

Surrey County Council

Consultation on proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2023

Introduction

Surrey County Council is consulting on proposed changes to admission arrangements for some community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2023.

Details of the changes being proposed are set out in this document.

The proposed admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools are set out in the following documents:

Enclosure 1	Admission arrangements for community & voluntary controlled schools
APPENDIX 1	Published admission numbers
APPENDIX 2	Schools to operate shared sibling priority
APPENDIX 3	Schools to be excluded when assessing nearest school
APPENDIX 4	Catchment map for Southfield Park Primary School
APPENDIX 5	Catchment map for Walton on the Hill Primary School
APPENDIX 6	Supplementary form for social/medical applicants
APPENDIX 7	Supplementary form for staff applicants

An equality impact assessment is included as **Enclosure 2**.

What changes are being proposed?

1. Removal of use of 'nearest school' for Hurst Park Primary School, Langshott Primary School, Meath Green Infant School and Tillingbourne Junior School

For September 2023, the local authority is proposing to remove use of 'nearest school' as a criterion for Hurst Park Primary School, Langshott Primary School, Meath Green Infant School and Tillingbourne Junior School.

Each of these schools would be recorded as following Surrey's standard admission criteria, as set out in Section 7 of Enclosure 1, as follows:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
2. Exceptional social/medical need
3. Children of a member of staff
4. Siblings
5. Any other children (with priority being based on the straight line distance from the child's home address to the school)

The removal of use of 'nearest school' makes the admission arrangements for these schools simpler and more transparent as it enables every family to understand how their application will be considered and prioritises children based on their proximity to the school.

Home to school distance is not being removed as a category for admission. For each of these schools, after siblings, priority will be based on straight line distance from the child's home address to the school.

Reasons for reviewing use of 'nearest school' within the admission arrangements for these schools are as follows:

- 'nearest school' is measured in a straight line from the child's home address. In this way, although this may be used to prioritise applicants, it does not necessarily reflect the school that is nearest by walking or road route or the one that is easiest for the child to get to
- having a school as a 'nearest school' does not guarantee admission
- this brings the admission criteria for these school into line with the majority of the remaining community and voluntary controlled schools
- the majority of schools do not give priority to children based on whether it is a child's nearest school

Modelling based on the last three intakes is set out for each of these schools below. Unless otherwise indicated, these proposals are supported by the Headteacher and Governing Bodies of these schools.

Hurst Park Primary School - Elmbridge

Modelling for Hurst Park Primary School would indicate that, if the criterion of 'nearest school' was removed and priority had been based on straight line distance after siblings, the impact on the intake for the last three years would have been as follows:

- In 2021, there would have been no impact on the intake and the same children would have been admitted
- In 2020, three children in Hurst Park would have been displaced in favour of three children who had Chandlers Field Primary School as nearer
- In 2019, two children in Hurst Park would have been displaced in favour of three children who had Chandlers Field Primary School as nearer

In each of these years, the children who would have been displaced would have been able to secure a place at Chandlers Field Primary School, their next nearest school.

Pupil forecasts for the area indicate a similar level of pupil numbers in 2023 when compared to 2021, leading the local authority to conclude that the pattern of admission in 2023 is likely to be the same as in 2021 (although this is also dependent on preference patterns remaining the same). As such, there would likely be no or minimal impact on the intake in 2023 if the criterion for nearest school was removed. Thereafter, forecasts indicate that pupil numbers will fall in Molesey West and the surplus of places will increase, further negating the need to prioritise children on the basis of nearest school as any children who might be displaced would still be likely to secure a place at Chandlers Field Primary School.

Langshott Primary – Reigate & Banstead

Modelling for Langshott Primary School would indicate that, if the criterion of 'nearest school' was removed and priority had been based on straight line distance after siblings, the impact on the intake for the last three years would have been as follows:

- In 2021, four children would have been displaced if nearest school had not used, but each of these would have gained a place at Horley Infant School, their second nearest school
- In 2020, nine children would have been displaced if nearest school had not been used, but each of these would have been eligible for a place at Burstow Primary School
- In 2019, seven children would have been displaced if nearest school had not been used but each of these would have been eligible for a place at Horley Infant School

It is apparent that, from the intakes for the past three years, any children who would have been displaced if 'nearest school' had not been used would have been eligible for an alternative school. It is also possible that the opening of Westvale Park Primary School and its participation in the coordinated admissions process in 2021 has lowered the impact on admission, as parents alter their preferences across the area, and that this pattern may continue in the future.

