

TITLE Consultations on 2016/17 Admission Arrangements for Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Admissions Forum on 2 December 2014

REPORT PREPARED BY Sue Riddick, Lead Admissions Officer

SUMMARY

This report informs the Forum of consultations issued by the admissions authorities for voluntary aided schools and Academies where known

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Forum considers the arrangements and whether it wishes to respond to these consultations.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Admission arrangements for 2016/2017 are attached from the following Academy:

The Forest School

The local authority is aware that the following Academies will also be proposing changes to their admission arrangements but the consultation documentation is not yet released.

Maiden Erlegh School

The Holt School

List of Background Papers

School Admissions Code and School Admissions Appeals Codes 1/2/12 and relevant regulations

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THE FOREST SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST

Consultation on a change to Admissions from September 2016

The Forest School Academy Trust is consulting on four minor changes to our admissions policy which are:

- (1) are including Education, Health and Care plans into our definition of children with special educational needs. This is a national change.
- (2) adding in a closure date for supporting documentation relating to criterion A.
- (3) altering and updating the definition of medical and social needs in criterion B.
- (4) modification to the layout of the policy (not content) to make it easier for parents/guardians to read.

We ask that you indicate whether or not you are for or against each of the changes.

Item (1): inclusion of Education, Health and Care plans into our definition of children with special educational needs.			
For		Against	
Comments:			
Item (2): the addition of a closure date for supporting documentation relating to criterion A.			
For		Against	
Comments:			
Item (3): alteration and updating the definition of medical & social needs in criterion B.			
For		Against	
Comments:			
Item (4): modification to the layout of the policy (not content) to make it easier for parents/guardians to read.			
For		Against	
Comments:			

Name: _____ Date: _____

Stakeholder category (please circle):

Parent Pupil Staff Governor Business WBC Other

The Forest School

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND ARRANGEMENT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/17

The Forest School is an 11–18 boys comprehensive Academy which admits girls to the Sixth Form. This document details the policy to be followed for admissions to The Forest School. Please note that living in or moving to the designated area of the school cannot guarantee a place at the school.

Year 7 Entry

The admissions number for entry in September 2016 is 200. The school uses the Wokingham Borough Council Admissions Service which publicises the school to parents in the same literature as for other Wokingham schools. The school will participate in the coordinated arrangements made by Wokingham Borough Council. Parents/carers wishing to send their sons to The Forest School should submit an application to their home Local Authority and follow the guidance of that Local Authority regarding deadlines for submitting the application. This information will be published in Local Authority admission guides (please go to <http://www.forest.wokingham.sch.uk/Apply> for more information).

Applications received after the published deadline (October 31 2016) will be treated as a 'late' application and be considered after the on-time applications have been allocated. If there is good reason i.e. the family has moved to the area after the closing date or the illness of a single parent prevented them submitting an on-time application, the application may be treated as on-time, provided it is received by January 15, 2016. In such instances evidence may be required.

Year 10 Entry

The admissions number for year 10 entry from September 2016 will be 20 giving a maximum total number of students in year 10 to 220. Entry specific detail is included for this year group although much remains the same as for other year groups in terms of criteria.

Admissions Criteria

Children with a statement of special educational needs including Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC) that names the school in the statement or plan will be allocated a place above all other applicants. If there are more applicants than places available applications will be prioritised in accordance with the following over-subscription criteria.

- A. Priority will be given to looked after children and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order' (previous looked-after children). Please see Appendix A for more information about information required to meet this criterion.
- B. Children who have exceptional medical or social needs as the grounds for their admission to The Forest School. This must be supported by written evidence, relating specifically to The Forest School from an independent professional aware of the child's case (e.g. doctor, hospital consultant, psychologist, or social worker) which must explain the reason why the school in question is the most suitable and the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school.
- C. Children whose permanent home address is in the school's designated area* and who have a sibling, half sibling, adopted sibling, step sibling or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling and who is expected to be at the school when the child will enter the school.
- D. Children whose permanent home address is in the schools' designated area.*
- E. Children who have a sibling, half sibling, adopted sibling, step sibling or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling and who is expected to be at the school when the child will enter the school*.
- F. Children whose parents have a preference for single sex education.
- G. Any other children.

*For notes relating to the above criteria and for information about what evidence required to your application please see Appendix A.

The school has sought to make the above criteria as objective as possible. However for category B and any other cases where judgement is needed as to which criterion the application meets, a panel of at least two officers will consider the application and supporting evidence. The panel's decision and reasons will be recorded, for the purposes of informing the parent and any subsequent appeal.

