

December 2017

To whom it may concern

Consultation on Admissions Policy for Admissions in 2019-20

The Governors of JCoSS will shortly be beginning a consultation on the school's Admissions Policies for the academic year 2019-20. We are writing to all interested parties to alert them to the proposed changes and invite them to respond to the consultation if they so choose.

The proposed changes are as follows:

1. The removal of feeder places for entry into Year 7.

When the School opened, our policy guaranteed places in Year 7 for all students from three named feeder schools, Akiva, Clore Tikva and Clore Shalom. As the school's popularity grew, our policy for 2015-16 began capping these guaranteed offers, so as to ensure that students from other schools also had a reasonable chance of a place. For 2015 entry the number of guaranteed offers for feeder school applicants was capped at 15 per Year 6 class. We also stated a long-term intention to remove feeder schools altogether, by means of gradual tapering over a period of years; in line with this intention, guaranteed feeder numbers were reduced to 10 per Year 6 class for 2016 entry, and 5 per Year 6 class for 2017 and 2018 entry.

Meanwhile, the proportion of sibling applicants has increased in recent years, which has reduced the number of places available to other applicants. Given that we are retaining the sibling policy, we need to find other ways to keep places available to the widest range of applicants. **Governors therefore now feel the time is right to remove feeder school status altogether, so that all applicants are considered on an equal basis irrespective of their primary school.**

The arguments for and against feeder schools are strongly felt on both sides, and have been clearly articulated in consultation responses each time this aspect of the policy has changed. On the one hand Governors gratefully acknowledge the support that the three feeder schools have given to JCoSS especially in our early years, the commonality of ethos that we share, and the large numbers of feeder school students who have come here. On the other hand, feeder school places give an advantage to one group of applicants over another, and there are at least as many families who seek our ethos but who are not at those feeder schools, whether by choice or by circumstance.

In particular, both Eden and Alma schools have the same claim to ethos commonality with JCoSS that the historic feeder schools do. To deny Eden and Alma feeder status in the long term would be unfair on their children, but to add further feeder places would disadvantage children from other schools. Our ethos is, moreover, also attractive to families with children at Orthodox primary school and at non-Jewish primary schools, and a pluralist school needs to ensure that all these backgrounds have an equal chance of a place.

Uncertainty over the possible opening of a new Jewish secondary school led Governors to pause the tapering of feeder school places in 2017-8. Although this uncertainty continues, we cannot justify further delay: with the demand for places at Jewish secondary schools continuing to outstrip supply, it does not feel right to continue a policy which tilts the competition for places in favour of those at particular schools.

We are pleased that numbers applying from the feeder schools have remained strong throughout the reduction in guaranteed places, and we restate our commitment to maintaining the close relationships that we enjoy with those schools, as well as building them with new schools including Eden and Alma. Governors are acutely aware and proud of our responsibilities as a genuinely cross communal school, reflecting all parts of the Jewish community. We are determined that any change to the admissions process that might result in lower student numbers from progressive Jewish primary schools would not lead to any change in the unique ethos offered at JCoSS.

2. Change in the entry requirements for 6th form

GCSE grading is changing, so that instead of grades being awarded on a scale from A*-G, they are now in almost all subjects awarded on a scale from 9 to 1. Governors therefore propose amending the wording of the policy to reflect the grades that will be awarded in 2019.

Government advice regarding the standards required to thrive on 6th form courses is evolving as the new system beds in, and schools' practice is evolving with it. Our proposed policy is that what has previously required a C Grade now requires a Grade 4, a B grade is replaced by a Grade 6 and an A grade by a Grade 7.

The 2019-20 Policies are enclosed with this letter, as well being available on the JCoSS website (www.jcoss.org). Those wishing to respond to the consultation should write to the Governors at the school. The deadline for responses is 16 January 2018. Governors will consider all responses before publishing the final version.

Yours sincerely



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