

## **Warden Park Secondary Academy - Consultation on proposed changes to the admissions criteria for places in Year 7 for September 2020 and beyond**

(including in-year admissions to other year groups where spaces become available)

Warden Park Secondary Academy is part of Sussex Learning Trust (SLT).

The Trustees of Sussex Learning Trust and Governors of Warden Park Secondary Academy (WPSA) are consulting on a proposal to amend the current admissions criteria for entry to WPSA for Year 7 places for September 2020 and beyond. The consultation will last for six school weeks and will conclude at 9.00 am on 9 January 2019.

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The following supporting documentation includes:

- the main proposed changes;
- the proposed Admissions Criteria in full;
- information as to the reasoning behind the proposed changes;
- some responses to anticipated ‘frequently asked questions’; and
- details on how to respond to the consultation.

Sussex Learning Trust (SLT) has never wavered from its vision to be a provider of world class education ‘for local people, by local people’.

We believe that the provision of an ‘aligned’<sup>1</sup> education (nursery to GCSE) brings a wealth of highly desirable outcomes for young people. We are encouraging parents to appreciate this as we move to making it *more likely* that children in local SLT primary academies move on to their local SLT secondary academy. It is important to note that we are seeking to widen parents options and are not, in any way, wishing to compel children to move through educational phases solely in SLT academies.

**Please see below for our information document on the benefits of aligned or all-through education.**

The main proposed changes to the previous WPSA admissions criteria are:

- removal of a catchment area in favour of places being allocated based on distance from the academy; and
- parity of priority for children currently in one of our existing SLT primary academies and Hurst Farm Primary Academy, which is proposed will open in September 2020 with two Reception classes.

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<sup>1</sup> In settings where the Early Years, Primary and Secondary phases are all located on the same site, the term ‘all-through’ describes the same principle, i.e. aligned systems, ethos, approaches.

## **Draft ADMISSIONS PROPOSAL - 2020**

### **ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

The criteria for admissions to Warden Park Secondary Academy follow the mandatory guidance in the Statutory Admissions Codes of the Department for Education (DfE) and the law.

### **GENERAL CRITERIA**

It is acknowledged that children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that specifies Warden Park Secondary Academy will be given prior consideration either for one of the Specialist Support Centre places or the 'main school roll'.

Beyond these children, places will be allocated on the following basis with the 'tie-breaker' in each category (should they be over-subscribed) being nearest 'as the crow flies' from the front door of the child's home to the front door (Reception) of Warden Park Secondary Academy.

### **OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

1. Looked After, or previously looked after, Children or Children Looked After (LAC or CLA)<sup>1</sup>.
2. Exceptional & compelling circumstances.<sup>2</sup>
3. Children with a sibling<sup>3</sup> on-roll at Warden Park Secondary Academy.<sup>4</sup>
4. Children who are on-roll at Northlands Wood Primary Academy, Warden Park Primary Academy and Hurst Farm Primary Academy (opening with Reception class in 2020).<sup>4</sup>
5. Children of a Sussex Learning Trust employee based at Warden Park Secondary Academy.<sup>4</sup>
6. All other children on a distance tie-breaker.

### **Applications for admission outside the normal age group**

West Sussex Admissions Team manages this process for WPSA. A waiting list is maintained by them applying the above criteria.

Appeals regarding unsuccessful applications for places are administered by the West Sussex Legal Services team.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Under this criterion, a “Looked After Child” or “Child Looked After” is a child whose previous or current temporary or permanent care has been directed by a Court Order (including a Special Guardianship Order) or 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).
  - <sup>2</sup> Parents/carers must provide written supporting evidence from an appropriately qualified person (usually a doctor or social worker) if they wish to apply under exceptional and compelling social, psychological or medical grounds where used. The evidence should state clearly why the academy is best suited to meet the child’s specific needs. Letters from parents are not considered sufficient evidence. The term ‘parent’ includes other legal guardians. Such applications will be considered by a panel of Governors advised by the Head Teacher.
  - <sup>3</sup> For these purposes a “sibling” includes (a) a half- or step-sibling, (b) an adopted sibling and (c) a child of the partner of the applicant child’s parent/carer provided that partner and child is living permanently at the same address as the applicant child.
  - <sup>4</sup> The satisfaction of this criterion is assessed as at the time of applying for a place, which means:
    - (a) for children applying to start Warden Park Secondary Academy in Year 7 at the start of the academic year, the admissions application deadline date as set by West Sussex County Council (please contact West Sussex Pupil Admissions Team for details [admissions.north@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions.north@westsussex.gov.uk));
    - (b) for all other admissions applications, including ‘in year’ applications, the date on which an application for a place is received by West Sussex Pupil Admissions.
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A rationale for an 'aligned' education – a document to inform all stakeholders involved in the consultation

This document is intended to inform the consultation on the proposed admission criteria changes for Warden Park Secondary Academy, where a high priority category will be given to children who attend Warden Park Primary Academy, Northlands Wood Primary Academy and Hurst Farm Primary Academy (anticipated opening with two Reception classes in 2020).

**1. What is an 'aligned approach to education'?**

1.1 All-through academies are those that combine at least two stages of a child's education – typically primary and secondary – in one establishment on the same site. Where the physical buildings are not co-located, the term 'aligned' describes the same principles of educational approach as 'all-through'. Most children join such academies at Nursery or Reception age and continue on-roll until aged 16 or 18. These academies are growing in popularity. At SLT, we are highly attracted to the educational and organisational benefits of an aligned education. However, we also like our academies to retain their own identity and earned autonomy and would never wish to suggest that children 'must' transition through SLT academies.

