

Breakwater Academy and Hawkes Farm Academy

**CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO VARY THE DETERMINED
ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2017
INTAKE**

from 20 December 2016 to 30 January 2017

Introduction

Breakwater Academy and Hawkes Farm Academy are primary academies which converted to academy status on 1 September 2016 and became part of STEP Academy Trust (“STEP”), a multi academy trust with existing academies in East Sussex, Croydon, Southwark and Bromley. This means that East Sussex County Council was the “admission authority” for the two academies until 31 August 2016 and STEP became the “admission authority” for them on 1 September 2016.

The School Admissions Code 2014 (“the Code”) requires all admission authorities to formally determine the admission arrangements for their academies by 28 February in the year before children will be admitted in September (known as the “determination year”). This means that the admission arrangements for the September 2017 intake for the two academies were determined by East Sussex County Council on or before 28 February 2016.

The Code goes on to provide that, where there has been a major change of circumstances (for example, an academy conversion), admission arrangements which have already been determined can be varied with the consent of the Secretary of State for Education.

STEP has developed its own set of fully compliant and fair admission arrangements for all of its existing STEP academies which are consistent across the whole of the trust. For this reason, STEP wishes to vary the determined admission arrangements for the September 2017 intake for the two academies, to bring them into line with the admission arrangements for all other STEP academies and ensure that they are fair and workable.

STEP are not, however, proposing to make any variations to the existing main oversubscription criteria in the admission arrangements for the September 2017 intake for the two academies – any substantive changes which would affect the allocation of places to children will not be made until the September 2018 intake, in relation to which STEP are also carrying out statutory consultation in parallel to this process. The proposed changes are either necessary to make the admission arrangements compliant (including making them clearer for parents), or procedural to clarify the process that parents must follow as a result of the change of admission authority.

STEP are now seeking your views on their proposal to vary the admission arrangements for the September 2017 intake for the two academies, with Secretary of State consent.

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 admission to Reception Year in September 2017 for the following academies:

Academy Name	Local Authority	Nursery
Breakwater Academy (formerly Meeching Valley Primary School)	East Sussex County Council	No
Hawkes Farm Academy (formerly Hawkes Farm Primary School)	East Sussex County Council	No

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

What are we proposing to change and why?

Effectively, STEP is proposing to vary the determined admission arrangements for the two academies by replacing them with the admission arrangements for all existing STEP academies (including associated forms, such as academy-specific application forms) while at the same time adapting the standard STEP admission arrangements so as to retain the two academies’ existing oversubscription criteria (i.e. priority categories), definitions (for example, the definition of “siblings” and “child’s home address”), the order in which places are allocated (i.e. the way in which distance is measured) and the tie breaker, but with clearer wording.

As set out above, the purpose behind the proposed variation is to ensure that the two academies have a very clear and entirely fair set of admission arrangements which can easily be understood by parents and which clearly set out the procedure which parents must follow, without making any changes which would result in different children being allocated places at the two academies than would be the case under the existing admission arrangements.

The current admission arrangements for the two academies are effectively the admission arrangements for community primary schools in East Sussex as determined by East Sussex County Council for the September 2017 intake.

The following tables summarise the main oversubscription criteria, definitions and other criteria, which have not been materially changed:

Summary of Oversubscription Categories		
Current Admission Arrangements	Proposed New Admission Arrangements	Reason for any Changes
1) Looked after and previously looked after children	1) Looked after and previously looked after children	<p>*For the reasons for the change to Categories 2 and 5 in the current admission arrangements and Category 2 in the proposed new admission arrangements (children with a sibling at the academy), please refer to the table below for the reasons for this change.</p> <p>Category 3 (children who attend a named infant feeder school) has been removed because it only applies to junior academies, and all four academies are primary academies. It is therefore a redundant category, and keeping it in would be confusing.</p> <p>Category 5 has been changed to “all other children” as this is the residual category which always comes last.</p>
2) Children who live within the pre-defined community area with a sibling at the academy*	2) Children with a sibling at the academy*	
3) Children who attend a named infant feeder school	3) Children who live within the pre-defined community area	
4) Children who live within the pre-defined community area	4) All other children	
5) Children who live outside the pre-defined community area with a sibling at the academy*		
6) Children who live outside the pre-defined community area		
Please refer to the proposed new Admission Policy for the full wording under each category.		

Definition of a “Sibling”		
Current Admission Arrangements	Proposed New Admission Arrangements	Reason for any Changes
<p>“[The Academy] considers children to be ‘siblings’ if they are full, half, adoptive or foster brother or sister living in the same household and includes siblings attending sixth forms.</p> <p>Children who have a brother or sister who joined the school prior to 1 September 2017 and who is still on roll will be admitted under the previous arrangement which gave priority to brothers and sisters regardless of whether they live in the pre-defined community area or not. Where a child has been unable to secure a place at a school in his/her community area and has been directed to attend a school outside the community area as an alternative, any applications for younger siblings to attend the school will be treated as if the family were resident in the community area, as long as the sibling will still be attending the school when the younger child starts.”</p>	<p>“A “sibling” will include a full, half, adopted or foster brother or sister, provided that in all cases the sibling and the applicant child live at the child’s home address (as defined by this policy) and are being brought up as siblings as part of a core family unit. For the avoidance of doubt, a child of a friend or extended family member (for example, a cousin) living at the same address will not be a sibling for the purpose of this policy.”</p>	<p>East Sussex County Council varied its admission arrangements for the September 2017 intakes. In doing so, they changed the oversubscription categories to those set out in the first column above which include separate categories for children with siblings depending on whether they live within or outside the pre-defined community area. Their definition of a “sibling”, however, makes it clear that the previous criteria in relation to siblings (i.e. all children with a sibling falling into Category 2 regardless of where the child lives) will apply to children seeking admission in the September 2017 intake. The wording is inexplicably complicated and very difficult to understand and, as it appears to only applies to the September 2017 intake and STEP are seeking to vary the admission arrangements for the September 2018 intake in any event, STEP takes the view that it would be much clearer for parents to state the oversubscription categories as they will be applied for the September 2017 intake and omit the second part of East Sussex</p>