Pupil forecasts across the area indicate a small surplus of places and so the removal of 'nearest school' should not affect the local authority's ability to offer a school place, albeit it may alter the school offered for a small number of children.

Meath Green Infant School - Reigate & Banstead

Modelling for Meath Green Infant School would indicate that, if the criterion of 'nearest school' was removed and priority had been based on straight line distance after siblings, the impact on the intake for the last three years would have been as follows:

- In 2021, there would have been no impact on the intake if 'nearest school' had not been used (likely due to the opening of Westvale Park Primary School and its participation in the coordinated admissions process in 2021)
- In 2020, six children would have been displaced if 'nearest school' had not been used but each of these addresses now has Westvale Park Primary School as their nearest school, so the pattern of admission for the area will have changed as a result of this new school
- In 2019, eleven children would have been displaced if 'nearest school' had not been used, but all but one of these now has Westvale Park Primary School as their nearest school, so the pattern of admission for the area will have changed as a result of this new school

It is apparent that the pattern of admission for this area has changed due to the opening of Westvale Park Primary School and that there is likely to be minimal impact on the intake to Meath Green Infant School if 'nearest school' is removed.

Tillingbourne Junior School

Modelling for Tillingbourne Junior School would indicate that, if the criterion of 'nearest school' was removed and priority had been based on straight line distance after siblings, the impact on the intake for the last three years would have been as follows:

- In 2021, the school was undersubscribed and so the intake would have been the same had 'nearest school' not been used
- In 2020, five children living in Gomshall/Shere would have been displaced in favour of five children who lived in Farncombe

- In 2019, eight children living in Gomshall/Shere would have been displaced in favour of five children who lived in Farncombe/Godalming

Due to the potential impact on children in Gomshall and Shere, modelling was also done on the 2017 and 2018 intakes, as follows:

- In 2018, the school offered to all applicants and so the intake would have been the same had 'nearest school' not been used
- In 2017, one child living in Gomshall would have been displaced in favour of 1 child who live in Farncombe

In each of the years where children living in Gomshall/Shere would have been displaced, they would have been able to secure a place at Surrey Hills CofE Primary School. Shere CofE Infant has also been named as a feeder school to Holy Trinity CofE Junior School since 2018 and children who had this school as their nearest CofE school would also have been able to access a place there.

Year 3 forecasts for Tillingbourne Valley and Godalming indicate a fall in pupil numbers in 2022, levelling out subsequently for 3 to 4 years.

The Headteacher and Governing Body are not in support of this proposal as they are concerned at maintaining pupil numbers. However, with a projected deficit of Year 3 places across Tillingbourne Valley of 0.5 of a full time equivalent class until 2026/27 it is unlikely the school will face a shortage of pupils. The school also wishes to continue to serve Gomshall and Shere which are very much part of the established school community. However, with projected forecasts for Godalming showing a surplus of Year 3 places for the foreseeable future, the local authority does not anticipate that children from Godalming will displace children from Gomshall and Shere and that the pattern of admission is likely to remain similar to that for 2021.

2. Removal of use of 'nearest school' for Wallace Fields Junior School

For September 2023, the local authority is proposing to remove use of 'nearest school' within the admission criteria for Wallace Fields Junior School.

Wallace Fields Junior School will still be recorded as having school specific criteria, as set out in Section 8 of Enclosure 1, due to the feeder link that exists from Wallace Fields Infant School. The school's admission criteria would be as follows:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
2. Exceptional social/medical need
3. Children of a member of staff
4. **Children who will have a sibling at Wallace Fields Infant School or Wallace Fields Junior School on the date of their admission**
5. **Children attending Wallace Fields Infant School**
6. Any other children

If the number of children who qualify under any criterion is greater than the number of places remaining available at the school, any remaining places will still be offered to children who meet the criterion on the basis of proximity of the child's home address to the nearest official school gate at either Wallace Fields Infant School or Wallace Fields Junior School.

