



Consultation on Proposed Changes to Liverpool College's Admissions Policy from September 2023

Why are we consulting?

The School Admissions Code (2021) requires admission authorities to consult when changes are proposed to admissions arrangements. This process allows stakeholders to raise comments or concerns about the proposed arrangements.

When are we consulting?

The consultation will run from **20 December 2021 – 31 January 2022**.

If you would like a hard copy of the proposal, please contact the school on 0151 724 4000.

How to return your comments

If you would like to comment on any of the proposed changes you can email consultation@liverpoolcollege.org.uk or you can send them in writing to: Miss S Bamber, Principal's PA, Liverpool College, Queens Drive, Liverpool L18 8BG.

All comments must be received by **31 January 2022**.

Following the consultation period, the Governing Body will consider any comments received and how to proceed. Admission arrangements for 2023 will be determined by 28 February 2022.

What changes are being proposed?

Liverpool College is seeking to consult on the elements of our admissions policy where changes have been made. The full proposed admissions arrangements for 2023 are set out on the Admissions Page on the school's website (www.liverpoolcollege.org.uk) and a summary of the proposed changes is outlined below:

A. Year 7 Admission Arrangements (section 5 in draft policy)

I. Removal of the requirement for applicants for Year 7 entry to sit a fair banding test.

Context

Fair Banding is a permitted form of selection that is used to ensure that in our Year 7 intake we have a proportionate spread of children with differing abilities. Banding is used to produce an intake in Year 7 that represents the full range of ability of applicants to Liverpool College. Those who do not sit the test are considered for a place after those who did take the test.

We have held a banding test as part of the Year 7 admission process every year since we became an academy but had to apply for a variation to our admissions policy for 2021 entry to not hold the test due to unique circumstances of the pandemic.

Proposed Change

Applicants for Year 7 entry will no longer be required to sit a fair banding test.

The draft admissions policy reflects this proposed change.

What will be the impact on applicants and parents on removing the banding test?

This proposed change will simplify the application process to the school for parents. To apply for a place, parents will now only have to list the school as one of their preferences on the local authority common application form. There will be no additional requirement to register for the school's banding test. The Year 7 admissions process will therefore likely be more straightforward and easier to understand for parents.

Parents and applicants are not disadvantaged by removing the banding test as how an applicant performs in the banding test bears no real relation to whether they are allocated a place or not. The banding test is not something an applicant passes or fails and places are not allocated on the basis of how an applicant does in the banding test. Rather the result in the test is used to place applicants in one of five ability bands and then the oversubscription criteria described in our admissions policy and below is used to allocate places within each of the bands:

Places are allocated based on our oversubscription criteria which gives highest priority to children who are looked after and previously looked after children, followed by siblings, staff children and then remaining places are allocated by random allocation (to those within 2 miles of the school and those 2 miles and beyond). There are also places awarded on the basis of music aptitude. The for placement of pupils whose EHCP names the school is through a different system.

(The oversubscription criteria for Year 7 remains unchanged and responses are not sought on it.)

While the banding test is a major administrative and logistical operation for the school due to the number of applicants we receive, it is important to note that for applicants and their parents it makes little difference to their chances of obtaining a place at the school. The removal of the banding test requirement therefore only represents a minimal change to our admissions arrangements for applicants and if anything will simplify the application process.

This change also means the process for Year 7 admissions will match that of applicants for a Reception place.

What may happen if we didn't remove the banding test requirement?

Liverpool College remains the most oversubscribed school in Merseyside at secondary (and primary) level. We anticipate that we will continue to have this extremely high level of applications.

An analysis of recent admissions data shows that we have reached a stage where the number of applicants in each band is much greater than the actual number of places available to be allocated from the band. This means that it is increasingly likely that some bands will have no places left to be allocated by random allocation and even some applicants who would be considered under a higher oversubscription criterion (eg. siblings) will end up missing out on a place.

The continuing use of the banding test in the context of extremely large numbers of applications could lead to families who would anticipate being highly likely to achieve a place (as they would be considered under a high oversubscription criterion) 'losing out' due to the banding system.

What will the impact be on the cohort admitted?

The school believes we can ensure the continuation of its comprehensive intake in Year 7 and a proportionate spread of abilities without the use of fair banding. This is because we attract such large numbers of applicants and from a wide geographical area and from many different primary schools across the city and neighbouring local authorities.

The design of our oversubscription criteria, particularly the fact we do not include distance from the school and there are no feeder primary schools for external candidates, means we can anticipate a continuing diverse geographical intake.

It is therefore reasonable to anticipate that our intake would continue to represent a broad cross section of ability.

The one year of data from when we did not hold a banding test due to covid restrictions, while not offering definite evidence, would suggest that the intake would continue to have a proportionate spread of children with differing abilities

No other changes are proposed for Year 7 admission arrangements.