Tie Breakers

Within criteria C and D, priority will be given to the applicant whose permanent home address is the shortest combined radial distance with The Holt School. Combined distance is calculated as (distance from home to The Forest School) **plus** (distance from home to The Holt School).

Living in the designated area does not guarantee a school place as there may be more applications from parents living in the designated area than places available. Where this is the case, the relevant tiebreaker, as explained above, will be applied to decide which of the applicants can be offered places, and waiting list order.

Subject to the exception above, priority will be given within any of the oversubscription criteria to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to the preferred school in terms of radial (straight line) distance. A full explanation of how distance is calculated is given in Appendix A.

In the unlikely event that two or more children live at the same distance or additional distance (measured as stated above) from school (including, for example, flats within the same building), and there are fewer places available, random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). This will be by supervised drawing of lots, carried out by at least two Children's Services staff.

Designated Areas

The designated area for The Forest School is held electronically and can be viewed through the Council's website. These electronic maps represent the definitive descriptions of secondary school designated areas for the purposes of admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

Residency Requirements

Home address

Applications are processed on the basis of the child's single permanent home address living with parent(s) or a carer/legal guardian at the closing date for applications. Reference to council tax records will be made to determine a single address for consideration of a place under criteria C or D. It is for the applicant to satisfy the local authority that they live at the address stated.

Applicants will be asked to declare that the address used will be their place of residence beyond the date of the pupil starting school. The local authority reserves its right to carry out further investigation and require additional evidence and to reject applications or withdraw offers of places, if it believes it has the grounds to do so. In such cases, the applicant will have recourse to putting their application through the independent appeals process.

It is important to declare if there is to be a change of address prior to the child starting school. If the applicant already owns a property which is in the process of being sold, we are able to accept the address of the new property only on submission of the appropriate evidence in support e.g. exchange of contracts letter on both the new property and, where possible, disposal of their current property. The latest date for submission of evidence to support a move is January 15th, 2016. If the move takes place later or evidence is submitted later, the local authority will only be able to consider

this information after the initial allocation of places has taken place and treat the new address for waiting list purposes.

Temporary addresses cannot be used to obtain school places unless:

- (1) there is evidence is proving a genuine reason for the move e.g. flooding or subsidence.
- (2) the application is for year 10 from families where the child is a member of Reading FC Academy. A written commitment from Reading FC is required stating that the child is a member of the football Academy programme at The Forest School Academy Trust and will continue to be so during the two years of KS4 education, and that temporary accommodation will be provided as near to school as possible, which will be used for allocation purposes for those whose permanent address lies outside the designated area.

Where an applicant has two or more properties, evidence will be required showing the rental or disposal of the previous property. Temporary addresses will only be considered where if an applicant owns a property which they do not occupy and/or rent out and then moves into another property within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school, the address of the property they own will be the address used for determining their designated area, unless the owned house has been rented out for 12 months prior to the closing date for applications.

Applicants are required to advise of any change of circumstance at any time prior to the child starting school. If you do not declare such arrangements, or a different address is used on the application where the child does not usually live, it will be considered that a false declaration has been made and it may be decided to decline to offer a place at a particular school, or normally withdraw the offer of a place.

Split living arrangements

Where a family claims to be resident at more than one address, justification and evidence of the family's circumstances will be required e.g. split residence order or legal separation documentation. The application must be completed by the parent, at an address which is owned, leased or rented, where the child lives for the majority of the school week. This is based on the number of school nights a child spends at the home (Sunday night 1800hrs to Friday 0900hrs). The School Admissions Team will assess to apply the appropriate single home address for the allocation of a school place. The information provided will be considered by an admissions panel of at least two officers and their decision is final. It is recommended that consensus is reached by both parents and child on the school preferences to be expressed and it should be noted that only one offer letter will be sent to the main applicant unless otherwise requested and agreed by both parents.

Applicants from abroad

An application for a school place can be made from applicants applying for a school place for their child from abroad, provided that they can provide evidence of their right of abode. The address used will be the address where the child is living at the closing date for applications unless evidence is provided that the family is returning to a property that they own in the Borough by January 15th, 2016. Third party written evidence confirming the details and timing of the relocation will be required. Adjustments will be made to any waiting lists, if the family returns later, prior to the start of school. Further advice on the documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team at Wokingham Borough Council.

Service Families

Families of UK service personnel (and other Crown Servants) who are not yet living in the area will be able to make an application if it is accompanied by an assignment order declaring a relocation date and intended address. In the absence of a new home postal address, the authority will use Hazebrouck Barracks as the postal address to determine distance to a preferred school. A letter from the Commanding Officer or garrison headquarters will be required confirming the living

arrangements for families who are being housed at Arborfield Garrison but are assigned to another base.

