



CONSULTATION NOTICE

Proposed Changes to Admission Arrangements for the 2023 Intake

Consultation Period: 1st October 2021 to 12 November 2021 inclusive

INTRODUCTION

Langley Park Learning Trust (the **Trust**), is the Admission Authority for each of its schools under the School Admissions Code 2021 (Code).

In accordance with Paragraphs 1.45 to 1.48 of the Code, the Board of Trustees is consulting on proposed changes to its admission arrangements for the September 2023 intake for two of its schools for a period of six weeks. The relevant schools are:

Langley Park School for Boys (LPSB)

Langley Park School for Girls (LPGS)

The Board of Trustees makes it clear that no decision on the changes proposed has as yet been taken, as this will be directly informed by the responses received during consultation. The Board of Trustees would like to receive a wide range of responses from interested parties, to enable it to make an informed decision.

The Board of Trustees would like to emphasise that, at the conclusion of the consultation period, it may decide not to go ahead with some or all of the proposed changes.

BACKGROUND

Langley Park School for Boys (LPSB) and Langley Park School for Girls (LPGS) are part of a multi-academy trust comprised of a mix of primary and secondary schools, all local to each-other. One of those schools, Langley Park Primary School (LPPS), is a Free School which opened in September 2016. Following investigation of a complaint, it became apparent to the Trust that prior to, and for a period shortly after, the opening of Langley Park Primary School, assurances were given to some parents relating to priority in admissions to the two Langley Park secondary schools (LPSB and LPGS). It became clear through investigating the complaint that those assurances influenced the decisions of some parents to subsequently send their child to Langley Park Primary School.

Nobody currently involved in the management of the Trust or its schools were involved in making these commitments but the position remains that the Trust believes that it is very likely that some parents of children in the top two year groups at Langley Park Primary School (those due to start Year 7 in September 2023 and September 2024) chose to send their child to Langley Park Primary School because they had been advised that this would give their children priority in admissions to the two Langley Park secondary schools.

Following extensive investigations, the Board of Trustees is proposing to make a specific change to the priority in admissions for the two Langley Park Secondary Schools (LPSB and LPGS), so as to give a new priority in admissions to Year 7 solely to pupils who started at Langley Park Primary School during the period when these assurances were given. By doing this, the Board is seeking to address the issue that commitments do appear to have previously been made to these parents, who then acted in good faith. At the same time the Board of Trustees is also seeking to ensure, as far as reasonably possible, that no other child misses out on a place at LPSB or LPGS as a result. The Board therefore proposes to increase the PAN at both Langley Park School for Boys and Langley Park School for Girls.

The Trust has listened to the feedback in a previous consultation and has engaged extensively with local education and community stakeholders to find a way of making this change whilst minimising the impact on other local families and local schools. In response the Trust is therefore proposing to take the following steps:

- The Trust has time limited the effect of the proposed change by stating that only children who have continuously been on roll since 31st August 2018 will have priority, thereby only capturing children in the two year groups at Langley Park Primary School who will start Year 7 in 2023 or 2024, whose parents appear to have been given assurances prior to 31st August 2018. These are the top two year groups currently at Langley Park Primary School. After that, this priority will automatically cease to apply, as all pupils who started at Langley Park Primary School by 31st August 2018 should then have started Year 7. The Trust does not want to create a permanent “feeder school” and is taking every step possible to make that clear. The Trust is aware of the requirement to consult on future admissions arrangements for Year 7 entry in 2025 and beyond.
- Inserting this date means that any child who started at or moved to Langley Park Primary School after 31st August 2018 will not have the benefit of this priority. The Trust Board considers this is important as, whilst LPPS is a successful and popular school, like many Free Schools it has a number of spare places in its first two year groups. Having sought the initial views of local primary schools, we are of the view that we should reserve this priority only for children on roll by 31st August 2018, so as ensure there is no incentive at all for parents to move their child away from other local primary schools. The Trust has considered the position of the very small number of children who joined these two year groups after 31st August 2018 and has considered that they joined when the school was being very clear that there was no priority in admissions for LPSB or LPGS.

