

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

## Arrangements for the admission of students to Westminster Academy for entry 2016/17

1) This document sets out the admission arrangements for Westminster Academy. This document forms an Annex to the Funding Agreement between Westminster Academy and the Secretary of State. Any changes to the arrangements set out in this document, with the exception of setting a Published Admission Number higher than the agreed admission number for a specific year, must be approved in advance by the Secretary of State\*1.

2) For the purpose of this Admissions Policy:

references in admission law and in the statutory Codes of Practice to admission authorities – shall be deemed to be references to the Governing Body of Westminster Academy;

references to ‘the LAA’ – shall be deemed to be references to the City of Westminster Local Authority Admissions; and

references to ‘the Admissions Forum’ – to be the City of Westminster Local Authority Admissions Forum.

### **I. Admission arrangements approved by the Secretary of State**

3) The admission arrangements for Westminster Academy for the year 2016/2017 and, subject to any changes approved by the Secretary of State, for subsequent years are:

a) Westminster Academy has an agreed admission number of 180

*\*1 In accordance, this document has been amended (i.e. Version 4) to reflect changes in the School Admissions Code and School Admissions Appeals Code, as set out in Section 85(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and **which came into force from 1 February 2012 (updated 19 December 2014)***

students. Westminster Academy will accordingly admit at least 180 students in the relevant age group each year if sufficient applications are received. Where fewer than 180 applications are received, Westminster Academy will offer places to all those who have applied. Where the number of applications exceeds 180, applications will be considered in accordance with the criteria in paragraphs 7 and 8.

b) Westminster Academy may set a higher admission number as its Published Admission Number for any specific year. Before setting an admission number higher than its agreed admission number, Westminster Academy will consult those listed at paragraph 26.

c) students will not be admitted above the Published Admission Number unless exceptional circumstances apply and such circumstances shall be reported to the Secretary of State\*<sup>2</sup>. The decision to admit above the Published Admission Number may not be delegated by the Trust.

#### *Process of application*

4) Applications for Westminster Academy will be made on the Common Application Form of the LAA in which the applicant resides. Westminster Academy will use the following timetable for applications each year (exact dates may vary from year to year in accordance with the annual review) which will fit in with the common timetable agreed by the City of Westminster Admissions Forum:

a) **July** – Westminster Academy will publish its prospectus of information about the arrangements for admission (including oversubscription criteria) for the following September (i.e. in July 2015 for admission in August/September 2016). This will include details of open evenings and other opportunities for prospective students and their parents to visit the school. It will refer to the LAA and London Schools Admissions System, including use of the Common Application Form of the LAA in which the applicant resides and the closing date for applications within the LAA and London Schools Admissions System. Westminster Academy will also provide information to the LAA for inclusion in the composite prospectus, as required.

*\*2 The total number of students may not exceed 1175, as this is a planning condition of the Westbourne Green site development*

**b) September/October** – Westminster Academy will provide opportunities for parents to visit Westminster Academy.

**c) Mid-October/early November** – closing date for admissions applications in accordance with the LAA and London Schools Admissions System.

**d) 1st March** – offers of places notified in writing to parents by the LAA (i.e. National Offer Day) on behalf of Westminster Academy.

5) This timetable reflects the practice in the LAA and is intended to secure a co-ordinated approach to admissions for parents and students. Westminster Academy intends to be part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme.

#### *Consideration of applications*

6) Westminster Academy will consider all applications for places. Where fewer than 180 applications are received, Westminster Academy will offer places to all those who have applied.

7) Notwithstanding paragraph 6 above, Westminster Academy may refuse admission to particular applicants in cases where fewer than the Published Admission Number have applied. These are applicants who have been excluded from two (2) or more other schools and the ability to refuse admissions runs for a period of two (2) years from the last exclusion. One of the exclusions must have occurred after 1 September 1997. Exclusions which took place before the child concerned reached compulsory school age do not count for this purpose. Academies may also refuse admission to students (other than in the normal year of entry) in the specific and limited circumstances described in paragraph 1.9(f) of the statutory Code of Practice. In all the circumstances described in this paragraph, however, the Secretary of State may direct Westminster Academy to admit such a student and that direction shall be binding on Westminster Academy.

