



Consultation Report
Proposed Changes to the Admissions Arrangements 2023/24
13th December 2021

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. The Consultation Proposals
4. The Process of Consultation
5. Responses to the Consultation
6. Decision
7. Next steps

Appendix 1: Admissions Arrangements 2023/24

1. Introduction

This report is for the Governing Body of The Reach Free School and is in response to the consultation on proposed admission arrangements for the 2023/24 academic year.

The Governing Body has consulted on the inclusion of an additional oversubscription criterion relating to the children of staff to take effect from September 2023.

This will move the oversubscription criterion for those children living nearest to the main entrance of the school to the fourth oversubscription criterion.

2. Background

The Reach Free School was established in 2013 providing 120 places per year group. In 2018 the school moved to its permanent location and the admissions arrangements were amended and consulted on to reflect this change.

After the admissions of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan where The Reach Free School is named on the plan, the oversubscription criteria are currently:

Rule 1: Children Looked After or Previously Looked After

Rule 2: Children who currently have a brother or sister as a pupil on roll at The Reach Free School and who would reasonably be expected to be still attending at The Reach Free School at the time of admission.

Rule 3: Children living nearest to the main entrance of the school

2. The Consultation Proposal

The proposed change relates to the community aspect of the school's ethos and this extends to members of staff and their children. The school's staff are a key asset and highly regarded by the Headteacher and Governing Body. As such, it is felt that should they wish to send their children to the school, then they are given the opportunity to, even if they live outside the immediate local area.

Therefore the Governing Body has proposed one change to the admission criteria as outlined below. There are no other proposed changes to the admissions arrangements.

Rule 1: Children Looked After or Previously Looked After

Rule 2: Children who currently have a brother or sister as a pupil on roll at The Reach Free School and who would reasonably be expected to be still attending at The Reach Free School at the time of admission.

Rule 3: Children of staff who are permanently employed to work at The Reach Free School and who meet the criteria below:

a) Where a member of staff¹ has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application is made.

b) That the child lives at the same permanent address as the member of staff.

¹ A member of staff is any individual employed by the Trust at The Reach Free School. This includes both teaching and non-teaching staff and applies to both full and part time employees.

Rule 4: Children living nearest to the main entrance of the school

3. The Process of Consultation

The consultation ran for six weeks from Friday 1st October 2021 to Friday 12th November 2021. The consultation was communicated as follows:

1. Notification to all parents, guardians and carers of children attending The Reach Free School via its management information system
2. Notification to Hertfordshire County Council and County Councillors
3. Headteachers and the Chair of Governors of primary and secondary schools in the local area were emailed a copy of the proposed admissions arrangements
4. Notification to neighbouring councils.

Recipients were asked to email comments relating to the proposed admissions arrangements to consultation@reachfree.co.uk.

This report and any subsequent decision on the changes to the admissions arrangements will be published on the school's website and emailed to the stakeholders listed above.

4. Responses to the Consultation

The school received five responses to the consultation. The table below outlines the respondents:

Response from	Number
Local Authorities	1
Local Academy Trust	1
Member of Staff	1
Parent, Guardian or Carer	2
Total	5

Three responses to the consultation were in favour of the proposed changes and one requested clarification regarding a scenario relating to length of service. There were no objections to the proposed changes to the admissions arrangements. The Local Authority responses suggested amendments to aspects of the arrangements.

Responses to a question raised during the consultation:

Question 1: What would happen if you had the scenario of having a new member of staff at the school for a year, and that member of staff having a child of relevant age wanting to go to Reach. Would you use the other criteria that are currently in place to decide whether the child would be offered a place or not (and possibly have the dilemma of said teacher leaving if their child were not offered a place) or offer a place based on the new criteria, but forego the length of employment at school and possibly add an addendum to that to be applied if need be?

