

**STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO VARY THE  
 ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL STEP ACADEMIES FOR  
 THE SEPTEMBER 2018 INTAKE**

**from 20 December 2016 to 30 January 2017**

The School Admissions Code 2014 ("the Code") requires all admission authorities to publicly consult on the proposed admission arrangements for their schools/academies where they propose to make changes to them.

STEP Academy Trust ("STEP"), a multi academy trust, is the admission authority for all of its academies located within Southwark, Croydon, Bromley and East Sussex.

We would like your views on a number of proposed changes to our admission arrangements.

**This document sets out:**

- What we are consulting on and why;
- Who we are consulting with;
- The consultation timetable;
- How to submit your views.

**We have included:**

- Proposed new Admissions Policies for admissions to Reception Year in September 2018 for the following academies:

<b>Academy Name</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Nursery</b>
Angel Oak Academy	London Borough of Southwark	Yes
Applegarth Academy	London Borough of Croydon	Yes
David Livingstone Academy	London Borough of Croydon	No
Gonville Academy	London Borough of Croydon	Yes
Heathfield Academy	London Borough of Croydon	No
Wolsey Junior Academy	London Borough of Croydon	N/A
La Fontaine Academy	London Borough of Bromley	No
Breakwater Academy (formerly Meeching Valley Primary School)	East Sussex County Council	No

Academy Name	Local Authority	Nursery
Hawkes Farm Academy (formerly Hawkes Farm Primary School)	East Sussex County Council	No
*Hailsham Academy (to be renamed Burfield Academy on 1 January 2017)	East Sussex County Council	Yes
*Marshlands Academy (to be renamed Phoenix Academy on 1 January 2017)	East Sussex County Council	Yes
*Newhaven Academy (to be renamed High Cliff Academy on 1 January 2017)	East Sussex County Council	Yes
*White House Academy	East Sussex County Council	No
<p><i>*These four academies are currently part of a multi academy trust called The Lilac Sky Schools Trust ("Lilac Sky") but will transfer to STEP on 1 January 2017, mid-way through the statutory consultation period. Lilac Sky have provided their consent to STEP commencing consultation on the admission arrangements for these four academies prior to the transfer in order to comply with the statutory timetable set out in the Code.</i></p>		

- All other associated admission documents (for example, supplementary information forms and academy-specific application forms);
- Questionnaire for responses.

### What are we consulting on?

We are consulting on the proposed new admission arrangements for admission to Reception Year (Year 3 in the case of Wolsey Junior Academy) in September 2018 for all STEP academies. The term "admission arrangements" includes not only the admission policy for each academy, but all other associated documents (for example, supplementary information forms).

The admission arrangements set out how places will be allocated to children at that academy, and the procedure that must be followed by parents.

### What are we proposing to change and why?

Firstly, the admission arrangements have been overhauled in their entirety to make them easier for parents to understand and to clearly set out the procedure which must be followed by parents. For example, the wording explaining how deferred and delayed entry, and part-time attendance, for Reception Year pupils has been made clearer, as well as the procedure for making an application for admission outside normal age group (which now includes a separate application form).

The main criteria in any set of admission arrangements which determines how children will be allocated places are:

- The oversubscription categories (for example, looked after and previously looked after children, or children with a sibling at the academy);

- The definitions used within the oversubscription categories (for example, the definition of a “sibling”);
- The definition of the child’s home address for the purpose of the policy;
- The way in which the distance from the child’s home address to the academy is calculated;
- The tie breaker (for example, random lottery).

Consultees are invited to consider the admission policies and associated documents published with this consultation before responding, however the following paragraphs summarises the main changes made.

1. The Oversubscription Categories

The changes made from the admission arrangements for the 2017 intake can be summarised as follows:

<b>Southwark and Croydon Academies (with the exception of Wolsey Junior Academy)</b>		
<b>2017 Intake</b>	<b>2018 Intake</b>	
	<b>Academies without a nursery</b>	<b>Academies with a nursery</b>
1) Looked after and previously looked after children	No change to type of category	1) Looked after and previously looked after children
2) Children with a medical need to attend the academy		2) Children with a medical need to attend the academy
3) Children with a sibling at the academy		3) Children with a sibling at the academy
4) All other children		4) Children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium who attend the academy’s nursery
		5) All other children
<p>The reason for this change is to encourage, in particular, the parents of disadvantaged children who are eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium to take advantage of nursery education for their children at the academy’s nursery, which will improve their education, provide continuity for them throughout their early years and help them to settle into Reception Year faster, where they do not already have a sibling at the academy. As the number of children attending the academy’s nursery is less than the number of places in Reception Year, this will not mean that parents will feel obliged to send their child to the academy’s nursery in order to achieve a place in Reception Year at the academy.</p>		