Multiple births or children with birth dates in the same academic year

Where the application of oversubscription criteria results in splitting twins, other siblings from a multiple birth or siblings born in the same school year; places will be offered, even if this will result in the school going above the admission number.

Admission outside the normal age group

Requests from parents for school places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully whether for gifted and talented pupils or for those who have experienced problems, e.g. having missed education due to ill health, etc.

Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances and will only be agreed where there is consensus that it is in the best interests of the child; the circumstances of each case will be considered individually. Such a consensus would be reached between the parents, schools concerned (the current school and The Forest School) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by The Forest School.

In Year admissions to Years 7-11

Applications for entry to Year 7 after the end of the routine admissions round (ending on 31st August) and applications for entry into Year 8 to Year 11 at any time are processed as in-year applications and applications must be submitted to the home Local Authority and will be co-ordinated by Wokingham Borough Council according to published admission arrangements and timescales. See www.wokingham.gov.uk/admissions.

The admission number for each year group is 200 except for Year 10 where the capacity will be increased by a further 20. (See separate note below regarding this Year Group).

If there are pupils on a waiting list for the year into which the applicant is seeking admission, then the pupil will be placed on that waiting list in a position determined by application of the criteria used in determining initial admissions to Year 7. Pupils will be admitted from the waiting list in order as space becomes available. If there is no pupil on the waiting list for the year into which the applicant is seeking admission, then the governors will determine whether a place can be offered to the applicant. If at the time of this determination the school has applications from more than one pupil for admission to the same year group, all the applications will be ordered according to the criteria used in determining initial admissions to Year 7 and will be considered in that order.

Out-of-age-group admissions in other year groups will only be agreed where there is consensus that it is in the best interests of the child; the circumstances of each case will be considered individually. Such a consensus would be reached between the parents, schools concerned (the current school and The Forest School) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by The Forest School.

Accepting or Declining the Offer of a Place

Parents are required to accept or decline the allocated place using the form sent with the allocation letter. The form must be returned to the local authority within two weeks from the date of the offer letter. If a form is not received, there will be one further written warning and failure to respond may result in the place being withdrawn. Parents are requested to advise the local authority at any stage, if they are not accepting the place for any reason. A facility to accept first preference offers online may be available.

In reaching a decision on an application for admission to a full year group, the governors will normally refuse a place unless they are statutorily obliged to admit the applicant or the application is covered by Wokingham Borough Council's Fair Access Protocols.

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the waiting list if they confirm that they wish to be.

Changes of preference

Parents who wish to amend their application **before** the closing date will be allowed to do so as long as they put their request in writing to the School Admissions Team or amend their online application by the closing date. Parents who wish to amend their application **after** the closing date should put their request in writing to the School Admissions Team. No consideration will be given to their request until after the offer date.

It should be noted that if an alternative school place has been allocated by the local authority as no parental preference, received by the closing date, could be met, changes of preference can adversely affect access to assistance with school transport.

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists will be maintained by the local authority on behalf of the Forest School Academy Trust where necessary for children not offered a school place at their preferred school. Positions on the list will be determined by applying the oversubscription criteria outlined above. Positions on waiting lists may go up or down due to pupil withdrawals or new or revised applications and no account is taken of the length of time spent on a waiting list.

Children who are the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a waiting list. Waiting list information will be available in accordance with the published timeline.

Appeals

Students refused a place in any year groups of the school, are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel. Appeals against a decision not to admit a child should be sent on the appropriate appeal form within 20 school days from the date of the letter refusing a place. Information about this process will be given in the decision letter sent by the local authority on behalf of the Academy Trust. The decisions of the appeals panel are binding on the school.

In the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to a school, the school will not consider any further application for admission, nor is there any automatic right to a further appeal for admission, within the same academic year (1st September to 31st August) unless there is an **exceptional** situation resulting in a significant change of circumstance relevant to the application. Appeals may be made by writing to the Chair of Governors at the school.

Sixth Form Admissions

General

The Forest School has a sixth form and students attending the school are entitled to be considered for entry into the school's sixth form provided they meet the entry criteria for individual courses and that there are sufficient spaces to meet their requirements (see Sixth Form Prospectus). In addition students, both male and female, from outside the school community can apply to join so long as entry requirements laid out in the prospectus are met and there is space on the particular courses of choice.