#### *Procedures where Westminster Academy is oversubscribed*

8) Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the Published Admissions Number, applications will be considered for Year 7 against the criteria set out below. *After* the admission of students with Statements of Special Educational Needs where Westminster Academy is named on the Statement, the criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:

a) children in public care (looked after children) and previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order). Further references to previously looked after children in the Code mean such children who were adopted (or subject to residence orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after

b) children whose siblings currently attend Westminster Academy and who will continue to do so on the date of admission. The term 'sibling' means a full, step, half, adopted or fostered brother or sister, but not cousins

c) children with exceptional medical, social or other needs for a place at Westminster Academy, where the application is supported by written specific professional advice as to why admission to Westminster Academy is necessary. The definition as to what constitutes exceptional needs within the scope of this provision will be agreed by the Trust and will be available in writing to parents in the prospectus as part of the admissions policy

d) children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

- where the member of staff has been continuously employed at the school for two (2) 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

e) children who live closest to Westminster Academy, measured by the shortest walking distance. The distance which determines how close the student lives to Westminster Academy is the shortest walking distance along public highways and footpaths between the door to the student's permanent address and the nearest entrance to Westminster Academy's main building.

*The student's permanent address is where he or she normally lives and sleeps and goes to school from. Proof of residence can be requested at any time throughout the admissions process. If false or misleading information is used to gain entry to Westminster Academy, the offer of a place will be withdrawn and the application cancelled*

9) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 8 above, the Secretary of State may direct Westminster Academy to admit a named student to *Westminster Academy on application from the LAA. The Secretary of State shall in such circumstances consult Westminster Academy before making such a direction and have regard to its comments.*

#### *Operation of waiting lists*

10) Subject to any provisions contained in the London Schools Admissions System, where in any year Westminster Academy receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate. This will be maintained by Westminster Academy and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application for admission to Westminster Academy.

11) A child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out in paragraph 8 above. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

#### *12) Arrangements for admission to the sixth form*

Westminster Academy provides educational opportunities to 16-18 year olds through a co-educational sixth form for a maximum of 275 students. There are no minimum entrance requirements for entry to the sixth form but students wishing to enter the sixth form must meet the minimum academic requirements for the courses for which they are applying. If either internal or external applicants fail to meet the minimum course requirements they will be offered any alternative courses for which they meet the minimum course requirements. Academic entry requirements for courses will be published on the Academy's website.

When the sixth form is undersubscribed all internal applicants will be automatically admitted. When there are more external candidates wishing to take up place than are available, and once places have been offered to students with statements of special educational need (SEN) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan naming Westminster Academy, places will be offered in the following order of priority:

- a) young people who are in public care (looked after children) or who were in public care but ceased to be so because they were

adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order)

b) on a first come-first served basis for a specific course until a course is full subject to the outcome of an interview with the Academy and meeting the academic entry requirements for the specified course (if any).

13) There will be a right of appeal to the Appeals Panel using the process as set out in paragraphs 14-20 for unsuccessful applicants.

#### *Arrangements for Appeal Panels*

14) Parents will have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of Westminster Academy. The Appeal Panel will be independent of Westminster Academy and will be composed of three (3) members who will include:

- at least one independent person who has no professional experience of education or personal experience of Westminster Academy, known as a 'lay member; and
- at least one independent person with experience in education.

15) Parents have the right to attend the Appeal Panel meeting in person and to make oral representations; that is, to clarify or supplement their written appeal. The parent may be accompanied by a friend, adviser or be represented. Parents may also bring an interpreter. Westminster Academy may also be represented at the Appeal Panel meeting.

16) The arrangements for appeals will be in line with the Code of Practice on School Admission Appeals published by the Department of Education

17) Parents will normally have at least (20) days after notification of a place not being offered at Westminster Academy to lodge an appeal. The notification in writing will indicate the reasons for refusal of a place and of the right of appeal.

18) Parents wishing to appeal against an admission decision by Westminster Academy should write to the Clerk to the Appeal Panel at the address given in the admission decision letter from Westminster Academy. Other documentation may be submitted in support of an appeal and should be lodged with the Clerk to the Appeal Panel not less than seven (7) days before the appeal hearing. The Appeal Panel will have the discretion to refuse to admit late evidence.

19) Any materials presented by Westminster Academy to the Clerk will be sent in advance to the parents and any materials presented by the parents will be sent in advance to Westminster Academy. The basic principle followed is that all information presented to the Clerk as part of the appeals process is available to all parties to the appeal.

20) Parents will be given at least ten (10) days' notice of the appeal hearing, unless they agree to a shorter period of notice.

21) The Clerk to the Appeal Panel will, if possible, inform parents of the Appeal Panel's decision on the day of the hearing. In the case of the appeal hearings taking in excess of one day, the Clerk to the Appeal Panel will contact parents with the decision on the final day of the hearings. The parents will also be informed of the outcome in writing within five (5) days of the date of the hearing. In the case of unsuccessful appeals, the Appeal Panel will give the parents their reasons for not upholding the appeal.

