

Westminster City Council

Consultation on Admission Arrangements for community primary schools

Academic Year 2024-25



City of Westminster

In accordance with the School Admission (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 the admission authorities for schools located in the Westminster are required to consult where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, or it has been 7 years since a formal consultation was carried out.

A consultation period must run for a minimum of 6 weeks and take place between 1st October and 31st January of the year before those arrangements are to apply. This consultation starts on **Monday 14 November 2022** and will end on **Friday 23 December 2022** and applies to the academic year of entry 2024-25.

Proposed changes:

- Reduction to the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Hallfield Primary School from 60 to 45
- Reduction to the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Essendine Primary School from 60 to 45
- Clarity of wording for criterion (2, note ii) medial/social priority,
- Clarity of wording for criterion (5, note iii) children of staff.
- Clarity of process and wording for in-year exceptional need requests.

Westminster City Council (WCC) is the admission authority for 7 community primary schools in the borough. These are indicated below with the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for each school.

Barrow Hill (Y3)	60	Hallfield	60 to 45
Edward Wilson	56	Robinsfield Infant	60
Essendine	60 to 45	Queens Park	42
George Eliot	30		

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Admission Arrangements for the 2023/24 year of entry for all Westminster Community Schools

Applicants with a signed Education, Health and Care plan which names a school will be admitted in accordance with Section 43 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Oversubscription criteria

If there are more applications to the school than there are places available, then places will be allocated in the following order of priority:

- 1) Children in Public Care, also known as Looked After Children(a) in care of the local authority, children who have been adopted(b) or made subject to a child arrangement(c) or special guardianship(d) order immediately following having been looked after. Previously looked after children, including those children who appear to Westminster Council to have been in state care(e) outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted [see *note (i)*].
- 2) The Director of Education Bi-borough Children's Services, as advised by senior officers, may on an individual basis give priority to applicants who can demonstrate that admission to a particular community school is necessary on the grounds of professionally supported exceptional need. Parent/carers must supply details of any such special factors at the time of the original application together with recent supporting documentation. Such applications will not be considered without professional support, such as a letter or report from a doctor, consultant or social worker which must be no more than six months old. All information submitted will be regarded as confidential [see *note (ii)*].
- 3) To brothers and sisters of children already on the roll of the school who will still be in the school at the time the applicant is admitted. This includes half-brothers or half-sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or stepsisters or the children of the partner of
- 4) the parent or carer provided that they live at the same address as the applicant. Please note sibling priority only applies to children with sibling(s) at the school in Years R-6 at the time of admission **not** nursery.

In category (3), in the case of the reception classes at Robinsfield Infant School, sibling priority would also extend to applicants with a sibling attending Barrow Hill Junior School and vice versa.

- 5) Children whose parent is a qualified teacher for a minimum of 0.6fte (16.5 hours teaching staff) who has been employed at the school concerned for two or more years at the time of application, and/or children of a member of staff who has been recruited to fill a vacancy for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage [*refer to note (iii)*].
- 6) Children living nearest to the school calculated as a straight line.

Nearness to the school will be calculated using a straight line (as the crow flies) measurement from the child's home 'address point' determined by Ordnance Survey Data to the nearest main school gate used by the school for pupils, and as determined by WCC using its computerised measuring system. The child living closest to the school will receive the highest priority. Accessibility by car or public transport will be disregarded.

Tie-break: If applicants share the same address point (for example, those who live in the same block of flats or shared house) priority will be determined by random allocation. If two or more applicants live at exactly the same distance from the school, the offer of a place will be decided by random allocation.

**Where it has not been possible to offer a place in reception, or any other year group, to a child of a multiple birth, priority will apply within the sibling category.*

Notes:

(i) Children Looked After, also referred to as Children in Public

- 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 the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.
- b) This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).
- c) Child arrangements orders are defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.
- d) Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians)
- e) A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

(ii) Exceptional Need - All schools have experience in dealing with children with diverse educational, social and medical needs. However, in a very few exceptional cases there may be reasons why a child may need to attend a specific school, and no other school can meet this need. If you feel there are exceptional reasons for your child to be considered for a priority placement at a particular school, you must indicate this in the space provided in your application, giving reasons supporting your case.