The biggest advantage is about having a shared philosophy and ethos is that there is greater consistency around expectations, pedagogy and the cultural ethos of the school

1.2 Parents must feel completely free to decide which is the best 'next' school or academy to continue their child's education. We refer to our academies as being 'aligned' which means our Headteachers, teachers, pastoral staff and administrators work very closely together and often follow shared practices to provide transparency and continuity to a child and their family's experience of education. SLT is keen to maximise all opportunities to increasingly 'align' our academies to the benefit of the children who attend them.

**2. What are the benefits of an 'aligned' education?**

2.1 An over-arching strategy for improvement across all academies which 'aligns' priorities and methods of collaborating to effect maximum impact for each academy, directly improving what goes on in each classroom. A 'high impact/low disruption' initiative.

2.2 Shared approaches to critical aspects of education. For example:

- A complementary curriculum that spans Nursery to GCSE co-designed by Headteachers who have an excellent appreciation of cross-phase partner academies.
- Secondary colleagues appreciating first-hand the demands of the primary curriculum and reflecting this in KS3 and beyond.

- Primary colleagues drawing on the subject specialisms of their secondary colleagues and specialist teachers in the primary phase.
- Curriculum leaders in core subjects sharing cross-phase resources and approaches benefitting the least and more-able learners.
- The benefits of 'active' learning, so prevalent in primary phase, shared with secondary phase.
- Secondary students mentoring primary pupils, hearing reading, sports coaching etc.
- Cross-phase leadership team learning walks which always encourage professional dialogue.
- All of our academies have excellent pastoral care but each is determined to continually improve; working with other professionals can only add to this.
- Knowledge of our families will aid us in helping people who have been a part of our SLT community from 2 to 19 years.
- Cross-phase career opportunities for teachers developing their expertise and acting as a recruitment incentive.
- Each academy has Character Education as a priority. We do not impose an approach but instead allow each academy to find their own. Sharing these will undoubtedly shape and widen best practice.
- Increased capacity for our SENDCOs who meet and support each other bringing their collective expertise to bear for all children in SLT. There is already an agreed approach to assessment at primary phase. We would like to extend this into the secondary phase.
- Data analysis of prior and current attainment and progress is critical for teachers to plan for a child to maximise their potential. Moving up in a school is 'better' than moving 'on' from a sharing of professional knowledge perspective.
- Immediate and unfettered access to records and professionals who 'know' the children and families best as they transition.
- Professionals that 'speak the same language' derived from common policy and practices established through partnership working.
- Excellent opportunities to share facilities and resources that may not otherwise be readily available (i.e. secondary specialist facilities).
- We intend to explore ways in which our specialist teachers can span different key stages in SLT.

### **3. In conclusion**

- 3.1 SLT believes that the work started in our primary academies should, wherever appropriate or possible, continue into and be 'seamless' with our secondary academy (WPSA). Therefore, we are consulting on giving higher priority for admission for places into WPSA to those children who currently attend 'local' and specified SLT primary academies.
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## FAQs assuming the proposals are enacted

**1. If my child is on-roll at Warden Park Primary Academy (WPPA) or Northlands Wood Primary Academy (NWPA) or Hurst Farm Primary Academy (HFPA), will this mean I don't have to complete the West Sussex or Sussex Learning Trust process of applying for a place at WPSA?** No, you must complete the application process in the manner that West Sussex and Sussex Learning Trust request for all people applying for places.

**2. If my child is on-roll at WPPA, NWPA or HFPA, are we guaranteed a place at WPSA?** No, it means that you have a high priority for a place but no one is guaranteed a place.

**3. If my child is on-roll at another primary school other than the three named in criterion 4, what are the chances of us getting a place?** This depends on how close you live compared to everyone else who applies in the same position. In recent years, to our knowledge, every child at WPPA and NWPA that wanted one secured a place at WPSA. In recent years only approximately 55% of the total number of pupils from both academies have applied to WPSA<sup>2</sup>. The following table shows the maximum number of children currently on-roll at NWPA and WPPA<sup>3</sup> and the year that they would be due to transfer to WPSA. We have also provided the 55% number, although clearly this is only indicative.

Year of entry to WPSA	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 inc HFPA
100% of pupils currently on-roll at named academies	91	109	119	111	119	180
55% of pupils currently on-roll at named academies	50	60	65	61	65	99
No. of places at WPSA	300	300	300	300	300	300

**4. In each category it says the 'tie-breaker' is the closest living to the academy. How is this calculated?** 'As the crow flies', i.e. straight line from the home address to WPSA using West Sussex approved software.

**5. What happens if another school joins the Sussex Learning Trust, will their children get priority?** The Trustees and Governors would have to consult again. Therefore, the earliest such a consultation could lead to another school gaining priority would be for admission in 2021.

**6. How many children are normally admitted each year under the statutory pre-criteria of those children whose Education and Health Care Plans name the academy and 'looked after' children.** This varies but is never a large number. Roughly speaking, on average, circa six.

<sup>2</sup> This figure is low because of distance from their homes to WPSA.

<sup>3</sup> As at 18.10.18. Clearly these figures could go up or down.

**7. How many children of staff (criterion 5) are there taking places in any one year? This is naturally variable. It is usually just a small number, i.e. four or five per year of entry.**

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To respond to this consultation please complete the following 'Survey Monkey'.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KWPRJCM>

Alternatively, written responses or questions can be sent to:

Jonathan Morris  
CEO Sussex Learning Trust  
% Warden Park Secondary Academy  
Broad Street  
Cuckfield  
RH17 5DP

**All responses will be considered and must be submitted by the  
deadline of 9.00 am on Wednesday, 9 January 2019.**