

APPENDICE – EVENDONS PRIMARY SCHOOL – ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023-24 CONSULTATION

From: Matt Parting

Sent: 17 December 2021 10:07

To: Tracey Blandford <Tracey.Blandford@bpet.co.uk>

Subject: LAB consultation on the admissions policy

Hi Tracey - just these points back from the LAB consultation on the admissions policy:

My comments as follow (LAB Chair):

(1) Remove the Criteria “Families who have exceptional medical or social needs as the grounds for their child’s admission to a particular school.” Because it is very rarely used and we do feel a child local school often best meets their medical needs; pupils who apply should be in a catchment of the school and we have no specialist facilities.

Is the criteria rarely used or never used? If there were precedent, it would be good to list out when was the last time it was used and why it was used to give a sense of how important (or not) this criteria is.

Trust Response: Evidence shows that Evendons Primary School, haven't used the criteria for medical needs. In the past, there have been families try to use social and medical care but they haven't been successful as they didn't have the evidence to back their application. Our experience is this is usually only sought to be used on appeal, when it is not mentioned in the application process. It remains hard to see how Evendons offers anything particular for exceptional medical needs, over what is usually best, being their local school.

(2) Amend the notes of the Criteria “Children of staff at the school. Children of staff in either following circumstances: i) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the child starts at the school.” Rather than “i) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of application.”

Not an employment law expert, but I personally would like to see a more progressive reform on this. What is the rationale of placing a 2 years employment criteria before the child would be considered in case of oversubscription? I would imagine the lengthy period can potentially be a big hurdle for prospective staff to join Evendons, which in turn prevents Evendons from hiring the best possible candidate for the job? Many employment law changes nowadays aim to provide more flexibility & protection to workers (such as changes in benefits on probation period) and it would be good for the school to think about how to provide more flexibility to the ever changing employment landscape to attract the best talent.

Trust Response: We (BPET) know that 2 years was chosen because employees have additional rights that they don't have before they are employed for 2 years for other aspects of employment. This is a balanced argument, as we have experienced parents apply for Teaching Support roles or Middy-Meal roles to get their child in to our schools, then leave the school at Christmas. As Evendons is a very popular school, we are seeking to protect ourselves on employment terms of people not really wishing to work at the school (this takes a lot of admin and training time) over a real benefit for staff who are with us for the long term.

Point 2: aligned with comment that this should include children with siblings and live within catchment? This feels that right thing to continue to keep the community we have (this might be covered off in point 6)

Trust Response: Most staff live out of catchment (possibly affordability and to be more anonymous in their local area) and the numbers will be low to threaten the school community.

Poitrn3 - i: I don't quite understand the value of having the 2-year timeframe; if we allow children of staff it shouldn't have the timeline of 2-years

Trust Response: This is a debate as to what is right. As we say above, it's to reward the loyal, not those seeking to 'work the system' to get their child into a very popular school and as per above the 2-year timeframe aligns such benefits with other employment law benefits/protection staff are offered. 2 years is consistent across all BPET Schools.

Trust respond with question to Evendons LAB – in an email 22.12.21, which was further chased on 12.01.22 before deadline of 20.01.22:

Q: Do you wish to consider a shorter timeframe, such as 1 year?? **No further response from Evendons LAB.**

From: Eleanor Scott

Sent: 17 December 2021 16:40

To: Info <info@bpet.co.uk>

Subject: Evendons Primary School 2023-24 Admissions Policy Consultation

I wish to state my objection to the proposed change to the criteria for a place at Evendons Primary School

My objection relates to criteria 3 - Children with a sibling at the school at the time of .

Commented [TB2]: The previous Evendons Admissions Policy stated "Children whose permanent home address is inside the school's designated area and who has a sibling at the school at the time of the application; who is expected to be attending the school when the child will enter the school." My reading of this is that all siblings will be given priority regardless of where they live. I do not believe that siblings of children already in the school should be given priority over those in the designated area in all circumstances.

I have no objections to siblings of children being given priority where they are also living in the designated area but feel that all siblings is unfair.

This effectively penalises those that live in catchment, those parents that have chosen to live in the catchment area and contribute to the local community, those that want their children to attend a local school and actively participate in school life and all it offers, where they can walk to school and make friends that are local to them.

The danger of the proposed criteria is that at its most extreme you could end up with a school full of children who don't live in catchment, as those who have secured a place for the first child can move out of catchment safe in the knowledge that their siblings have a secure school place no matter what, to the detriment of more local families. This does nothing to encourage local children or parents or root the school in the community.

Yours faithfully

Eleanor Scott

Trust Response:

Currently, February 2022, there are 21 pupils attending Evendons Primary School who live outside of the catchment area. Of these; 1 family is a staff member who has moved out of the school catchment area, 2 (siblings) moved out of catchment to attend a different school for which they could not get in so they stayed at Evendons and finally one pupil remains at Evendons after his family moved out of catchment in the hope of him getting into the same secondary school that his older sibling, with an ECHP, attends.

Most if the pupils (families) who have moved out of the Evendons catchment area, we estimate 17 of the 21 above, have moved to become closer to their preferred secondary school.

Looking at initial data from Wokingham Borough Council of siblings who have potentially been offered a Reception place at Evendons for September 2022, zero (0) live outside of the catchment area.

We therefore conclude that the driver for moving out of the catchment is secondary schooling and there is no evidence that these families become disengaged members of the Evendons Community whilst attending.

From: Daryn Wilkinson >

Sent: 20 December 2021 20:09

To: Info <info@bpet.co.uk>

Subject: Evendons Primary School 2023-24 Admissions Policy Consultation

To Tracey Blandford

I'd like to enquire about the proposed changes to the admissions policy.

The cover letter states that there are two proposed changes but in the draft it looks like there is an additional change to the sibling policy. Could you explain the reason it has not been included in the cover letter and if it is, in fact, part of the proposed change?

I'm not sure if it is relevant or noted down anywhere but I support the proposed changes, including the change not noted in the cover letter.

Kind Regards

William Wilkinson

Trust Response:

Thank you for your email of 20th December 2020.

You are correct that we have amended the sibling criterion so that it is consistent with all other BPET Schools. So regardless of catchment zone, those families with children already at Evendons will be ensured their sibling gets a place.

It looks like a track changes deletion rather than acceptance of the letters draft has resulted in its omission. You are the only person to have noticed so thank you for bringing this to our attention.

Again, thank you for your message of support for all of the proposed changes.

I hope this clears up the matter.