All requests for priority consideration must be supported by a professional, such as a doctor or social worker, who must be able to demonstrate a link with the exceptional need and the school and why it is necessary for your child to attend this school in particular and the difficulties it will cause your child to attend another school.

It is for you to decide how to support your case and what documents to provide, but these must be submitted by the closing date: **15 January 2024**. The Admissions Team is not responsible for contacting professionals for information about your case and any decision will be based on documents you submit by the closing date.

A Panel will consider exceptional needs cases soon after 15 January and before 10 March to comply with the dates of the Pan London coordinated scheme. The Panel is made up of three Senior Admissions Officers. Depending on the circumstances of the case, a senior member of the SEND team will be on the panel. The view of the school may be sought and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The notification date is **16 April 2024**. You will not be advised before this date whether your request for priority is agreed. If priority is not granted, your application will be

considered against the remaining admission criteria. Your outcome notification will indicate if your application was granted priority or not under the exceptional need criterion.

It is important to be aware that very few cases are agreed under this criterion. The Admission Authority (the Panel) must be able to justify awarding priority for a child above other applicants. It will need to be agreed by those making the decision that the professional support provided clearly makes a case that the needs for the child can only be met at the school requested, as opposed to another local school.

(iii) Children of staff - Priority will be limited to one place for each form of entry in any year with an additional maximum limit of no more than:

- 3 children throughout the whole school (for single form entry schools)
- 4 children throughout the whole school (for 1 ½ form entry schools)
- 5 children throughout the whole school (for 2 form entry schools, and upwards)

Exception to the above will apply to children of multiple birth or those born in the same academic year.

Children whose parent is a qualified teacher for a minimum of 0.6fte (16.5 hours teaching staff) who has been employed at the school concerned for two or more years at the time of application. Applicants seeking priority for a school place under this criterion must still be employed at the time of application and when the child starts the school. If the staff member is no longer employed when the child is due to start the school, and the applicant would not have qualified for a place under any other criterion, the offer will be withdrawn.

If the request for priority under this criterion is on the grounds that the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacancy for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage, the contract of employment for the post must be for minimum of 12 months from the date the child is to start school.

In both of the above cases, evidence of employment must be submitted to the LA and be accompanied with the relevant paperwork supporting an application on these grounds. The applicant must take sole responsibility to provide such paperwork. Without the provision of the relevant papers, priority will not be given on these grounds.

Admission arrangements that apply to all Westminster community primary schools

Twins, triplets and multiple births – twins, triplets and multiple birth children will be considered as individuals alongside all other applicants. Every effort will be made to accommodate twins or multiple birth children within the same school even if this means that the PAN will be exceeded.

Children attending nursery class at a school – Parents of children attending the nursery class at a school must reapply for a reception class place. There is no automatic transfer from the nursery class to the reception class at a school. The infant or primary school where a child attends a nursery class will not necessarily be able to offer a place in reception.

Split residence – Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, the address where the child spends the majority of the school week should be used for the school application. If there is a genuine 50/50 shared arrangement in place, the address where the child lives is determined using a joint declaration from the parents stating the pattern of residence. In cases where an agreement cannot be agreed and Child Tax Credit is claimed, the address that is registered for this claim will be used. In the situation where there are ongoing Family Court proceedings, the Council will consider the approach to be taken for processing on a case by case basis.

Random allocation - any applicants requiring order of priority using random allocation, will be determined using a Third Party Draw Service - **Random.org**. This process is independent of the school and managed by the Council's Admissions Team.

Date of admission/deferred entry – Children will normally be admitted to the reception year for community primary schools in the September following their fourth birthday.

