

STEP Academy Trust

Responses to admissions consultation for 2020-21

| Issue | Summary of consultation response | STEP Decision |
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| Applications for admissions outside normal age group | Southwark LA response – The LA would like such requests to be made via the LA’s website for safeguarding reasons, pupil tracking and to keep the process user friendly. | STEP Academy Trust as its own admission authority wishes to co-ordinate applications outside of the normal age range. The Admissions Code provides that it is the decision of the admission authority as to the procedure of such applications. We would confirm that this process has been the same since September 2018. |
| | East Sussex LA response – The LA would like the addition to this section that children will not, under any circumstances, be admitted to reception class before the academic year in which their fifth birthday falls. | Although this section would normally be used for parents who want to delay their child’s admission to Reception, for example, because they are summer born, included is a statement to this effect under the heading, “Applications For Admission Outside Normal Age Group” so that the policy is clear that parents cannot apply for their child to be admitted to Reception earlier than the academic year in which their fifth birthday falls. |
| Looked after and previously looked after children | Southwark LA response - looked after child or a previously looked after child must be admitted regardless. | The first paragraph under this oversubscription criterion regarding the application of the tie breaker (distance from home to school) has been removed as this is repeated later in the admissions policy under the heading of ‘Order of allocation’. Although we agree with the sentiment that all looked after and previously looked after children should have priority, the Trust would still need a basis for prioritising such applications in the unlikely event that you receive more applications from such children than there are places. |
| Children previously in state care outside of England | Southwark LA response, Croydon LA response Governor HH response, Parent response – All responses question the inclusion of this section. | Trustees do not propose to include this criteria until a formal decision has been made to the Code by the Secretary of State. |

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| <p>Children with a medical need to attend the school</p> | <p>Southwark LA response - The LA have noted the following:</p> <p>‘Although we understand that the information is sought in order to properly consider applicants under this category, it is prohibited for admission authorities to make direct requests using a supplementary information form that relates to a parents’ or a child’s disabilities, special educational needs or medical conditions. This is in accordance with Paragraph 2.4 (c) of the SAC.’</p> | <p>Strictly speaking, this is correct but the forms have been in used since 2018 (following consultation) to ensure that the Trust was satisfied that such applications could be considered fairly, given that there is an element of subjectivity when assessing applications under this criteria. In addition, the Code states, “If admission authorities decide to use social and medical need as an oversubscription criterion, they must set out in their arrangements how they will define this need and give clear details about what supporting evidence will be required (e.g. a letter from a doctor or social worker) and then make consistent decisions based on the evidence provided.” This is an inconsistency in the Code. Therefore, it is decided that we will keep the forms.</p> |
| <p>The use of sub-categories and complicating the policy</p> | <p>Southwark LA response - The tie breaker can be removed from each of the oversubscription criteria, removing them as subcategories, but keeping in the separate section at the end of the oversubscription,</p> | <p>We believe this is saying that you should take out the words, “...by reference to the proximity of the child’s home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy, with those living nearer receiving higher priority” in relation to each criteria and just have this order of allocation stated once at the end of the oversubscription criteria.</p> <p>We can see the logic of doing this but do not believe it makes the policy over complicated.</p> |
| <p>Distance measuring</p> | <p>Southwark LA response – This particular LA confirms that it does not carry out the distance measuring.</p> | <p>As the LA does not carry out the distance measuring, the admission policy has been amended to reflect this and states that distances are measured using geographical distance measuring software.</p> <p>The policy also specifies that the school’s designated entrance is the main entrance on Burcher Gale Grove.</p> |

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| Fair access protocol | Southwark LA response – The LA confirm that the admission policy does not apply to the Fair Access Policy. | While the paragraph in the policy relating to the Fair Access Protocol is not necessary, it is more of a statement of intent which isn't unlawful to include although this section has been moved to underneath the 'In year admissions' paragraph. |
| | Parent response – a parent disputes the inclusion of the Fair Access Protocol. | The Trust's participation in the Fair Access Protocol was simply included for the reader's information. All admission authorities must participate in the Fair Access Protocol in order to ensure that unplaced children are allocated a school place quickly. |
| Admission timetable | Southwark LA response – This particular LA recommends that the Trust inserts into its admission policy that Southwark residents who are making a late application must do so on the LA's website. | The LA's recommendation has been included in the relevant Admissions Policy documents. |
| Waiting lists | Southwark LA response – This particular LA recommends that the admissions policy includes a paragraph under this section confirming that looked after children, previously looked after children and those allocated a place at the academy in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol take precedence over those on a waiting list. | This amendment is in accordance with the Admissions Code and has been added for clarity. This may help to manage the expectations of others on the waiting list if they become aware that another child has been offered a place ahead of them. |

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| <p>In-year admissions</p> | <p>Southwark LA response, East Sussex LA response, Bromley LA response and Croydon LA response, Governor response – All of these LAs question the Trust bringing in-house the in-year application process on the grounds of safeguarding, pupil tracking and having a user friendly process.</p> | <p>There is no requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year applications, and there are also no identifiable safeguarding/pupil tracking concerns as the academy is under an obligation to upon receipt of an in-year application, notify the local authority of both the application and its outcome, as such the LA will have the information it requires when it requires it in order to monitor the situation.</p> <p>However, the Trust has decided not to bring in-year admissions in house and the policies have been amended to reflect this.</p> <p>LAs to try to ensure that the allocation of places is dealt with effectively and in a more timely manner. If this does not happen, then the Trust may go out to consultation again in the future to bring the service in-house.</p> |