<b>Wolsey Junior Academy</b>	
<b>2017 Intake</b>	<b>2018 Intake</b>
1) Looked after and previously looked after children	No change to type of category
2) Children with a medical need to attend the academy	
3) Children with a sibling at the academy	
4) Children who attend Wolsey Infant School	
5) All other children	

<b>La Fontaine Academy</b>	
<b>2017 Intake</b>	<b>2018 Intake</b>
1) Looked after and previously looked after children	No change to type of category
2) Children with a medical need to attend the academy	
3) Children with a sibling at the academy	
4) Children who are eligible for Pupil Premium or Service Premium	
5) All other children	

<b>Breakwater Academy and Hawkes Farm Academy</b>	
<b>2017 Intake</b>	<b>2018 Intake</b>
1) Looked after and previously looked after children	1) Looked after and previously looked after children
2) Children living within the pre-defined community area with a sibling at the academy	2) Children with a medical need to attend the academy

3) Children attending a named infant feeder school	3) Children with a sibling at the academy
4) Other children living within the pre-defined community area	4) All other children
5) Children living outside the pre-defined community area with a sibling at the academy	
6) Children living outside the pre-defined community area	
<p>These two academies were community schools until 1 September 2016 when they converted to academy status and became part of STEP. The statutory timetable within the Code provides for admission arrangements to be determined some eighteen months before children are admitted, which means that East Sussex County Council had already determined the admission arrangements for the September 2017 intake many months before the two academies became STEP Academies on 1 September 2016.</p> <p>Now that STEP is the admission authority for these two academies, we propose to change their admission arrangements to bring them in line with all other STEP academies which have been tried and tested over recent years, using much simpler criteria which is entirely fair and easier for parents to understand. Within each of the oversubscription categories, places are allocated by reference to the distance between the child's home address and the academy, ensuring that those living closer to the academy receive higher priority. STEP believes that no child should lose out on a place to a child living further away in the same oversubscription category.</p>	

<b>Hailsham Academy, Marshlands Academy, Newhaven Academy and White House Academy</b>		
<b>2017 Intake</b>	<b>2018 Intake</b>	
	<b>Academy without a nursery</b>	<b>Academies with a nursery</b>
1) Looked after and previously looked after children	1) Looked after and previously looked after children	1) Looked after and previously looked after children
2) Children with a sibling at the academy	2) Children with a medical need to attend the academy	2) Children with a medical need to attend the academy
3) Children attending a named infant feeder school	3) Children with a sibling at the academy	3) Children with a sibling at the academy

4) Children living within the pre-defined community area	4) All other children	4) Children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium who attend the academy's nursery
5) Children living outside the pre-defined community area		5) All other children
<p>Lilac Sky is the admission authority for these four academies until 1 January 2017 when they will transfer to STEP. Lilac Sky have never consulted on proposed variations to the admission arrangements for these academies (this has been verified by East Sussex County Council) and it is therefore the case that their admission arrangements mirror those for all community schools in East Sussex for the September 2015 intake (East Sussex County Council did, in fact, vary their admission arrangements between the September 2016 and September 2017 intakes, however they have confirmed that they were not asked to include these four academies within that consultation by Lilac Sky).</p> <p>STEP will become the admission authority for these four academies on 1 January 2017. We therefore propose (with the consent of Lilac Sky) to change their admission arrangements to bring them in line with all other STEP academies which have been tried and tested over recent years, using much simpler criteria which is entirely fair and easier for parents to understand. Within each of the oversubscription categories, places are allocated by reference to the distance between the child's home address and the academy, ensuring that those living closer to the academy receive higher priority. STEP believes that no child should lose out on a place to a child living further away in the same oversubscription category.</p>		

## 2. Children with a Medical Need

The criteria within this category has been tightened up to make it clearer that only children with a compelling reason for attending that particular academy, and no other school or academy, because of their own or their parent's medical need, will meet the criteria. This is because these children are given the highest priority (after looked after and previously looked after children) over and above all other children and, accordingly, this category is regularly abused by parents who simply prefer their children to be admitted to that academy, rather than there being a compelling reason why this is absolutely necessary. It has been made clear that the compelling reason cannot be based on social need or inconvenience.

