

Background

RET is the admissions authority for Turing House. The Local Governing Body consider 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 Year 7 Admissions Policy¹ and Sixth Form Admissions Policy² ran from **9 December 2020 – 20 January 2021**.

This consultation followed the procedure set by the Admissions Code 2014 ('the Code') and has given the local community the opportunity to provide their views on these proposed admission arrangements.

We consulted with:

- the Local Authority;
- all maintained schools in Richmond-upon-Thames, including a request for schools to make the parents/carers of their own students aware of the consultation where appropriate;
- neighbouring local authorities;
- local sixth form colleges;
- schools in neighbouring areas;
- Parents/carers of current Turing House students;
- Local councillors.

Consultees were invited to send us their comments on the proposed policies. They were directed to the Consultation Document³ for further explanation of the proposed changes. The consultation document and proposed policies were on our website for the duration of the consultation. This report confirms the outcome of the consultation.

We received 4 responses to the consultation, as follows:

- A current Turing House parent wrote in support of the proposal.
- Achieving for Children (AfC)'s Associate Director for School Place Planning raised some concerns and suggestions regarding the proposal on behalf of the Local Authority.
- A parent of primary-aged children expressed concern about the distance criteria used in the Year 7-11 admissions policy.
- A local resident raised some concerns and suggestions regarding the proposal.

¹ <https://www.turinghouseschool.org.uk/documents/admissions/THS%20Proposed%20Admissions%20Policy%202022%20Year%207.pdf>

² <https://www.turinghouseschool.org.uk/documents/admissions/THS%20Proposed%20Admissions%20Policy%202022%20Sixth%20Form.pdf>

³ <https://www.turinghouseschool.org.uk/documents/admissions/THS%20Consultation%20Document%20Proposal%20Admissions%20September%202022.pdf>

Key points raised by the Director for School Place Planning:

1. **Sibling Criterion:** The Director suggested that by giving priority to students who have older or younger siblings on the school's roll at the time of application only, this could lead to students being admitted at a point, in September (or in-year), when their sibling is no longer on roll at the school.

Response: Governors' have discussed this scenario, which is likely to occur infrequently, and confirmed that their intention for the sibling criterion is to maintain established family links, from which a new student can benefit even if their sibling has recently left the school. The criterion is in line with the Code.

2. **Nodal Admissions Point:** The Director asked the school to provide some clarification on why the 80% nodal admissions point will continue to be used for Years 7 to 11 admissions but not for external applicants to the Sixth Form.

Response: This was consulted on during a previous consultation for the 2020 admissions policy. We have added an explanation to the school's website here:
www.turinghouseschool.org.uk/admissionspoint.php

3. **Definition of Home Address:** The Director pointed out that the third paragraph in the definition of home address given in the Year 7-11 policy is different from that stated in the borough's composite secondary admissions brochure. As it is AfC's School Admissions Department, in its coordinating role, which determines the home address, he requested that the paragraph be removed and a link instead provided to the web page where the brochure is published.⁴

Response: The Secondary Admissions Brochure that is currently on the Council's web page is for 2021 admissions. Pages 18-21 provide detailed information about how AfC's admissions team define and verify home address. The brochure is re-published each year in September, so the details may change for 2022 admissions. To address discrepancies and reduce the risk of our policies becoming further out of sync with the brochure in future, the note on home address has been modified in the determined policy and a reference to the brochure has been added.

4. **Correction to reference:** The Director said that where we refer to the School Admissions Code 2012 in the introduction to both policies, it needs to be changed to 2014, as that is the latest version.

Response: This correction has been made in the determined policy.

⁴https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/children_and_family_care/schools_and_colleges/school_admissions/secondary_school_admissions

Key point raised by a local parent:

5. **Distance Criteria:** The parent was concerned that her children may not get a place, even though they live 2 minutes' walk from the permanent site. She would like the proportion of places allocated by distance to the permanent site under criterion 6a of the Year 7-11 policy to increase.

Response: Our admissions policy is reviewed annually in the Autumn term by governors to ensure that it remains fair and reasonable. Evolving patterns of applications and admissions are considered as part of that process. The admissions section of our school website provides data and maps indicating how places were allocated in previous years to help potential applicants assess their chances of being offered a place.

Additional key points raised by a local resident:

6. **Consultation Process:** The respondent expressed concern that the consultation was not published to all interested parties and not publicised as widely as in previous years.

