



Bristol Free School Admissions Arrangements September 2022 Admissions Consultation Report

Background

RET is the admissions authority for Bristol Free School. The Local Governing Body considers changes to the school's admissions policy and consult on these. Following consultation, the Governors report to RET on the outcome of the consultation and make recommendations before RET determine the final admissions policy.

The admissions consultation for the 2022-23 Admissions Policy¹ and Sixth Form Admissions Policy² ran from **15 December to 26 January 2021**. This report confirms the outcome of the consultation.

Summary of responses

We received 10 responses to the consultation. Of these:

- 3 were supportive of the proposals.
- 2 responses raised some suggestions regarding the proposals. One of these was from Bristol City Council raising some suggestions regarding wording – these are covered in the recommendations below.
- 5 objected to the proposal for children of staff to be prioritised.

The objections

A summary of the objections received is as follows:

- *Instead of offering priority places to children of staff, it was suggested that the school seek to attract and retain staff through e.g., its reputation and ethos.*
- *Children of staff should not be prioritised above local applicants.*
- *The children of staff criterion will make it harder for local children to gain a place as there will be less places available under the distance criterion.*

Response to objections:

- The “children of staff” criterion is permitted by the Admissions Code 2014 and is widely used across schools/academy trusts. The wording of the criterion is in line with that prescribed by the Code.

¹ https://www.bristolfreeschool.org.uk/documents/Policies_ALL/BFS%20Proposed%20Admissions%20Arrangements%202022%20final.pdf

²

https://www.bristolfreeschool.org.uk/documents/Policies_ALL/BFS%20Proposed%20Sixth%20Form%20Admissions%20Arrangements%202022%20final.pdf

- The criterion requires existing staff to have shown commitment to the school's ethos through at least 2 years' service.
- New recruits may only apply for a place for their children under this criterion where they have been recruited to meet a *real and demonstrable skills shortage*, as determined by the Headteacher and agreed with the CEO of RET and Chair of Governors. Such priority would support the education of BFS students to ensure the recruitment of staff in a subject/role where it has been difficult to recruit. The recruit will have been through the same rigorous recruitment processes as other candidates.
- The numbers of students prioritised under the "children of staff" criterion is likely to be very small, based on experience to date in other RET schools. It should not have great impact on the places available under the other criterion.
- The criterion has already been agreed through previous consultations in 3 out of 5 RET schools and it is intended that the criterion should apply to all school staff across the Trust.

Review of responses:

At its meeting on 4 February 2021, the Local Governing Body considered the responses received to the consultation and recommended to the RET Board that the proposed Admissions Policy and Sixth Form Admissions policy be adopted as proposed with the following recommendations:

- **Distance Measurement:** Remove the reference to the 'ground floor' in the definition as this is not accurate when calculating straight line distances.
- **Tie Break:** Definition will be separated as a new note.
- **School Admissions Code 2012:** The reference to the Code in both policies should be changed to '2014' as this is the current version of the Code.
- **Siblings:** Foster-siblings will be included in the 'sibling' and 'children of staff' criterion in both policies. This corrects a typographical error as the current admissions policy does already include foster siblings. e.g.: *"Siblings include full, step-, half, adopted and fostered siblings living in the same household. Cousins are not considered siblings"*.
- **Children of Staff:** The definition of "children of staff" is moved to the notes as with the sibling definition e.g.: *Children of staff includes full, step, half, adopted or fostered children living in the same household) as the member of staff"*.
- **Education outside of age group:** Further clarification is included to make clear that where a student who wishes to be educated outside of their age group seeks permission from governors in "exceptional circumstances", permission granted does not guarantee the student a place in that year group. They would still need to apply via the usual application process and the Oversubscription Criteria will apply e.g.: *"...the application must be made via the usual application processes and will be subject to the usual Oversubscription Criteria"*.

Decision

The admissions arrangements including the recommendations of the Local Governing Body were determined by delegated authority of the RET Board on 26 February 2021. The arrangements have been published on the school's website and appropriate bodies have been notified.