

March 2018

Response to Consultation on Admissions Policy for 2018-19

The consultation process in respect of JCoSS ran from 4 December 2017 to 16 January 2018. The proposed policies for Year 7 entry and Year 12 entry were published on the school's website, together with details of how to respond. The School contacted all the schools, synagogues and individuals who had contributed to previous years' consultations to draw their attention to this year's process.

The proposed changes were:

- 1. The removal of feeder places for entry into Year 7.**
- 2. Change in the entry requirements for 6th form to reflect changes in national GCSE grade expectations.**

Summary of outcome

The great majority of respondents this year supported the removal of feeder schools, and there were no significant new arguments put forward in favour of feeder schools. The proposed Year 7-11 Admissions Policy for 2019-20 is therefore confirmed: there will be no guaranteed places for children from feeder schools.

No comments were received relating to the changes to entry requirements for 6th form. The proposed 6th form Admissions Policy for 2019-20 is also therefore confirmed.

There was a relatively small number of responses to this year's consultation, and very few argued against the proposed changes. Of those that did, one response was received on behalf of a feeder school requesting that feeder status be retained; another from a former feeder parent expressed sadness but understanding that it might end. One respondent asked whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had been carried out, since (in their view) the change would affect girls more than boys. The reasoning was that since JCoSS, as the only pluralist Jewish secondary school, was the only one where progressive Jewish views of gender might be upheld. Therefore girls from progressive backgrounds might see a greater impact than boys if their chances of a place were reduced by the removal of feeder school status.

Governors considered this but felt that whatever the merits of the argument, the removal of feeder places would not materially alter the availability of places to girls or boys. Moreover, families wishing for reasons of gender equality to send their daughters to JCoSS could just as easily be at non-feeder schools as at feeder schools, and the proposed change was therefore unaffected by the argument. While acknowledging the view expressed, Governors did not therefore feel that a formal EIA was necessary. The consultation documents noted the desire of those at feeder schools for a continuity of ethos, but the numbers seeking the JCoSS ethos is at least as large beyond feeder schools as within them. Governors felt that the continuity argument must be balanced against the argument from equality of access across the community, in line with our founding purpose.

As the guarantee of places to children at the historic feeder schools comes to an end, Governors restate their gratitude to these schools and their commitment to maintain strong links with them and with other schools with a similar Jewish character. We are determined to encourage applications to JCoSS from all families who seek our particular ethos, and it is likely that large numbers will continue to come from Akiva, Clore Shalom and Clore Tikva, and be joined in time by Alma, Eden and Mosaic. The school will take steps to secure this: the substantial 'commonality of ethos' has been important to JCoSS and will continue to be so.

Governors also restate their determination to preserving the distinctive ethos of JCoSS into the future. Should there be, for whatever reason, lower student numbers from progressive and pluralist Jewish primary schools, this will not lead to any change in the unique atmosphere offered at JCoSS, so recently affirmed as Outstanding by Pikuach.

Governors are grateful to all who have responded to consultations on this difficult issue over recent years. After this gradual process of change, further changes are not envisaged in the current climate; the Admissions Policy will however be reviewed regularly and stakeholders will be alerted to any future proposals.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Moriarty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Patrick Moriarty
Headteacher