It has been made clear that the necessary supporting medical evidence must be provided on or before the application deadline for the child to fall within the category – failure to do so will result in the child being placed in the next category that applies. This is to ensure that the admission process runs smoothly and to prevent abuse by parents who attempt to get their child into this category after they have failed to achieve a place under a different category. There must be a clearly stated cut-off point to ensure that the admissions process is fair to all children, not just those whose parents choose to play the system.

## 3. Definition of "Sibling"

The definition has been amended to include a full, half, adopted, foster and step-sibling and the children of cohabiting partners of parents, as long as in all cases the sibling lives at the child's home address with the applicant child.

In the case of the children of cohabiting partners, it is a condition that the parents must have been cohabiting for at least one year at the application deadline. The purpose behind including the children of cohabiting partners within the definition of a "sibling" is to ensure that committed couples who have simply chosen not to

get married are not disadvantaged as a result of making that choice, however this unfortunately does leave the door open for some prospective parents to abuse this criterion by temporarily moving in with another parent with a child at the academy for a very short period while the application is processed and then moving out again once a place is achieved. Each time this happens, a child who should have received the place fails to do so. The purpose of the one year cohabitation condition is aimed at removing or substantially reducing such instances of abuse.

#### 4. Definition of "Child's Home Address"

The definition has been amended simply to make it clearer and to make parents aware that, where an issue arises, they will be required to provide documentary evidence and/or the times that the child has spent at the home address in the three month period immediately preceding the application deadline.

Again, the reason for this is to try to prevent abuse by parents who fraudulently claim that their child lives at an address which is clearly not their home address simply because it is nearer to the academy and therefore receives higher priority.

#### 5. Distance Measuring

The way in which distance will be measured has been simplified and made clearer. Distance will be measured in a straight line measurement from a point at their home address which is pre-defined by the local authority's distance measuring software to the same point at the academy, and that all children living within a multi-dwelling block will be regarded as living an equal distance from the academy, with the tie breaker being applied.

STEP has noted that some local authorities give priority to children based on how near they live in a building to the ground floor or, in some cases, based on their name in alphabetical order, and does not agree that this is a fair way to determine which children will achieve places. Random lottery is, in STEP's view, the only fair way to determine this where children live at different addresses within the same building, as is the case with children who do not live in the same building but just happen to live exactly the same distance from the academy.

#### **When are we consulting?**

STEP is required to publicly consult on proposed changes to its academies' admission arrangements for a minimum of six weeks between 1 October (at the earliest) and 31 January at the latest, in the determination year.

Accordingly, this consultation will begin on 20 December 2016 and run until 30 January 2017.

#### **Timetable for Consultation:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
20 December 2016	Start of consultation
30 January 2017	End of consultation period and deadline for submitting responses
31 January 2017	Consideration of all responses received during the consultation period
28 February 2017	Deadline for formally determining admission arrangements
15 March 2017	Deadline for sending determined admission arrangements to the relevant local authorities
15 May 2017	Deadline for objections to be submitted to the Schools Adjudicator

**Who are we consulting with?**

- Parents and carers of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
- The respective local authority, namely the London Boroughs of Southwark, Croydon and Bromley, and East Sussex County Council;
- Early years providers, childminders and local residents within the relevant areas;
- All other admission authorities (local authorities, Governing Bodies and multi academy trusts) within or adjoining the relevant areas (except those only responsible for secondary schools/academies);
- Headteachers, members of staff and Governors within the relevant areas;
- Any other interested parties.

**How should a response be provided?**

If you would like to comment or raise a concern about the proposed new admission arrangements for the September 2018 intake, please complete the questionnaire either online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/JN6FQZH> or by downloading/printing the questionnaire and returning the completed form by post or email to:

Mrs C Gilbert  
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Gonville Road  
THORNTON HEATH  
Surrey  
CR7 6DL

Email: [admissions@stepacademytrust.org](mailto:admissions@stepacademytrust.org)

All completed questionnaires must be received on or before 30 January 2017.