Response: The consultation process was undertaken in line with the Code. The list of consultees who were notified directly is provided at the beginning of this report. The consultation document and proposed admissions policies were available on the school website throughout the consultation period. We no longer retain the external mailing list that was built in the school's pre-opening phase and used in our earliest admissions consultations. As in previous years, we requested that other schools make their parents aware of the consultation where appropriate. We have previously suggested to AfC that this practice be encouraged via the guidance it issues to schools.

7. **Distance Criteria:** The respondent said he thought that the distance criteria used in the Year 7-11 policy might cause traffic congestion, breach the Greenwich Judgement, discriminate against children living in disadvantaged areas, and not fulfil the school's aim of serving the western (Middlesex) side of the borough. He suggested we consider two potential alternatives – use of multiple distributed nodal points, or random allocation within a defined catchment area.

Response:

- Residents' concerns over traffic congestion were expressed during the planning consultation for our permanent site in Hospital Bridge Road, so were considered by the planning authorities as part of that decision-making process.
- The distance criteria do not breach the Greenwich judgement, which prevents schools from giving priority admission simply because a pupil lives in the local authority area.
- The maps and data on the school's admissions page indicate that the school is fulfilling its founders' primary aim of serving the western side of Richmond borough and is also serving some demand from outside of the borough.
- Using free school meal (FSM) eligibility as a measure of disadvantage, Turing House was broadly average for secondary schools on the western side of the borough in the most recently published comparison data from January 2019 (**Figure 1**). The school's FSM percentage has increased as the school has grown and become more established, so the

comparative figures will continue to evolve over time, especially as the two schools with the highest percentages were historically undersubscribed, with wide geographical catchments, but are now becoming much more popular with local families.

Figure 1: Data from the Government's 2018-19 School Performance Tables

<u>School name</u>	<u>% FSM in prev 6 years (@ Jan 2019)</u>
Waldegrave School	10.2
St Richard Reynolds Catholic High School	10.5
Orleans Park School	13
Teddington School	15.8
Turing House School	16
The Richmond upon Thames School	26.5
Hampton High	30.1
Twickenham School	33.8
<u>Average</u>	<u>19.5</u>

8. **Pupil Premium:** The respondent suggested we might consider prioritising students eligible for the Pupil Premium.

Response: Pupil Premium funding is provided to schools based on the number of students who have been eligible for free school meals in the previous 6 years, in addition to the number of looked after (or previously looked after) students. As noted above, the school's FSM percentage is already reasonably representative of the Western side of the borough. This will continue to be monitored over time.

9. **Sibling Definition:** The respondent suggested that we add foster siblings to the sibling definition (which appears in both policies).

Response: The current wording refers to "siblings (by which is meant full, step-, half- and adopted siblings living in the same household)". It is usual to include foster-siblings in the definition and this has been added to the determined policy. It has also been added to the children of staff criterion.

10. **Applicability of sibling criterion to Year 11:** The respondent suggested the school should 'use their judgement' as to whether an applicant's sibling in Year 11 is likely to continue into Year 12 to decide whether the applicant can be admitted under the sibling criterion.

Response: Paragraph 14 of the Code makes it clear that admissions criteria need to be objective, so this suggestion would not be appropriate.

11. **Distance measurement:** The respondent suggested we add more information about how distance from the applicant's home to the school or nodal point is measured.

Response: The Year 7 Policy includes information about how distance is measured in the note about the Nodal Point. As this applies more generally, we have moved it to a separate note

in the determined policy. The note says that “all distances will be measured using the Local Authority’s geographical information system”. More information is provided in the Council’s secondary admissions brochure and, as mentioned in Point 3, we intend to add a reference to this.

12. **Staff criterion:** The respondent expressed concern that the staff criterion prioritised staff employed by the academy trust rather than staff employed by the school.

Response: The policy wording makes it clear that it only applies to staff employed by the trust to work at Turing House, rather than to staff who work at other schools in the trust.

13. **Children educated outside of their chronological age group:** The respondent expressed concern that the wording of this note may not be in line with latest government guidance or planned primary legislation that will enable children already in this group at their current school to make the transition between school phases automatically.

Response: The DfE issued a statement in September 2020 confirming their intention to legislate to enable students to remain with the cohort with which they are admitted throughout their education.⁵ Until that change is made, schools must continue to adhere to the Code and consider requests for admission outside of the normal age group on an individual basis.