Response: The criterion for children of staff states that the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application is made and that the child lives at the same permanent address as the member of staff. Therefore if a member of staff had fewer than two years service they would not be applicable for this rule and their child would be included under rule 4, distance.

Response to the matters raised by the local authority

Sibling: Your rule includes “children who are reasonably expected to still be attending at the time of admission”. What does this mean in practice? It is not covered in your definition and could be confusing for parents.

Response: The wording in this section has been updated to make it clearer for parents.

Children of Staff: The new School Admissions Code (section 1.40) requires admission authorities to specify in their arrangements how this priority will be applied, for example which groups of staff it will apply to (teaching/non-teaching, full-time/part-time etc)

Response: This information is already included in the footnote at the bottom of the page.

Section 4.2. It would be helpful if this section referred to the HCC website and online application form at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

Response: The website address has been added.

In Year Admissions

6.4.1. It would be helpful if this section included the relevant web address for In Year applications and specified how parents obtain a paper form.

Response: The website address has been added.

6.4.2. This should state that a place will be offered.

Response: This wording has been added.

6.4.6. The Trust is required to inform HCC of all In Year applications and the outcome.

Response: This wording has been added.

Children Out of Year Group

It would be helpful if this section included the Trust’s policy for applications from summer-born children who were originally admitted to Reception a year late. An increasing number of these children are now approaching secondary transfer and clarity in admission arrangements would support parents. A number of schools make clear that they will accept applications, out of year group, from any child who was initially admitted to Reception a year late.

Response: This has been clarified in section 7.2.

Appeals

8.2. HCC administers appeals on behalf of the Trust for both secondary transfer and In Year. Parents do not have to contact the school but submit their appeal to HCC as outlined in sections 8.4 and 8.5.

Response: This has been amended and unsuccessful applicants wishing to appeal should contact Hertfordshire County Council.

In Year Application

This is an application form, not an expression of interest form, and should be titled appropriately. The form provided does not appear to be complete. Please send in a full version.

Response: The title of the form has been updated. A copy of the full application form is available [here](#).

6th Form Application

Please remove the request for an explanation for the application. This information is not relevant to the allocation process.

Similarly (whilst understandable) you cannot, on the application form, ask how students /parents have heard about the school. If this information is important to the school, it can be requested after allocation.

Response: These two will be removed from the application form

6. Decision

The school has carefully considered the consultation responses and is recommending that the proposal outlined in section 3 is agreed. The revised admissions arrangements are contained as appendix 1.

7. Next Steps

The admissions arrangements for 2023/24 were recommended for approval at the Full Governing Body on Thursday 25th November 2021. Further revisions have taken place, which the Governing Body have approved remotely. They will be distributed to the stakeholders and be placed on the school's website at <https://www.reachfreeschool.co.uk/policies>. They will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1 - Admission Arrangements 2023/24

1. Introduction

1.1 The Admissions Arrangements for The Reach Free School have been designed to reflect its ACE ethos of achievement, community and enjoyment. The school is committed to an inclusive culture and will admit pupils non-selectively, without reference to their ability or aptitude. For admissions in 2023/24 distance places will be allocated on the basis of proximity to the school. The distance from the school to an applicant's home address is calculated using a straight line distance measurement provided by AddressBase Premium.

2. Published Admissions Number

2.1 The Published Admissions Number (PAN) is 120 pupils.

3. Admissions Arrangements Introduction

3.1 The Admissions Arrangements of The Reach Free School determined by the Governing Body have been approved by the Secretary of State for Education.

3.2 The Admissions Arrangements contained within this document are divided into the following sections:

4. Year 7 Secondary Transfer
5. Admissions to the Sixth Form
6. In-Year Admissions
7. Children Out of Year Group
8. The Appeals Process
9. The Waiting List
10. Successful Applications

4. Admissions Arrangements

4.1 Year 7 Secondary Transfer

4.1.1 This section covers pupils wishing to join The Reach Free School transferring from primary education (September entrants to Year 7).