		<p>County Council’s definition of a sibling, which reflects the position in practice once the second part of the “sibling” definition has been applied.</p> <p>The current definition of “sibling” only includes full, half, adoptive and foster siblings, and this has not been changed. STEP’s own admission arrangements also include step-siblings and the children of cohabiting partners, however this change will not be made until the September 2018 intake (subject to consultation) to ensure that there are no changes made which would change which children will achieve places in the September 2017 intake.</p>
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Definition of a “Child’s Home Address”		
Current Admission Arrangements	Proposed New Admission Arrangements	Reason for any Changes
<p>“You must state your child’s home address which should be a residential property that is your child’s only or main residence and not an address at which he or she might sometimes stay or sleep.</p> <p>If your child regularly stays with another parent or relative and therefore has more than one address, the school place will be</p>	<p>“The child’s home address stated in the Common Application Form (“CAF”) must be a residential property that is the child’s only or main residence, and not an address at which he or she might sometimes stay or sleep.</p> <p>If the child regularly stays with another parent or relative and therefore has more than one</p>	<p>The definition of a “child’s home address” has not been changed, however the wording has been amended to make this clearer for parents.</p>

<p>allocated based on the address at which your child spends the majority of weekday nights during term time.</p> <p>If you give two addresses, we will decide which address should be used as the main residence for the purpose of processing your application because we only accept one current address. Evidence may be required to confirm the address given and we reserve the right to check the information you supply.”</p>	<p>address, the child’s home address will be the address at which they spend the majority of weekday nights during term time. If two addresses are given, only one will be accepted, which will be the address which meets the definition stated above.</p> <p>The Academy may require parents to provide evidence to confirm that the stated home address for the child meets the definition stated above, and reserves the right to check information and evidence supplied.”</p>	
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Distance Measuring		
Current Admission Arrangements	Proposed New Admission Arrangements	Reason for any Changes
<p>“In the event of oversubscription within any priority, place allocation will be decided by prioritising applications on the basis of home to school distance measured in a straight line (as the crow flies).”</p>	<p>“The distance between the child’s home address (as defined by this policy) and the Academy will be measured the Local Authority’s Geographical Information System (GIS).</p> <p>The distance will be measured from the GIS determined point at the child’s home address to the nearest gate used by pupils at the Academy using the shortest route from home to school using surfaced, passable routes, which will not include unmade</p>	<p>The way in which distance is measured has not been changed, however the wording has been amended to make it clearer for parents.</p> <p>The current admission arrangements do not clarify that the distance will be measured using the Local Authority’s GIS system, and neither do they set out how children living in multi dwelling buildings will be dealt with, and it is therefore necessary to include provision</p>

	<p>footpaths, and there must be a public right of way.</p> <p>In the case of multi-dwelling buildings (for example, an apartment block), the distance will be measured from same GIS determined point in the building regardless of the actual location within the building of the child's home address, with the tie breaker being applied if more than one application is received for children living in the building (see below)."</p>	<p>for these to ensure compliance with the Code.</p>
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Tie Breaker		
Current Admission Arrangements	Proposed New Admission Arrangements	Reason for any Changes
<p>"In the event that applicants cannot be prioritised using the [distance criterion] because the distance measurements are the same, the [Academy] will use random allocation to decide which children will be offered the remaining places. This will be done electronically using the Authority's admissions software."</p>	<p>"Where two applications cannot otherwise be separated because the distance between the child's home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy is the same, the order in which places will be allocated will be determined by random lottery in the presence of a person who is independent of the Academy."</p>	<p>The tie breaker (i.e. random lottery) has not been changed, however amended wording has been used as the Code requires random allocation to be supervised by somebody who is independent of the academy.</p>

Other proposed changes made to the admission arrangements are aimed at making them clearer, or set out the procedure to be followed. This applies to the explanation for deferred and delayed entry, and part-time attendance, for Reception Year, and to the procedure for making an application for admission outside normal age group (which includes a separate application form).

Parents are invited to consider the full set of admission arrangements published with this notice.

When are we consulting?

STEP is publicly consulting on the proposed changes to the four academies' determined admission arrangements for the September 2017 intake for six weeks from 20 December 2016 until 30 January 2017.

Timetable for Consultation:

Date	Action
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, and submission of application for Secretary of State consent

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 2017 intake, please complete the questionnaire either online by downloading/printing the questionnaire at Annex A and returning the completed form by post or email to:

Mrs C Gilbert
 STEP Academy Trust
 Gonville Road
 THORNTON HEATH
 Surrey
 CR7 6DL

Email: admissions@stepacademytrust.org

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