The removal of use of 'nearest school' makes the admission arrangements for the school simpler and more transparent as it enables every family to understand how their application will be considered and prioritises children based on their proximity to the school.

Home to school distance is not being removed as a category for admission. After siblings and children attending the named feeder school, priority will be based on straight line distance from the child's home address to the school.

Reasons for reviewing use of 'nearest school' within the admission arrangements for these schools are as follows:

- 'nearest school' is measured in a straight line from the child's home address. In this way, although this may be used to prioritise applicants, it does not necessarily reflect the school that is nearest by walking or road route or the one that is easiest for the child to get to
- having a school as a 'nearest school' does not guarantee admission
- this brings the admission criteria for these school into line with the majority of the remaining community and voluntary controlled schools
- the majority of schools do not give priority to children based on whether it is a child's nearest school

Modelling for Wallace Fields Junior School based on the last three intakes would indicate that, if the criterion of 'nearest school' was removed and priority had been based on straight line distance after children attending the feeder school, there would have been no impact on the intake and no children would have been displaced.

This proposal is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school.

3. Introduction of a catchment area for Walton on the Hill Primary School in place of 'nearest school'

For September 2023, the local authority is proposing to introduce a catchment for Walton on the Hill Primary School as set out in Appendix 5 of Enclosure 1. The catchment will replace use of 'nearest school' as a criterion.

The school will still be recorded as having school specific criteria, as set out in Section 8 of Enclosure 1. The school's admission criteria would be as follows:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
2. Exceptional social/medical need
3. Children of a member of staff
4. Siblings
5. **Children living in the defined catchment area of the school (see Appendix 5 for catchment map)**
6. Any other children

The catchment that has been proposed has been modelled on the area created by use of 'nearest school'.

Modelling for Walton on the Hill Primary School based on the last four intakes would indicate that, if the criterion of 'nearest school' was removed and priority had been

based on straight line distance after siblings, the impact on the intake would have been as follows:

- In 2021, there would have been no impact on the intake and the same children would have been admitted
- In 2020, two children would have been displaced if nearest school had not been used
- In 2019, one child would have been displaced if nearest school had not been used
- In 2018, there would have been no impact on the intake and the same children would have been admitted

Whilst the number of children affected is not significant in any year, Governors at the school are mindful of the geography of the area and the potential impact on the intake if 'nearest school' is removed and applications from the neighbouring village of Tadworth increase. Some children living in Tadworth live closer to the school than some children living in Walton on the Hill and so, if priority on the basis of 'nearest school' was removed, these children would displace children living in Walton on the Hill if no alternative proposal was put forward to protect their priority.

Given the location and oversubscription of other local schools it is also likely that, if children in Walton on the Hill were displaced by children in Tadworth, they would not be able to access another local school.

A catchment would serve the same purpose as priority on the basis of 'nearest school' whilst ensuring that parents could easily understand its boundaries and whether they fall within or outside the catchment.

This proposal is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school.

4. Reigate Priory School – Reigate & Banstead

For September 2023, the local authority is proposing to introduce a nodal point that will be used to measure home to school distance (and thereby priority for admission) for Reigate Priory School, that does not relate to a school gate. This change is reflected in bold in Section 8 of Enclosure 1.

A nodal point is a fixed geographical point, other than the location of the school, from which children may be afforded priority for admission, based on the distance from the child's home to the nodal point. A nodal point is part of a school's admission arrangements and must therefore be consulted upon, determined, and published in the same way as other admission arrangements.

For most schools, home to school distance is measured from the child's home to the nearest school gate available for pupils to use. However, Reigate Priory School is exploring a move to a new site which is about 0.7 miles south of the existing school site. To ensure that the pattern of admission does not change as a result of a site move, it is proposed that home to school distances, used to prioritise applicants, will be calculated based on a nodal point at the site of Reigate Priory, where the school is currently situated.

This proposal will ensure there is no change to the admission intake if the site move does go ahead but will have no impact on the intake if it does not, because the nodal point used to prioritise applicants will still be within the existing site of the school.