4.1.2 If there are fewer than 120 applications for places, all pupils will be admitted.

4.1.3 If there are more than 120 applications for places, the school will use the criteria, in the order shown in section 4.1.4, to decide which children to admit.

4.1.4 After the admissions of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan where The Reach Free School is named on the plan, the oversubscription criteria for admissions will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:

Rule 1: Children look after and children who were previously looked after

Rule 2: Children who currently have a brother or sister as a pupil on roll

Rule 3: Children of staff

Rule 4: Children living nearest to the main entrance of the school

4.1.5 Rule 1: Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear to have been in state care outside England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

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.

Children who were not "looked after" immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under rule 1.

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Rule 1 if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School"

The child's previously looked after status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:

- i. to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and
- ii. to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is in "state care" if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by –

- (a) a public authority,
- (b) a religious organisation, or
- (c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

4.1.6 Rule 2: Children who currently have a brother or sister² as a pupil on roll at The Reach Free School. Parents who submit applications under Rule 2 must confirm that an elder sibling of the applicant is on the School's roll at the time the application is required. The School will presume if the elder sibling is in year 7 to 12, they will be on its roll in September 2023.

4.1.7 Rule 3: Children of staff who are permanently employed to work at The Reach Free School and who meet the criteria below:

- a) Where a member of staff³ has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application is made.
- b) That the child lives at the same permanent address as the member of staff.

4.1.8 Rule 4: Children living nearest to the main entrance of the school (Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system is used for all home to school distance measurements. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences⁴).

4.2 For Hertfordshire residents

4.2.1 Parents, guardians and carers must complete the form provided by Hertfordshire County Council as part of their coordinated schemes of admission. The online application form is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

² This includes legally adopted brothers/sisters, half brothers/sisters, foster brothers/sisters and step brothers/sisters living at the same address. It does not include cousins or any other children or family members living at the same address

³ A member of staff is any individual employed by the Trust at The Reach Free School. This includes both teaching and non-teaching staff and applies to both full and part time employees.

⁴ This must be that of the child's permanent home with his/her parents, guardians or carers. If a child spends time at two addresses, the residence which is registered with the General Practitioner will be used.

4.3 For non-Hertfordshire residents

4.3.1 Parents, guardians or carers are required to complete the application in their own local authority's admissions guide, stating The Reach Free School as a preferred school. The form should then be returned in line with that local authority's requested procedure. The local authority will then inform Hertfordshire County Council of the choice to apply to The Reach Free School.

4.4 Tiebreaker

4.4.1 In the event of two or more pupils having equal priority, the decision on the allocation of the place will be determined through random allocation, which will be conducted by an independent third party.

4.4.2 In the case of twins/multiple births from the same household if only one twin qualifies for admission, the school will allocate places to both children, conditional on both twins attending the school. To accommodate this the school will go over the PAN. If the original qualifying twin withdraws their application for a place, then the second place is forfeit. This principle will apply to other multiple births such as triplets. Additional place(s) will be counted as sibling admissions.

4.5 Notes to Parents, Guardians and Carers

4.5.1 In the event that an application is unsuccessful the child's parents, guardians or carers would have the right of appeal to an independent panel (see section 8).

4.5.2 Once places have been offered applicants must return their acceptance of a place by the published date.

4.5.3 Parents, guardians or carers will be given a further opportunity to respond and it will be explained what will happen if there is no response.

4.5.4 If parents, guardians or carers do not respond following the second opportunity the offer will be withdrawn and offered to applicants on the waiting list. These are known as late offers.

4.5.5 Applicants are advised at all stages of the admissions cycle to hold only one offer of admission at any one time.

5. Admissions to the Sixth Form

5.1 The PAN for Year 12 is 120. Open evenings for The Reach Free School's Sixth Form will take place in the 2022/23 academic year. Application forms will be available from and returnable to The Reach Free School and online at www.reachfreeschool.co.uk/sixthform.