Administration of sixth form admissions is carried out by the school. Interviews with student or their families will not be held to determine a place; although meetings may be arranged to provide advice on options and entry requirements for particular courses.

Entry to courses in the sixth form will not be dependent on attendance, behaviour record, or perceptions of attitude or motivation.

Course entry criteria for external applicants, both male and female, will be the same as that applied to internal students.

Where an application is rejected on the grounds that the student does not meet the course entry criteria, an offer of an alternative course of study will be made.

Admission Number

No separate admission number applies for admission to The Forest School's sixth form as places will be offered first to year 11 students within the school and then to external candidates provided an appropriate course is available for a suitably qualified student.

Applications

Both parents and prospective students themselves have separate rights to apply for place in the sixth form. Those wishing a place in the school's Sixth Form starting in Year 12 in September 2016 should complete the school's Sixth Form Application form, which will be available from the school at the start of November 2015. Pupils in Year 11 already attending the school will be given a copy of the form (the term 'applicant' is used in the rest of this policy, to mean either parents or prospective students).

Offers of places to external students are subject to the school confirming date of birth or right of abode by examination of the birth certificate and/or student's passport, as appropriate. Failure to provide evidence, or providing evidence which shows the information provided at application to be incorrect, may lead to the offer being withdrawn.

Applications will be considered by a committee of the Governing Body, or this may be delegated to the Principal or Head of Sixth Form plus at least one other member of staff nominated by the Governing Body.

Applicants will be asked to declare that the address used will be their place of residence beyond the date of the student starting at the school. The offer of a place may be withdrawn if false or misleading information is given.

Allocation of places (oversubscription criteria)

For admission to the Sixth Form students will be required to pass at least 5 courses successfully at the following levels; A*-C at GCSE, or level 2 BTEC. In addition each course has specific entry requirements as detailed in the school sixth form prospectus.

In the case of oversubscription for a place on a particular course, places will be offered first to students within the school and then to external applicants, using, where applicable, the same course entry minimum qualification requirements.

The following criteria will be used to allocate the available places (after existing students have indicated their preference against their entitlement) on those courses that receive more applications meeting the course entry qualifications than can be accommodated, in descending order of priority.

If there are more applicants than places available applications will be prioritised in accordance with the following over-subscription criteria.

Children with a statement of special educational needs including Education, Health and Care Plans that names the school in the statement or plan will be allocated a place above all other applicants and who meet the academic requirements for the course. The admissions authority does not have the right to refuse admission.

A. Priority will be given to Looked after children and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order' (previous looked after children). Please see Appendix A for more information about information required to meet this criterion.

B. Students who have passed at least 5 courses successfully at the following levels; A*-C at GCSE, or level 2 BTEC.

Tie Breaker

Priority will be given within any of the above oversubscription criteria to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to the preferred school in terms of radial (straight line) distance. A full explanation of how distance is calculated is given in Appendix A.

When families move to the designated area, documentary evidence of the move must be provided e.g. rental agreement or exchange of contracts. Where a family claims to be resident at more than one address, applicants will be required to provide justification and evidence of a family's circumstances (e.g. legal separation). If a student spends part of the week with parents at different addresses, the home address will be where they usually spend the majority of the school week (Sunday 1800hrs to Friday 0900hrs).

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists will not be held for sixth form admissions.

Late Applications

If an application is received after the deadline and before the date applicants are notified of places, this will be considered 'late'. Late applications will be considered after the allocation of places and notified after the main allocation date, unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. hospitalisation of a parent or a family has just moved into the area. In such instances, evidence will be required.

Applications received after the normal admissions round

Applications received after the notification date will be considered as an 'in-year' application. Places will only be offered if places on requested courses are available and the student meets academic requirements of the course.

Multiple births or children with birth dates in the same academic year

Allocation of places is based on individual students meeting the requirements of their chosen course. No guarantee of a place is given to other siblings applying to the school from the same family.

Accepting or declining the offer of a place

Places are offered on the understanding that there is a commitment to meet the academic requirements of the course. Applicants are required to accept or decline the allocated place using the form sent with the allocation letter. The form must be returned to the school **within two weeks** from the date of the offer letter. If a form is not received, there will be one further written warning and failure to respond may result in the place being withdrawn.

Applicants are requested to advise the school at any stage, if you are not accepting the place for any reason.

Appeals

Where it is decided that an internal or external student is not offered a place because they do not meet the requirements of a particular course, the school will offer an alternative course of study.

Applications may be rejected because the applicant does not meet minimum entry standards published for entry to the sixth form, or – in the case of external applicants – because the sixth form is full. In all cases, the school will provide a letter of explanation to the applicant of the decision to reject their application together with an explanation of how to appeal.