This proposal is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. It is also supported by the Education Place Planning team as it ensures the school will still serve the area to the north of Reigate which does not have alternative Year 3 provision.

5. West Ashtead Primary School – Mole Valley

For September 2023, the local authority is proposing to reduce the published admission number (PAN) at Year 3 for West Ashtead Primary School from 30 to 2. This change is reflected in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1 which sets out the proposed PANs for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023 admission.

West Ashtead Primary School currently has a Year 3 PAN of 30. However, this reduction in PAN has been formally requested by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school as the school is not filling to its PAN. A reduction will enable the school to still admit children at Year 3, but will provide the school with greater ability to maintain financial viability as they will be able to operate with just one class in KS2.

It is anticipated that there would still be sufficient places in the area if the PAN is decreased, as current forecasts indicate a projected surplus of primary places across the Ashtead and Leatherhead area from 2023. However, to help compensate for the reduction in PAN, there is a linked proposal to introduce a Year 3 PAN at Leatherhead Trinity Primary School (see section 6).

This decrease in PAN would have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.

6. Leatherhead Trinity Primary School – Mole Valley

For September 2023, the local authority is proposing to introduce a Year 3 PAN of 4 at Leatherhead Trinity Primary School. This change is reflected in bold in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1 which sets out the proposed PANs for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023 admission.

A Year 3 PAN at Leatherhead Trinity Primary School will help offset the reduction in Year 3 PAN at West Ashtead Primary School and will current help alleviate any pressure on places in Fetcham and Bookham at Year 3.

Surrey's Education Place Planning team are supportive of this proposal, as are the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school.

The introduction of a Year 3 PAN would have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.

7. Felbridge Primary School – Tandridge

For September 2023, the local authority is proposing to introduce a Year 3 PAN of 2 at Felbridge Primary School. This change is reflected in bold in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1 which sets out the proposed PANs for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023 admission.

A Year 3 PAN at Felbridge Primary School will formalise the arrangement that already takes place, whereby two additional children are offered a place from the waiting list at Year 3. However, the existence of a published PAN will ensure parents know about the intake and they will be invited to apply for a place as part of the Junior intake to the school.

Surrey's Education Place Planning team are supportive of this proposal, as are the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school, who have requested this change.

The introduction of a Year 3 PAN would have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school.

8. Priority for children of staff for community and voluntary controlled nurseries

For September 2023, the Local Authority is proposing to give priority to children of staff for entry to community and voluntary controlled nurseries, as set out in Section 20 of Enclosure 1.

This will align the criteria with those for entry to Reception in this regard.

The School Admissions Code permits admission authorities to give priority to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

- where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and/or
- the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

The definition of a member of staff and the conditions to qualify will be the same as those that apply for Reception, as set out in Section 11 of Enclosure 1.

9. Supplementary Information Form for Social/Medical applicants

For September 2023, the Local Authority is proposing to introduce a supplementary information form for parents to complete if they wish to apply on the basis of social/medical need, as set out in Appendix 6 of Enclosure 1.

This will ensure applicants can be guided through this process, enable them to understand what information they will need to provide to support a social/medical claim and give them opportunity to declare details of their case in more detail than is allowed on the application form.

The School Admissions Code allows for the use of supplementary information forms when they are needed to gather additional information that is not collected on the application form.

The supplementary information form is referenced in Sections 7 and 10 of Enclosure 1.

How can you respond to the consultation?

The consultation on the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and these proposed changes will run until Wednesday 1 December 2021. If you would like to take part, please complete an online response form available at www.surreysays.co.uk. Alternatively, if you would prefer to respond on a paper form, please telephone the Surrey Schools and Childcare Service on 0300 200 1004 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) to request a copy. Please note that only response forms which are fully completed with the respondent's name and address will be accepted.

What happens next?

After the closing date, responses will be collated and presented to the County Council's decision-making Cabinet on 25 January 2022. It will decide whether to proceed with the proposed changes as well as determining the admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools for which no changes are proposed. Cabinet's decision will then need to be ratified by the full County Council on 8 February 2022. Once determined, the final admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023 will be placed on Surrey's website at www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions.

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