5.2 The Published Admission Number for external applicants will be dependent on the number of The Reach Free School's Year 11 pupils who apply to continue to Year 12 and meet the entry requirements outlined in 5.3.

5.2.1 If all pupils progressing from Year 11 in The Reach Free School to Year 12 fill all 120 places, then The Reach Free School will not admit external applicants. If the number of pupils progressing from Year 11 to Year 12 is less than 120 then places will be available to external applicants.

5.2.2 In the event that an application is unsuccessful the child's parents, guardians or carers would have the right of appeal to an independent panel (see section 8).

5.3 Entry requirements

5.3.1 The Reach Free School will publish its minimum academic entry requirements for the Sixth

Form and academic progression criteria relevant to the course of study to be followed in the Sixth Form Options Brochure and on the website. As a minimum all pupils applying for a place in the Sixth Form must meet the entry requirements outlined in 5.3.2.

5.3.2 Pupils who have attained GCSEs in English and Mathematics, achieving at least a grade 4 in both, as well as an average grade of 5.5 from their five best subjects.

5.3.3 After the admissions of pupils with Education, Health and Care plans where The Reach Free School is named, the criteria for admissions will be applied in the order in which they are set in 5.4.

5.4 The Oversubscription Criteria

5.4.1 If there are more than 120 applications for places at The Reach Free School Sixth Form, the school will use the following oversubscription criteria for external candidates only, in the order shown, to decide which children to admit:

Rule 1: Children look after and children who were previously looked after

Rule 2: Children who currently have a brother or sister as a pupil on roll

Rule 3: Children of staff

Rule 4: Children living nearest to the main entrance of the school

5.4.2 Rule 1: Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear to have been in state care outside England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

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.

Children who were not "looked after" immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under rule 1.

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Rule 1 if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School"

The child's previously looked after status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:

- i. to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and
- ii. to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is in "state care" if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by –

(a) a public authority,

(b) a religious organisation, or

(c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

5.4.3 Rule 2: Children who currently have a brother or sister⁵ as a pupil on roll at The Reach Free School. Parents who submit applications under Rule 2 must confirm that an elder sibling of the applicant is on the School's roll at the time the application is required. The School will presume if the elder sibling is in year 7 to 12, they will be on its roll in September 2023.

⁵ This includes legally adopted brothers/sisters, half brothers/sisters, foster brothers/sisters and step brothers/sisters living at the same address. It does not include cousins or any other children or family members living at the same address

5.4.4 Rule 3: Children of staff who are permanently employed to work at The Reach Free School and who meet the criteria below:

- a) Where a member of staff⁶ has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application is made.
- b) That the child lives at the same permanent address as the member of staff.

5.4.5 Rule 4: Children living nearest to the main entrance of the school (Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system is used for all home to school distance measurements. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences⁷).

6. In-Year Admissions

6.1 For pupils transferring to The Reach Free School from other secondary schools during the academic year, the school coordinates its own in-year admissions and is part of Hertfordshire County Council's Fair Access Protocol.

6.2 Applications for in-year admissions (pupils joining after the September of Year 7) are made directly to The Reach Free School. Places at The Reach Free School are open to all, irrespective of ability or aptitude. They are however limited by admission levels and the Fair Access Protocol, which ensure that the standards of educational provision are maintained. The Reach Free School does not take part in the Hertfordshire County Council's scheme of in-year coordination

6.3 The Reach Free School will, if necessary, admit children through the Fair Access Protocol over the PAN and before children on the continuing interest list.

6.4 The Procedure

6.4.1 Parents, guardians or carers complete an online 'in-year application form' available from www.reachfreeschool.co.uk/apply-for-a-place. Paper copies are also available.

6.4.2 If a place is available and there is no waiting list then the school will contact parents, guardians and carers and a place will be offered.