- The Trust has also considered the impact on other parents and children, who would be hoping to join the two Langley Park secondary schools (LPSB and LPGS) because they live locally to those two schools. The Trust does not want anybody to be disadvantaged in their application for a place in these two year groups as a result of this proposed change. The Trust is therefore also stating in this consultation its intention to increase its PAN at both Langley Park School for Boys and Langley Park School for Girls for the Year 7 cohorts that start at the two secondary schools in September 2023 and September 2024. This aims to ensure that, as far as reasonably possible, no child misses out, as a result of the new proposed priority being introduced for these two year groups. The Trust had originally intended to increase the PAN solely by the additional number of pupils at LPPS who would newly have priority and would not have done so previously, which was up to a maximum of 16 in one year at LPSB. However, following further consideration the Trust has concluded that increasing by a whole class at both LPGS and LPSB would be preferable for the quality of education, due to considerations about the size of classrooms.
- The Trust is not required to consult on this increase in PAN but is doing so for the purposes of transparency. The Trust considers the proposed increase sufficiently moderate to avoid negatively impacting on its neighbouring secondary schools. The Trust has also considered the impact on students and staff at LPGS and LPSB. Both schools are already full. They have limited space for further expansion. However, the Board of Trustees is of the view that the schools can accommodate this moderate increase. This proposed increase in PAN is inextricable from the prior proposal and will only go ahead if the prior proposal is agreed, following consultation. The Trust Board wants to make it clear now that it does not intend to permanently increase the PAN at both schools, (indeed, neither school would be able to accommodate a permanent increase in PAN of this size. The Trust Board acknowledges that reducing the PANs back down to their current levels, when all children at LPPS who started by 31st August 2018 have transferred to Year 7, will require further consultation in 2023/2024 to amend the admission arrangements for the 2025 intake.

By taking these steps, the Trust is seeking to balance addressing the legitimate expectations of the parents of children who joined Langley Park Primary School prior to 31st August 2018, whilst also ensuring that a) as far as is reasonably possible, no child is disadvantaged in their application to the two Langley Park secondary schools (LPGS and LPSB) in these two year groups as a result of this proposed change and b) that there is no adverse impact on other neighbouring schools.

In addition, the Trust is also consulting on adding wording that seeks to provide clarity on how the admission arrangements apply to mixed sex twins, triplets and siblings of a higher multiple birth (e.g. quadruplets), where one or more achieves a place within the PAN in the usual way, and the other one(s) of the opposite sex don't. Since the Trust introduced the new reciprocal siblings priority, it has received a small number of enquiries from parents of mixed sex twins as to how the overall criteria applies to them. The Board of Trustees is of the view that the existing rule for same sex twins, triplets and siblings of a higher multiple birth (namely that if one achieves a place, the others will be admitted even where this means the PAN will be exceeded), should apply to mixed sex twins, triplets and siblings of a higher multiple birth too, i.e. that families with both boys and girls will typically want them to attend schools on the same site rather than having to travel in different directions. This approach is already used by another local Trust which has both single sex boys' and girls' schools and the Board of Trustees understands that the actual numbers captured by this rule are extremely low, as the numbers of mixed sex twins, triplets and siblings of a higher multiple birth are low, and almost all would either be eligible for places at both schools, or none, under other existing criteria. The Board of Trustees is therefore also consulting on additional wording that makes this clear.

The Trust is also making a number of other changes that are statutorily required in response to the new Admissions Code 2021. As these are required for compliance reasons, they are not subject to consultation.

LEGAL POSITION, IMPACT ANALYSIS AND REASONING OF THE PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATION

The Code is clear that admissions authorities may name feeder schools. The Code states:

1.15 Admission authorities may wish to name a primary or middle school as a feeder school. The selection of a feeder school or schools as an oversubscription criterion **must** be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.

The Trust is seeking the views of consultees on the proposal to name Langley Park Primary School as a feeder school to LPSB and LPGS, only for those pupils on roll at Langley Park Primary School continuously from 31st August 2018. The Board of Trustees is clear that the proposal to name LPPS as a feeder school to LPSB and LPGS for that specific group of children is solely to address the legitimate expectations of parents at Langley Park Primary School who started at the school up to and including 31st August 2018, as set out in further detail above.

