixth forms.*

This will enable us to be consistent with the School Admissions Code 2014 and ensure that this priority is available at each stage of study within our community schools, having agreed this for primary and secondary schools from 2019-2020.
To change the oversubscription criterion relating to siblings for primary school places, to withdraw this criterion if the address has changed after the child on roll was offered their place, and the distance in now greater than one mile from the school.

Parents applying for Primary school places often express concern that despite living close to their preferred local school, they are unable to secure a place for their child as those families with a child already in the school are given a higher priority, even if they have moved further away since their child took up their place.

To give the second highest priority to previously Looked After children from outside of England and Wales.

A letter from Nick Gibb MP was circulated to Local Authorities in December 2017 which advised that it was his intention to make changes to the School Admission Code when the opportunity arise, to ensure that children who were previously in care outside of England and Wales also receive the highest priority for admission into a school in England. He stated that until the Code can be changed, following consultation and the will of Parliament, he would encourage admission authorities to use their discretion and give these children second highest priority when setting admission arrangements from now on.

The DfE School Admissions Team has also written to Local Authorities asking them to consider making the proposed amendment, and provided the following definition for overseas PLAC, which they will use when they come to changing the School Admissions Code:

*For children who appear to have previously been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales, state care is defined by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as being in the care of, or being accommodated by: (a) a public authority; (b) a religious organisation; or (c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.*

Other London Local Authorities have taken the decision not to make this change ahead of the proposed changes to legislation and the School Admissions Code, which will be some significant time in the future as parliamentary time is fully taken up with Brexit legislation.

We are proposing that a second priority is given to previously LAC children from outside England and Wales, to ensure that these children also receive the highest priority we can offer for admission into a school in Redbridge, until it is set in law as a first priority.

To remove the wording in section 1.7 of the admission arrangements:

*Children with statements of special educational needs/Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or those being re-integrated back into a mainstream school from the Churchfields Infants Language Facility or the Roding Unit for Hearing Impaired or such other educational facility as, in the opinion of the Authority’s professional advisers, serves a similar function, will be admitted to the named school as ‘excepted pupils’ even if this causes the class size to rise above 30.*
Following a recent investigation by the Schools Adjudicator, they queried the legality of this section. To avoid any potential risk of not fully adhering to the legislative requirements of the School Admissions Code 2014, we propose removing this section from the arrangements. The children it relates to are ensured places at their named schools under other sections of the arrangements, so will not be disadvantaged in any way.

To reduce the published admission numbers from 120 to 90 at Cleveland Road Primary School and Mayespark Primary School.

We are proposing to reduce the PAN at Cleveland Road Primary School from 120 to 90, as pupil projections and pupil place numbers show that there will be a surplus of places in the local area, which is expected to continue for several years.

At the request of Mayespark Primary School’s Governing Body, an application has been made to change the admission numbers from 120 to 90 for September 2019. The Governors consider that it is unlikely more than 90 will be admitted in the foreseeable future, as there is no potential for growth in the immediate area of the school, given a large part of it is a conservation area. We are proposing that this in year variation is also agreed for 2020-2021.

5 Further Action

5.1 Consultees are advised that the admission authority requires any comments on the issues in this report by 16 November 2018. Comments should be made through the online consultation or e-mailed to admissions@redbridge.gov.uk under the title “Response to Admissions Consultation 2020/21”, please.

6.0 All comments will be submitted to Cabinet at their meeting on 12 February 2019.