14. **Applicability of sibling criterion to the Sixth form:** The respondent suggested that, as sixth formers can travel independently, they shouldn’t be eligible for admittance to the school under a sibling criterion. He also expressed a view that the sibling criterion would unfairly prioritise applicants from outside of the sixth form’s “catchment area”.

Response: As noted in point 3, the sibling criterion is aimed at maintaining established links between families and the school, and not solely to make travel arrangements more convenient. The sixth form does not have a defined catchment area.

15. **Previous adjudicator decisions:** The respondent commented at length about a determination by the schools’ adjudicator which rejected an objection to the school’s September 2017 admission arrangements from a member of the public.⁶ He felt some aspects of the adjudicator’s decision were mistaken, and other aspects were based on factors which have now changed.

Response: School admissions arrangements are re-determined annually and, after they are determined, members of the public can raise objections to the Office of the Schools’ Adjudicator. The Adjudicator’s decisions are final and binding on all parties.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission/updated-statement-on-admission-of-summer-born-children-2020>

⁶ <https://www.turinghouseschool.org.uk/documents/ADA3143%20Turing%20House%20School%20Richmond%20upon%20Thames%207%20June%202016.pdf>

16. **Sixth form academic criteria:** The respondent expressed a view that use of predicted grades and other information from the applicant's existing school in making conditional offers for the sixth form is subjective.

Response: A conditional offer is not a firm offer of a place at the school. It sets out the academic criteria that must be met if a place is to be offered. Paragraph 2.6 of the Code specifically allows schools to set academic entry criteria for their sixth forms. A conditional offer won't automatically result in the firm offer of place - if more applicants meet the academic criteria than there are places available, the oversubscription criteria will be applied.

17. **Children adopted from outside England:** The respondent referred to Ministerial advice issued to local authorities and admission authorities in 2017 requesting that children adopted from outside England should be given the same admissions priority as those adopted within England. He highlighted that this advice was not being reflected in our proposed admissions policies.

Response: In December 2017, a letter was issued by the Minister for Schools, setting out the DfE's intention to modify the Code to give specific priority to children previously in care outside of England.⁷ He encouraged schools to use their discretion in prioritising such children in the meantime. However, in January 2018, AfC's Head of Admissions wrote to all local schools to say that the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCCS) had raised a number of practical issues with this request and advised them not to act in response to the letter until its recommendation becomes a statutory requirement. The proposal to revise the Code was consulted on last year,⁸ so we will await the outcome of this before recommending associated changes to our policy.

Recommendations agreed by Turing House LGB on 2 February 2021:

- Turing House LGB recommended to the RET Board that the proposed policies be adopted with the following changes:

- i. With reference to Point 3, the Home Address note in both policies should become:

Home Address:

Any offer of a place on the grounds of distance must be based on the child's permanent address. A business address, a childminder's address, or any address other than the child's permanent home will not be accepted. Proof of address will be sought and may be the subject of further investigation. Temporary addresses will not be used for the purpose of administering applications.

⁷ <https://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/file/5484/rt-hon-nick-gibb-mp-letter-re-admission-of-children-adopted-from-care-outside-of-england>

⁸ <https://consult.education.gov.uk/home-to-school-transport-and-admissions-team/changes-to-the-school-admissions-code/>

- ii. With reference to Point 11, the following text should be removed from the Nodal Point note in the Y7 policy and put into a separate note as follows:

Distance Measurement:

Proximity to Turing House or the Nodal Admissions Point is measured by the shortest route by road and/or maintained footpath from the property to the relevant point. Accessibility of private or public transport will not be considered. All distances will be measured using the Local Authority's geographical information system.

- iii. With reference to Point 3 and Point 11, an additional note should be added to the both policies as follows:

Further Information:

For full details of how the Local Authority measures distance, defines home address and deals with appeals, please refer to their admissions documentation.

Richmond's Secondary Admissions brochure is available on the following web page or in print form by contacting their admissions department:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/secondary_school_admissions.

- iv. With reference to Point 4, the mention of the School Admissions Code 2012 in the introduction to both policies should be changed to 2014.
- v. With reference to Point 9, we should include foster-siblings in the sibling definition and children of staff criteria in both policies.

Decision

The admissions arrangements including the recommendations of the Turing House LGB were determined by delegated authority of the RET Board on 26 February 2021.

The determined admissions arrangements will be published on the school's website and communicated to consultees including notification to the Local Authority.