Potential impact on Year 7 intakes in 2023 and 2024

The table below includes data correct as of the end of the previous academic year. It shows how many pupils are in each of the two year groups in question at LPPS and how many of those live further than the 4 year average from the two secondary schools for securing a place under the oversubscription criterion of 'all other children' and who are not believed to be eligible under other oversubscription criteria. Under this criterion, where there are more applications than places, applicants will be ranked in accordance with the distance between the child's home address and the school (with random allocation used where the distance for the final place is equal).

	A Total number in the year group at LPPS as of 31 st August 2021.	B Number of boys in (A) who live further than the 4 year average from LPSB (1.09 miles) and who joined LPPS by 31 st August 2018	C Number of girls in (A) who live further than the 4 year average from LPGS (1.42 miles) and who joined LPPS by 31 st August 2018.
Year group at LPPS due to start secondary school in September 2023	54	12	4
Year group at LPPS due to start secondary school in September 2024	48	16	8

The Board of Trustees is also clear that, as far as reasonably possible, it does not wish pupils to be disadvantaged in applications to its two secondary schools as a result of this proposed change. The Trust is therefore proposing to increase the PAN by more than the number of places set out in the table above at both Langley Park School for Boys and Langley Park School for Girls in 2023 and 2024. It intends to do this by creating a new class at both LPSB and LPGS. This is to try to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that no child is disadvantaged in an application for a place at these two schools as a result of these changes. Further consideration of this step is outlined in the "Background" section above.

The Board of Trustees is also clear that it does not wish to cause any adverse impact on neighbouring schools. The Trust has therefore engaged with local schools in advance of this consultation on how best to ensure this is the case. The

additional steps the Board of Trustees is taking to seek to avoid adverse impact on neighbouring schools are outlined in the background section above, alongside the rationale, as well as in the section below on increasing PAN.

Alongside the two questions for consultation (on the priority and on the increase to PAN), the Trust is also proposing to add wording in respect of the admission of mixed sex twins, triplets and siblings of a higher multiple birth, and is seeking views about this proposed clarification.

The Trust has also considered the equalities impact of the proposals. The proposal in relation to priority affects both boys and girls, who are all the same age. The % of pupils who are BAME in the year group at LPPS who are due to start Year 7 in 2023 is 36.1%. The % of pupils who are BAME in Years 7-11 at LPGS is 31.7% and the % of pupils who are BAME in Years 7-11 at LPSB is 25.3%. We have therefore concluded that this proposal will not negatively impact on BAME pupils. The Trust has also considered the equalities impact of the other two proposals in this consultation and has concluded that they do not impact disproportionately on any group with protected characteristics.

Finally, the Department for Education has introduced the new School Admissions Code 2021 (applicable from 1 September 2021). All admission authorities are required to make changes to their admission arrangements to comply with the new requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021. Sections (3) and (4) below provide further detail on this additional wording and on the rationale.

KEY PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

1. New priority for those pupils at Langley Park Primary school who were on the school roll by the 31st August 2018 and who remain on the school roll at the closing date for applications

The Board of Trustees propose to amend the admission arrangements for LPSB and LPGS for the September 2023 intake as set out below.

Proposed new wording to be inserted in Admission Policy of LPSB and LPGS:

School:	Current oversubscription criteria:	Proposed new oversubscription criteria:
LPSB	1. Looked after and previously looked after children	1. Looked after and previously looked after children
LPGS	2. Children with siblings	2. Children with siblings
	3. Children of staff at that particular school	3. Children of staff at that particular school
	4. All other children	4. Children currently in Year 6 at LPPS who have been registered pupils since 31 August 2018 and are still registered pupils at the closing date for applications.
		5. All other children

For ease of reference, the Trust has set out the proposed wording below:

After Category 3 (Children of staff at Langley Park School for Boys) insert:

Category 4: Children currently in Year 6 at Langley Park Primary School who have been registered pupils continually since 31 August 2018

Children who are currently in Year 6 at Langley Park Primary School, who were registered as pupils on or before 31 August 2018 and have remained registered pupils on a continual basis since that date, and are still registered pupils at the closing date for applications, will be allocated places in this category.

For the avoidance of doubt, children who were registered as pupils of Langley Park Primary School on or after 1 September 2018 will not be allocated a place in this category.

In order to be included in this category, a Category 4 Form (which is available to download from the School's website or in hard copy format from the School's main office) must also be submitted with the application or, if later, by the closing date for applications.

This category does not apply to applications for admission to the sixth form.

