

6th February 2017



Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School

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Acting Head **Mrs C Y Gammon BSc**

Dear Parent or Carer,

QEGS Admissions Policy Consultation

Thank you for taking the trouble to respond to the consultation on our admissions policy. The Governing Board has considered all responses received very carefully, as well as reflecting on the application and admissions information from the first three years since the establishment of the free school. From the outset we were keen to provide a clear and fair system of admission to the school.

The consultation resulted in responses from 20 people including both parents of one family. All responses related to the current preferential admissions rights of siblings. 17 people (16 families) were in favour of retaining these rights and three favoured their removal. Various reasons were given to support the arguments put forward including logistical issues, honouring statements about the nature of the school upon which choices had been based, the benefits of children of a family attending the same school and various aspects of fairness.

QEGS has two main admissions points: Reception and Year 7. In order to ensure that the school serves the region rather than the immediate neighbourhood, places are split between two catchment areas comprising Blackburn-with-Darwen and a wider area of Lancashire. For Year 7 admissions each area is split into 5 ability bands to ensure that children across the whole ability spectrum are admitted. The Board wishes to retain these aspects of its policy and allocates places within each category by a random draw. In some categories all available places have been filled by siblings so it has been impossible for some groups of applicant to obtain a place. Furthermore, in some categories there have been insufficient places for all siblings to be admitted and a draw has been required to ascertain which siblings would be successful.

The Board considers that the preferential sibling rights have resulted in unfairness both for some siblings and for others. The consultation did not alter this fundamental view. It considered possible restrictions of the right but believed that this would make the policy complicated and cumbersome. Reluctantly it has been decided to remove the sibling right so that siblings and non-siblings will have an equal chance in the draw. The chance of any individual being admitted will depend upon demand in the particular category.

We realise that this decision will be a disappointment to many parents. It is for this reason that I have explained at some length the thinking behind the Board's decision. The arrangements will continue to be kept under review so that we can ensure that they are as effective as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C Y Gammon'.

Mrs C Gammon
Acting Head