

DETERMINATION

Case reference: VAR/000582

Admission Authority: Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, Liverpool

Date of decision: 13 August 2012

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variation to the admission arrangements determined by the Governing Body of Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School.

I determine that for admissions in September 2013 the admissions criteria for Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School shall name partner schools and remove references to attendance at schools other than partner schools and that a supplementary information form to assess priority against faith based oversubscription criteria shall be introduced.

The referral

1. The Governing Body of Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School has referred a variation to the Adjudicator about the admission arrangements for Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School (the School) a voluntary aided secondary school for boys, for September 2013. The School wishes to name partner schools and to remove references to a child's attendance at schools other than partner schools. It also wishes to introduce a supplementary information form to assess priority against faith based oversubscription criteria. It believes that these changes will clarify the criteria and ensure that the arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code (the Code).

Jurisdiction

2. The referral was made to me in accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) which states that:

“where an admission authority (a) have in accordance with section 88C determined the admission arrangements which are to apply for a particular school year, but (b) at any time before the end of that year consider that the arrangements should be varied in view of a major change in circumstances occurring since they were so determined, the authority must [except in a case where the authority's proposed variations fall within any description of variations prescribed for the purposes of this section] (a) refer their proposed variations to the adjudicator, and (b) notify the appropriate bodies of the

proposed variations”.

3. I am satisfied that the proposed variation is within my jurisdiction.

Procedure

4. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation, guidance and the Code.

The documents I have considered in reaching my decision include:

the Chair of Governors’ letter of referral of 18 June 2012 and supporting documents;

the determined arrangements for the School and the proposed variation to those arrangements;

a copy of Liverpool Local Authority’s (the LA) booklet for parents seeking admission to schools in the area in September 2012 ;

a copy of the letter notifying the appropriate bodies about the proposed variation; and

an email from the Council supporting the proposed variation.

Consideration of Factors

5. There has been a change in circumstances that has led the School to request this variation. The School has recently had a number of appeals for admission for September 2012 places and the appeals panel has identified some problems with a number of the existing criteria. These criteria contravene 1.9(l) of the new Code, which says that admission arrangements must not take in to account any previous schools attended, unless they are named feeder schools.

6. The School’s admission arrangements for September 2013 have already been submitted to the Council for inclusion in the composite prospectus, using the existing criteria. They now wish to amend them to eliminate contraventions and increase clarity before they are published by the LA in the composite prospectus for admissions in 2013.

7. The existing admissions criteria are as follows:

- “1) Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children
- 2) Baptised Catholic children living in the designated Parish(es) named in 4) overleaf and attending a partner school.
 - St Oswald’s
 - St Sebastian’s
- 3) Children who have a brother or a sister at the school at the time of

likely admission. This includes full, half or stepbrothers and sisters, adopted and foster brothers and sisters who are living at the same address and are part of the same family unit.

- 4) Baptised Catholic children living in the designated Parish(es) named in 4) overleaf but attending a Catholic school other than a partner school.
- 5) Baptised Catholic children attending partner schools but outside the designated Parish areas.
- 6) Baptised Catholic children living in other Parishes who attend Catholic schools other than partner schools.
- 7) Baptised Catholic children living in the designated Parish(es) named in 4) overleaf but attending a non-Catholic school.
- 8) Baptised Catholic children living in other Parishes who attend non Catholic schools.
- 9) If after considering applications made which meet any of the above criteria or a combination of one or more of the same, there remains a shortfall in the planned admissions number, then the Admissions Committee will consider applications made by parents of children who are baptised in other Christian denominations. Proof of baptism in the form of a baptismal certificate or confirmation from an appropriate minister of religion that the applicant is a member of that faith group, is required.
- 10) Children of other faiths. Proof of baptism in the form of a baptismal certificate or confirmation from an appropriate minister of religion that the applicant is a member of that faith group is required.”

8. The proposal is as follows:

- to change the wording of criterion 2 and to list the partner schools
- to remove the word “Catholic” in criterion 4
- to remove the reference to partner schools and “outside designated areas” in criterion 5 and replace it with “living in other parishes”
- to introduce a supplementary information form and to delete criteria 6,7, and 8, as the changes to other criteria render these obsolete.

9. The proposed amended criteria would read:

1. Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children

2) Baptised Catholic children living in the designated Parish(es) named in 4) overleaf and attending a partner school listed below.

- St Paul's
- St Margaret Mary's
- St Cecilia's
- St Cuthbert's
- St Oswald's
- St Sebastian's

3) Children who have a brother or a sister at the school at the time of likely admission. This includes full, half or stepbrothers and sisters, adopted and foster brothers and sisters who are living at the same address and are part of the same family unit.

4) Baptised Catholic children living in the designated Parish(es) named in 4) overleaf but attending a school other than a partner school.

5) Baptised Catholic children living in other parishes.

6) If after considering applications made which meet any of the above criteria or a combination of one or more of the same, there remains a shortfall in the planned admissions number, then the Admissions Committee will consider applications made by parents of children who are baptised in other Christian denominations. Proof of baptism in the form of a baptismal certificate or confirmation from an appropriate minister of religion that the applicant is a member of that faith group, is required.

7) Children of other faiths. Proof of baptism in the form of a baptismal certificate or confirmation from an appropriate minister of religion that the applicant is a member of that faith group, is required.

8) Children whose parents express a preference for a place at the school.

10. In addition to these changes, the School wishes to introduce a supplementary information form. The form in question is compliant with the Code. The proposed changes including the addition of a supplementary faith form would remove the contraventions and make the arrangements clearer for parents.

11. There have been no responses from those notified of the proposed variation. I take this to indicate that there will be no significant impact on other schools. The diocese has been included in correspondence from the Office of

the Schools Adjudicator concerning this proposal but has not chosen to comment.

Conclusion

12. The school is proposing to vary its admission arrangements in the light of problems that have arisen in the 2012 admissions round and contravention of the new Code. This proposal is fully supported by the LA. The proposed variation will remove the contravention and make the admissions criteria simpler and clearer for parents. I therefore support the proposed variation.

Determination

In accordance with section 88E of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I approve the variation to the admission arrangements determined by the Governing Body of Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School.

I determine that for admissions in September 2013, the admissions criteria shall name partner schools and remove references to attendance at schools other than partner schools and that a supplementary information form to assess priority against faith based oversubscription criteria shall be introduced.

Dated: 13 August 2012

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Mrs Janet Mokades