The student and their parent may appeal separately or jointly appeal against non-admission to an independent panel. This will be explained in the school's decision letter. Appeals should be made to the Chair of Governors at the school.

Out-of-age-group admissions will only be agreed where there is consensus that it is in the best interests of the child; the circumstances of each case will be considered individually. Such a consensus would be reached between the parents, schools concerned (the current school and The Forest School) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by The Forest School.

General Contact information

Copies of the Sixth Form prospectus, application form for Sixth Form and the school admissions policy are available on the school website or from the school. In the first instance contact the school on telephone number: 0118 978 1626 or via email: office@forest.wokingham.sch.uk.

Copies of Wokingham Borough Council documents, parent's guides and common application forms are available on its web site: www.wokingham.gov.uk/admissions. They can also be obtained from the School Admissions Team, whose contact details are given below. Any queries about Wokingham's admission arrangements should be addressed to the team.

Email: schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

Telephone: (0118) 974 6143. Fax: (0118) 974 6135

School Admissions Team

Children's Services

Wokingham Borough Council

P O Box 156, Shute End

Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1WN

Appendix A

Notes relating to the above over-subscription criteria:

Criterion A

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 definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Previous 'looked after children' include those children under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (section 46 relating to adoption orders), Children Act 1989, section 8 which defines a 'residence order' as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live and section 14A which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Applications received under the Criterion A must be made by the person with parental responsibility or the child (e.g. the child's social worker, acting on behalf of the local authority for a looked after child) and will need to be supported by the following official documentation, as applicable:

- A. confirmation by the home local authority that the child is looked after or
- B. confirmation by the local authority that last looked after the child confirming that the child was looked after immediately prior to the issuing of one of the following orders:
 - (i) adoption order.
 - (ii) residence order.
 - (iii) special guardianship order.

All supporting documentation must be received by January 15 2016 for consideration prior to the main allocation of places.

Criterion B

When submitting applications under criterion B (exceptional medical or social needs as grounds for a child's admittance to a particular school), this must be supported by written evidence from an independent professional aware of the case relating to the child, parent/carer or other children living at the same address (e.g. doctor, hospital consultant or psychologist for medical grounds or registered social or care worker, housing officer, the police or probation officer for social needs). This evidence must be specific to the school in question; it must show why that school is the most suitable; what facilities will benefit the child, and why no other school can offer the same support.

Your application cannot be considered if you do not declare that you are applying under this criterion and you do not provide written independent professional evidence. All supporting documentation must be received by 15 January 2016 for consideration prior to the main allocation of places. An admissions panel will consider the supporting evidence provided and will advise the applicant of its decision; the panel's decision is final. Any evidence received by the school admissions team after 15 January 2016 will not be taken into account in the main allocation of places but may, if agreed by panel, affect the applicant's position on a school's waiting list after offer day

Criterion C and D

Occasionally a parent with more than one child can express a preference for their designated area school for the older child, but the local authority is unable to meet this preference. The local authority will then allocate a place at a lower ranked preferred school or the closest available school with places. In this case, the parent may then prefer to send younger sibling(s) to the same school as the older child attends. In such instances, the allocated school may be regarded as if it were the designated area school for subsequent siblings and would be treated as meeting criterion C (sibling resident within designated area).

Parents must notify the school admissions team at the time of application that they consider this exception applies. Where there is an application for the actual designated area school(s), designated area status would still be applied.

Criterion C and E

Siblings of older children at the school, who resided at an address in the previous designated area of The Forest School on September 1st, 2011 and continue to live at that address, will be treated as living in the school's designated area (criterion C). This clause will no longer be applied after June 30th, 2018 and parents must declare on their application form if this applies.

Parents may indicate a sibling in year 11 at the school provided it is the intention of the family that the child is due to continue their studies in the sixth form at the school.

Tie-breaker Distance Calculations

Distances will be measured consistently and will be measured as a straight line between the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) address points for the respective home address and school, using the Easting and Northing for each address point. These are then used to calculate the distance between the two address points using a 'direct distance mathematical routine' within the Capita ONE system used by the council's School Admissions Team into which the LLPG address points are imported. This calculates the distance from the values created through this process using Pythagoras' Theorem by measuring the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing for each end address point then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert to miles. It should be noted that this calculation may not be exactly the same as that created by a Geographical Information System (GIS) product as the GIS product may build in a formula to allow for the curvature of the earth. This curvature does not begin to affect distance values until the distance is least 10 miles