2. Increase in PAN for Year 7 at Langley Park School for Girls (LPGS) and Langley Park School for Boys (LPSB)

The Trust is not required to consult on an increase in PAN but is choosing to on this occasion for the purposes of transparency. Having considered the number of pupils in these two year groups at LPPS who would not otherwise be offered a place at LPGS or LPSB (see analysis above), the Board of Trustees is of the view that it should increase the PAN at both LPGS and at LPSB for the Year 7 intakes that start at the two schools in September 2023 and September 2024.

The Trust considered an increase just at the level in the table above but concerns about the size of classrooms mean that it has concluded that it is preferable for the quality of education to increase the PAN by one class at each school. This means that the PAN at LPGS in 2023 will be increased to 270 (from 240) and the PAN at LPSB will be increased to 245 (from 220) for the Year 7 intake for September 2023. The Trust Board does not want to permanently increase the PAN at both schools. The Trust Board acknowledges that, in order to reduce the PANs back down to their current levels when all children at LPPS who started by 31st August 2018 have transferred to Year 7, there will need to be a further consultation in 2023/2024 to amend the admission arrangements for the 2025 intake.

This is so as to ensure, as far as reasonably possible, that no child misses out on a place at LPGS or LPSB who would otherwise have been offered a place on grounds of distance, if it were not for the time-limited priority being afforded to this discrete group of pupils at LPPS. This is in response to concerns raised by local parents in response to a previous consultation.

The Board of Trustees has also considered the impact on other local secondary schools. It considers the impact to be manageable as there are a large number of secondary schools close by and so the students who would newly secure places at LPGS and LPSB would have been otherwise going to many different schools. The Trust has also considered the increases in birth rate for the cohorts due to start secondary school, which is expected to lead to increasing numbers applying for secondary schools over the next few years before then falling again.

3. Clarification in relation to how the admissions policies apply to mixed sex twins.

Between December 2020 and January 2021, the Trust consulted on applying the siblings priority across our two secondary schools (LPSB and LPGS), so that if a pupil had a sibling (as defined in the admission policies) at one of the two schools then in almost all circumstances (apart from those who joined in Year 12 from a school outside the Trust) would have priority for admission at the other school. This proposal received strong support and was incorporated into our admissions policy for entry from September 2022 onwards.

Since finalising that position, the Trust has been contacted by parents seeking clarification in relation to the position of mixed sex twins, where brothers and sisters will often want to attend schools on the same site, in the same way as brothers and sisters who are not twins.

The Trust considers that the current wording of its policies do not explicitly allow for mixed sex twins to be treated in the same way as other mixed sex siblings or other twins, triplets or siblings of higher multiple birth. The Board of Trustees is of the view that the existing rule for same sex twins, triplets and siblings of a higher multiple birth (namely that if one achieves a place, the others will be admitted even where this means the PAN will be exceeded), should apply to mixed sex twins, triplets and siblings of a higher multiple birth too, i.e. that families with both boys and girls will typically want them to attend schools on the same site rather than having to travel in different directions. The Board of Trustees is therefore also consulting on additional wording that makes this clear. The new proposed wording is included below.

New wording to be inserted in Admission Policy:

After Para 5.1 (on twins, triplets and siblings of higher multiple births) insert:

Where a female twin, triplet(s) or sibling(s) of a higher multiple birth is offered a place **in Year 7** at Langley Park School for Girls within the published admission number (PAN) in the normal way, and the place has been accepted, but their male twin, triplet(s) or sibling(s) of a higher multiple birth did not achieve a place in Year 7 at the School, the School will nevertheless offer a place **in Year 7** to their male twin, triplet(s) or sibling(s) of a higher multiple birth even where this means exceeding the PAN.

4. Updated text as a result of the new Admissions Code

The updated School Admissions Code 2021 makes a number of requirements of admissions authorities, including in relation to the position of children adopted from state care outside of England, in-year applications and the requirements for home addresses for children of UK Armed Forces Personnel / Crown Servants. All admissions authorities are statutorily required to update their policies accordingly and the policies now submitted for consultation include these required updates.

The Trust is not including a consultation question on this wording as it is being changed solely in response to the requirements of the new Admissions Code. It is being referenced in this document for the purpose of transparency and to explain all the changes when compared to the previous policy.