

Appendix 6

TOWER HAMLETS SCHOOL ADMISSION FORUM (Constitution, Terms of Reference and Membership)



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1. Purpose

The Local Authority School Admission Forum is community led advisory group representative of key stakeholders in the school admission process, including parents, schools, diocesan authorities, the Council of Mosques and local community representatives.

The forum's primary purpose is to consider and promote a fair and effective schools admission system, which advances social equity and inclusion, ensuring that the interests of local parents and children come first. It will discuss and **give advice** to the Local Authority and other admission authorities on a range of school admissions issues including:

- a) Considering existing and proposed admissions arrangements;
- b) Promoting local agreement on admission issues;
- c) Considering improvements to admissions processes;
- d) Reviewing admissions guidance for parents;
- e) Promoting agreement on arrangements for dealing with in-year admissions including arrangements for vulnerable and looked after children;
- f) Publishing advice representing the agreed views of the Forum, this is distributed to the governors of all schools which are their own admission authorities;
- g) Having regard to guidance published from time to time by the Secretary of State, particularly the revised Codes of Practice on School Admissions, School Admission Appeals and 'Hard to Place' Pupils.

The forum does not have a remit with individual admissions cases.

2. Obligations and Responsibilities

The Forum shall:

- promulgate its advice and recommendations to all admission authorities, maintained schools and Academies within the area of the LA, and
- make available such advice and recommendations to any other persons with an interest.

The LA and Admission Authorities

The LA and the admission authorities within the area of the LA shall have regard in carrying out their functions, to any relevant advice given to them by the Forum.

3. Core Membership

The Forum comprises a core membership of 20 representatives, nominated by the following groups and appointed by the LA:

Four parent representatives, (two from the Tower Hamlets Parent Council, one from the Collective of Bangladeshi Governors and one parent governor)

One Local Authority (LA) Education Appeal Panel Member

One community representative from the Parents' Advice Centre (Inclusion/SEN)

One community representative from the Early Years/Childcare Partnership

One representative from a local voluntary/community organisation

One representative from the Council of Mosques

One representative from the Church of England Diocese

One representative from the Roman Catholic Diocese

One headteacher representing community primary schools

One headteacher representing community secondary schools

One headteacher representing voluntary aided primary schools

One headteacher representing voluntary aided secondary schools

One headteacher representing nursery schools

One headteacher/representative from primary free school/academy sector

One headteacher/representative from secondary free school/academy sector

The Headteacher of Tower Hamlets PRU

One Local Authority Officer

4. ALTERNATE MEMBERS

4.1 If a member is unable to attend they should nominate an alternate member who should be fully briefed before attending the meeting of the forum in their absence with the following provisos:

- a) LA members may only nominate an alternate member who is a member of the LA.
- b) A Parent member may only nominate an alternate member who is also a Parent with a child(ren) between the ages of 2 – 16 years.
- c) A school member may only nominate an alternate member who is a headteacher or from the same sector and phase as the school of which the Member in question is a headteacher.
- d) Diocesan and Council of Mosque members may only nominate an alternate member with the consent of the appropriate Diocese/Council.

4.2 Written notice of the attendance of an alternate member must be provided to the LA's nominated officer at least 2 days prior to any meeting.

5. Term of Office

The term of office for members of the Admission Forum shall be four years subject to them remaining eligible. A member may resign at any time and is required to leave if he or she ceases to be eligible in the capacity in which he or she has been appointed.

There is no limit to the number of terms of office to which a member may be nominated or re-nominated if still eligible. Where a member is replaced, the new member serves for the remainder of the term of office.

Diocesan and Council of Mosque representatives must stand down if the body that nominated them decides they should do so and notifies the Clerk to the Forum.

Schools Members and the LA nominated local community member must stand down if, following a recommendation from the Core Members, the LA decides that the member should no longer be a member of the Forum.

Core Members will become ineligible for membership in the following circumstances:

- Community members – if they cease to be a member of the organisation they represent;
- LA Education Appeal Panel Members - if they cease to be an Education Appeal Panel Member.
- School Members – if they cease to be a Headteacher of a school in the schools group;
- Parent member – if he/she ceases to be a qualifying parent.

Any member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Clerk to the Forum.

It will be a condition of appointment for all members that a member will cease to be a member of the Forum if they do not attend three consecutive meetings unless they have sought their apologies and those apologies have been accepted by the majority of the Forum members present at the meeting.

6. Conduct

In carrying out their functions, members of the Admission Forum are expected to act in accordance with the seven principles of public life set out in the first report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership www.public-standards.gov.uk.

Members of the Admission Forum are required to declare an interest in any individual proposal or matter which directly affects the school at which they are a governor, member of staff or which their children attend, or in which they might have a direct pecuniary interest.

7. Clerk of the Forum

The Admission Forum will be clerked by a representative of the Local Authority's Pupil Admissions Team.

8. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Core members must elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman at the first annual meeting of the Admissions Forum by a majority of votes cast by core members. Where possible, the chair and vice chair should not be drawn from the same membership group unless this is unavoidable. The term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair is one year. However, in keeping with the principle of representation and influence from the widest possible category of members, it is anticipated that the chair and vice-chair will be drawn from a different representative group each year.

When electing a Chairman and Vice-Chairman, those members nominated for office will be asked to withdraw and a secret ballot taken where appropriate. In the event of there being the same number of votes for two or more candidates a second ballot will be taken. If the voting remains the same a coin will be tossed.

A chair or vice chair will cease to hold office if they resign by giving notice to the Clerk of the Admission Forum, or if they cease to be a member of the Forum. Where a casual vacancy arises there will be a vote at the next meeting of the Forum.

The Officer representing the Local Authority on the forum is not permitted to stand for election as chair/vice chair, or vote in the elections

9. Role of the Chair

The Chair or, in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair, will have the following role:-

- (a) to preside over meetings of the Admission Forum so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of members and the interests of parents, schools, admission authorities and the community;
- (b) to ensure that meetings provide an opportunity for the debate of matters of concern to parents, schools, admission authorities and the community;
- (c) overseeing preparations of the record of the meeting, liaising with the LA Officers and the Clerk on the agenda for forthcoming meetings

10. Quorum

The quorum for the Admissions Forum is 7 core members.

11. Meetings and Proceedings

The Forum normally meets between 4 and 5 times a year during term-time. Members decide the time and location of meetings, but meetings take place during the day. Meetings of the Forum are held in private.

The Clerk will ensure that meetings of the Forum are convened by giving a minimum of 5 working days' notice in advance of the meetings, with a full agenda. Forum members will need to avail themselves of the time to read the agenda and accompanying papers and can expect each meeting to last for up to two hours.

Forum members are required to declare any pecuniary or other interest they might have that is greater than the interests of other members of the Forum in any matter on the agenda for discussion.

12. Publication and Circulation of Meeting Minutes

The minutes of Forum meetings will be published on the Tower Hamlets website. Members of the Forum are free to circulate copies within the bodies they represent. The Forum's Agendas and Minutes are included on the LA's Publication List required under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Additional Information

The Forum will undertake the following programme of work in the 2013/14 school year.

- Give its views on the LA's Consultation on School Admission Arrangements
- Give its views on the Consultations of School Admission Arrangements for own admission authority schools
- Monitor and review the LA's co-ordinated admissions schemes
- Monitor the Local Authority's arrangements for the planning and provision of school places
- Review advice for parents and schools on deferring primary school entry
- Review the LA's Admission brochures
- Monitor and Review the LA's Fair Access Protocol