*Arrangements for admitting students to other year groups, including to replace any students who have left Westminster Academy*

22) If an application is made for a student to be admitted to Westminster Academy and the required year group is below the level of the Published Admission Number applicable to the age group, the student will be accepted.

23) Where a year group in Westminster Academy is at the level of the Published Admission Number applicable to that age group, Westminster Academy will operate a waiting list for those students who have applied for a place and been refused.

24) There will be a right of appeal to the Appeals Panel for unsuccessful applicants.

## **II. Annual procedures for determining admission arrangements - Consultation**

25) Westminster Academy shall consult each year on its proposed admission arrangements. Westminster Academy will take part in the local admission forum for the Westminster Area

26) Westminster Academy will consult by 1st March, prior to the publication of admission arrangements, with:

(i) Westminster LAA;

(ii) any other admissions authorities for primary and secondary schools located within the relevant area for consultation set by the LAA; and

(iii) any other governing body for primary and secondary schools [as far as not falling within paragraph (ii)] located within the relevant area for consultation.

### *Determination and publication of admission arrangements*

27) Following consultation, Westminster Academy will consider comments made by those consulted. Westminster Academy will then determine its admission arrangements by 15th April of the relevant year and notify those consulted as to what has been determined. *Publication of admission arrangements*

28) Westminster Academy will publish its admission arrangements in July of each year once these have been determined by:

a) copies being sent to primary, special and secondary schools in City of Westminster LAA

b) copies being sent to the offices of City of Westminster LAA

c) copies being made available without charge on request from Westminster Academy

d) copies being sent to public libraries in the area of City of Westminster LAA for the purposes of being made available at such libraries for reference by parents and other persons



- 29) The published arrangements will set out:
- a) the name and address of Westminster Academy and contact details
  - b) a summary of the Admissions Policy, including oversubscription criteria
  - c) a statement of any religious affiliation
  - d) numbers of places and applications for those places in the previous year
  - e) arrangements for hearing appeals.

*Representations about admission arrangements*

30) Where any of those bodies that were consulted, or that should have been consulted, make representations to Westminster Academy about its admission arrangements, Westminster Academy will consider such representations before determining the admission arrangements. Where Westminster Academy has determined its admissions arrangements and notified all those bodies who it has consulted and any of those bodies object to Westminster Academy's admission arrangements, they can make representations to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will consider the representation and in so doing will consult Westminster Academy. Where he/she judges it appropriate, the Secretary of State may direct Westminster Academy to amend its admission arrangements.

31) Those consulted have the right to ask Westminster Academy to increase its proposed Published Admissions Number for any year. Where such a request is made, but agreement cannot be reached locally, they may ask the Secretary of State to direct Westminster Academy to increase its proposed Published Admissions Number. The Secretary of State will consult Westminster Academy and will then determine the Published Admission Number.

32) In addition to the provisions at paragraphs 30 and 31 above, the Secretary of State may direct changes to Westminster Academy's proposed Published Admissions Number.

*Proposed changes to admission arrangements by Westminster Academy after arrangements have been published*

33) Once the admission arrangements have been determined and published, Westminster Academy will propose changes only if there is a major change of circumstances.

The decision to propose changes to the admission arrangements after these arrangements have been published may not be delegated by the Trust. In such cases, Westminster

Academy must consult those consulted under paragraph 26 above and must then apply to the Secretary of State setting out:

- the proposed changes;
- reasons for wishing to make such changes; and
- any comments or objections from those entitled to object.

34) The Secretary of State will consider applications from Westminster Academy to change its admission arrangements only when Westminster Academy has consulted on the proposed changes as outlined at 25 and 26 above.

35) Where Westminster Academy has consulted on proposed changes and there have been no objections from any of the admissions authorities referred to in paragraph 26, Westminster Academy must still secure the agreement of the Secretary of State before any such changes can be implemented. Westminster Academy must seek the Secretary of State's approval in writing, setting out the reasons for the proposed changes and passing to her/him any comments or objections from other admission authorities/other persons.

36) The Secretary of State can approve, modify or reject proposals from Westminster Academy to change its admission arrangements.

37) Records of applications and admissions shall be kept by Westminster Academy for a minimum period of ten (10) years and shall be open for inspection by the Secretary of State.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

38) The Governing Body of Westminster Academy will review this policy at least every two (2) years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and published throughout Westminster Academy.