6.4.3 If there are no places available this will be conveyed to the parents, guardians and carers. Parents, guardians and carers will be informed of the reason(s) why a place cannot be offered and will be offered the right to appeal.

6.4.4 Parents, guardians and carers will be offered the opportunity of their child being placed on the waiting list (see section 8 for more information).

6.4.5 When a place becomes available the school will advise the parents, guardians or carers of the child who is top of the waiting list, that an offer is being made on behalf of the Governing Body.

6.4.6 The school will notify the local authority of all in year applications and the outcome.

⁶ A member of staff is any individual employed by the Trust at The Reach Free School. This includes both teaching and non-teaching staff and applies to both full and part time employees.

⁷ This must be that of the child's permanent home with his/her parents, guardians or carers. If a child spends time at two addresses, the residence which is registered with the General Practitioner will be used.

7. Children out of Year Group

7.1 Hertfordshire County Council's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. It is also The Reach Free School's policy that pupils are admitted to the correct chronological year group.

7.2 The school will only consider an exception to this if there are extreme extenuating circumstances or where a summer-born child has been originally admitted to Reception a year late.

7.3 If parents, guardians or carers believe their child should be educated in a different year group they must, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort.

7.4 The school is responsible for the decision to accept such an application on the basis of the evidence submitted. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis.

7.5 If an application is not accepted on this basis, this does not constitute a refusal of a place, and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal.

8. The Appeals Process

8.1 The Reach Free School's appeals timetable will be published each year. In the event that a place at The Reach Free School is unsuccessful, parents, guardians or carers will be notified of their right to an independent appeals panel.

8.2 If an unsuccessful applicant wishes to appeal against the decision, they should do so in writing to Hertfordshire County Council within 28 days of receiving notification:

8.3 The Reach Free School will adhere to the rules set out in the School Admissions Appeal Code.

8.4 Parents applying for secondary transfer, who wish to appeal and who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link 'register an appeal'. Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details, log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system".

8.5 For in-year applications – We will write to you with the outcome of your application and, if you have been unsuccessful, Hertfordshire County Council will write to you with registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals

8.6 Appeals for in-year admissions shall be heard in accordance with the Schools Admission Code. The school exercises its right not to consider further appeals for the same child within the same academic year.

8.7 For all appeals an independent appeals panel will be convened consisting of a chair, a clerk and at least one member who is a lay person and one member who has educational experience and is familiar with school management.

8.8 The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will present the school's case for refusing a place at the hearing.

9. The Waiting List

9.1 The Reach Free School will maintain a waiting list of applicants. Places on this waiting list will

be allocated in accordance with the admissions arrangements and oversubscription criteria outlined in this document. No priority will be given in regard to the length of time that an applicant has been on the waiting list.

9.2 Late offers will be made to those parents on the waiting list in strict order. Applicants receiving late offers may decline previously accepted offers from other schools.

9.3 If a child on the waiting list is offered a place at the school, the parent, guardian or carer will receive a letter in writing confirming this. If a response to this offer of a place is not received in writing within 10 working days from the date of the letter then a further opportunity to respond is given together with an explanation of what will happen if there is no response.

9.4 If parents, guardians or carers do not respond following the second opportunity the offer will be withdrawn and offered to applicants on the waiting list. These are known as late offers.

9.5 Every year in June, the school will write to every parent, guardian or carer with a child on the waiting list requesting confirmation that the child's name should remain on the waiting list. If the school does not receive written confirmation that a child should remain on the list by the end of the December of the same year, then that child will be removed from the waiting list.

9.6 If they choose, parents can keep the names of their children on waiting lists up to the end of year 11.

10. Successful Applications

10.1 Once a place has been offered, parents, guardians and carers will be invited to complete the relevant paperwork and purchase uniform.

10.2 The school will also inform applicants of their start date and in consultation with staff, will develop a timetable and make necessary administrative arrangements. This may include special needs consultation and liaison with Form Tutors who will oversee pupils' successful integration into the school.