In line with the Admissions Code, parents can defer their child's entry to the reception year until later in the school year, where they have been offered a place at a school to start before they are of compulsory school age. Where entry is deferred, the school will hold the place for that child and not offer it to another child. However, entry cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the end of the Reception Year. In practice this means that parents could defer entry until January for children born between 1 September and 31 December, or until April for children born between 1 January and 31 August. Parents can also request that their child attends part-time until he/she reaches compulsory school age.

Requests to apply for Reception in the following year – Requests for admission outside of the child's chronological year of entry will be considered in accordance with para. 2.17 (Admissions Code). Such requests would normally apply to children that are Summer born (between April and August) and there are significant reasons that would benefit the child's academic, social and emotional development by starting reception in the following year as opposed to Year 1. The Council, as the admission authority for community schools (or the governing body for the academies), must make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case, informing parents of their statutory right to

appeal. The headteacher of each of the school(s) applied for will be informed of the request and their views taken into account. This right to request a later admission, does not apply if the child is offered a place in another year group at the school. Each case will need to be supported by a professional (e.g. GP, social worker) that provides the reason for admissions outside of the chronological year group.

Year 3 Admission – In the case of Year 3 admission to Barrow Hill Junior School priority of admission is given to pupils transferring from Robinsfield Infant School. Junior transfer applications must be made to through the Home LA as part of Pan London coordination.

Members of the UK Armed Forces and Crown Servants - An official letter confirming your destination address or quarters will be required. This can be provided before you have relocated to ensure your application is not disadvantaged.

Method of Application – Parents/carers must apply on the Common Application Form of the local authority where they live. This can be completed online www.westminster.gov.uk/admissions or on a paper can be requested from the Home LA's Admissions Team.

Closing Date and Initial Notification Date – Under the WCC coordinated admission arrangements the closing date for reception class applications will be 15 January 2024. Notification letters will be sent out on 16 April 2024.

Late applications - Applications received after the set closing date will be accepted but will not normally be considered for a place at the school until after the initial offer date.

Waiting List - Unsuccessful applicants (including any applications received after the closing date) will be included on the school's waiting list ranked in order of priority under the published oversubscription criteria, without regard to the date that the application was received. Please note a child's position on the waiting list can go down as well as up. For example, if a new application is received or if a child on the list moves nearer to the school, the waiting list may need to be revised. The offer of a place does not depend on the length of time your child's name has been on the waiting list and there can be no guarantee that a place will be offered.

Appeals - Unsuccessful applicants have a right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Further details will be included in the notification letter.

7.4 Coordinated admission arrangements and timetable for applications to reception

As required by law, WCC will be coordinating admissions for 2024-25 entry.

This document outlines the scheme which will run along similar lines to the arrangements to previous years.

Details of the coordinated scheme will be available online at www.westminster.gov.uk/admissions or by contacting the School Admissions Team on 020 7745 6432/36433 or email: schooladmissions@westminster.gov.uk.

In-Year admissions

Applications for a school for a year group already established (Year 1 to 6 and reception from the start of September) are made on the Council's in-year common application form via [Apply in-year](#). If no waiting list is operation and a vacancy exists in the child's chronological year group, a place will be offered. Where a vacancy does not exist, the application will be considered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria and associated admission arrangements.

Exceptional Need requests – for schools that are full, all requests for priority consideration must be supported by a professional, such as a doctor or social worker, who must be able to demonstrate a link with the exceptional need and the school and why it is necessary for your child to attend this school in particular and the difficulties it will cause your child to attend another school.

As set out under **Note ii (page 6)**, the panel will meet to consider the case requested for priority. For in-year admission requests, where the school is full, consideration under the 'Exceptional need' criterion is for priority placement on the waiting list, not admission to the school. There are no set dates for the panel to meet to consider cases as these are convened periodically. A decision is communicated to the applicant normally withing 14 days after submission of your application.

In-Year Fair Access

The council has in place a Primary Fair Access Protocol that provides the mechanisms for the placement of children that require a school place in-year but present a high level of need but do not an Education, Health and Care plan in place. All community schools participate in the protocol and further details can be obtained from the Admissions team at: schooladmissions@westminster.gov.uk.