



Consultation on proposed Admissions Arrangements for 2019 entry

Introduction

The Board of Governors of Steiner Academy Bristol is seeking to change the school's Admissions Arrangements for entry to the school in September 2019. Under the 2014 School Admissions Code, the school must run a public consultation before making changes to admissions arrangements. The school is therefore publishing the proposed new Admissions Arrangements for consultation.

The school welcomes all comments on the proposed changes and will publish a report after the consultation showing comments made and the school's responses to them.

This consultation

When schools want to change admissions arrangements, they are required by law to run an eight-week public consultation in the period between November and March of the year before the new arrangements come into effect.

Steiner Academy Bristol's proposed Admissions Arrangements for 2019 entry are therefore open for consultation from 11th December 2017 to 5th February 2018.

We welcome all comments, which should be submitted by email to:

consultations@steineracademybristol.org.uk

Or by post, to:

Admissions Consultation
Steiner Academy Bristol
College Rd
Bristol BS16 2JP

Proposed changes

The proposed new Admissions Arrangements are the same as those adopted for entry to the school in September 2018, apart from the removal of one of the over-subscription criteria.

All schools use a set of over-subscription criteria to rank admissions applications. These criteria define priority groups for admissions, so that all of the children in each group are offered a place before moving onto the next group.

The 2018 Admissions Arrangements use the following set of criteria:

1. *A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order. A looked after child is a child who, at the time of application, 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 (section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 applies).*
2. *Children with a sibling attending the Academy at the time of application (see Note 1 below)*
3. *Children of the Founding Directors (see Note 2 below)*
4. *Children of staff (see Note 3 below)*
5. *Children who, at the time of application, are eligible for Pupil Premium funding and who live within 2 miles of the school site (see Note 4 below)*
6. *Children not satisfying a higher criterion.*

The school proposes to remove Criterion 5, which relates to Pupil Premium.

Rationale

The Pupil Premium criterion was adopted when the school was first opened. The intention was to ensure that families on lower incomes were able to access the school, so that our school community would be representative of our local community.

However, in practice the school has found that this criterion is not effective.

Firstly, many parents are not sure whether or not their children would be eligible for Pupil Premium, so that they don't tell the school about their status when applying. We know this because the numbers of children entering the school on this criterion are quite low, but many of these families tell us about their eligibility for pupil premium later, after joining the school.

Secondly, the criterion is difficult to administer and creates opportunities for errors. Many parents who are eligible for Pupil Premium do not apply for this via the Local Authority verification service, so that the school has no way of checking their availability and has to request documentation directly from parents.

The Bristol City Council Coordinated Admissions Process also doesn't gather information on Pupil Premium, so parents also need to fill in an Additional Information form when they apply for places within the main admissions round, which increases the likelihood of errors and omissions.

Thirdly, our experience is that many parents are working but on very low incomes so that they are not eligible for Pupil Premium, and therefore receive no priority in admission to our school, even though in some cases they may be no better off financially than those not working. This creates a perception of unfairness and demonstrates that the use of Pupil Premium as a way of prioritising children from low-income households is not effective.

New policy

The Board of Governors wishes to remove this criterion altogether, leaving a simpler set of criteria, as follows:

1. *A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order. A looked after child is a child who, at the time of application, 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 (section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 applies).*
2. *Children with a sibling attending the Academy at the time of application (see Note 1 below)*
3. *Children of the Founding Directors (see Note 2 below)*
4. *Children of staff (see Note 3 below)*
5. *Children not satisfying a higher criterion.*

Criterion 1, relating to Looked After children, is a statutory requirement for all state-funded schools.

Criterion 2, siblings, is a standard and necessary criterion adopted by all schools.

Criterion 3, Children of the Founding Directors, enabled the children of the group of parents and teachers who created the school to have priority in admissions. All of these children are now attending the school so it is unlikely that any more children will be admitted under this criterion, but the governors have chosen to leave it in place for the time being.

Criterion 4, children of staff, remains in place as a way to assist with recruitment of teachers. All schools struggle to recruit the best teachers so the governors have chosen to maintain this incentive in recruiting staff. Very few children have entered the school under this criterion but it has on occasion been valuable.