



Proposal to Establish
Menorah High School for Girls
as a Voluntary Aided School

Contact Details

1. The name of the proposer or proposers and a contact address.

The Trustees and Governors of Menorah High School for Girls
105 Brook Road
Dollis Hill
London NW2 7BZ

governors@menorahhigh.com

The proposal is being sent to the decision maker, the London Borough of Barnet, who will review this along with supporting evidence.

Implementation

2. The date on which it is proposed that the school be opened or, where it is proposed that the opening be implemented in stages, the dates of and information about each stage.

It is proposed that the new school be opened on 1 January 2016. As it has been an independent school for 14 years and is rated Good by Ofsted, it is proposed that the opening be implemented in one stage.

3. Where the proposals are to establish a voluntary, foundation or foundation special school, a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local authority or by the proposers, and if the proposals are to be implemented by both, (a) a statement as to the extent that they are to be implemented by each body, and (b) a statement as to the extent to which the capital costs of implementation are to be met by each body.

- (a) The proposals are to be fully implemented by the proposers themselves and
- (b) The capital costs of the implementation are to be met fully by the proposers.

Reasons for the new school

4. A statement explaining the reason why the new school is considered necessary and whether it is to replace an existing school or schools.

Our objective is for the existing girls' school, Menorah High School for Girls at 105 Brook Road, Dollis Hill, London NW2 7BZ to enter the maintained sector by becoming a Voluntary Aided secondary school. Menorah High School for Girls caters for 250 children aged between 11 and 18. 99.6% of current pupils are London Borough of Barnet residents. The school opened in 2001 and since then, has educated London Borough of Barnet children, being located in the London Borough of Brent only because of the inability to find a site in London Borough of Barnet.

In response to a shortage of secondary school provision for strictly orthodox Jewish families in the London Borough of Barnet area, Menorah High School for Girls was opened in 2001 by a group of concerned parents who were not able to secure school places for their children in any strictly orthodox independent or maintained Jewish secondary school in the London Borough of Barnet or the neighbouring local authorities.

School places in orthodox Jewish secondary schools in the London Borough of Barnet and neighbouring authorities have, for some years, been stretched to their limit. Local demand is expected to continue to increase due to the ongoing growth of the strictly orthodox Jewish community in the London Borough of Barnet.

At present, there are many pupils who attend the independent Menorah High School for Girls because of the shortage of suitable places within the maintained sector. Menorah High School for Girls itself has been oversubscribed for the last 4 years, with 40% of the September 2015 Year 7 intake being siblings of older girls.

The new proposed school will replace the existing Menorah High School for Girls independent school. It will provide access to a Jewish and secular education within the maintained sector for strictly orthodox Jewish girls who live in London Borough of Barnet. This is in response to considerable demand for such education within the London Borough of Barnet and neighbouring authorities. The intention is to enhance the quality of education currently provided to pupils at the existing independent school, Menorah High School for Girls, and to increase the diversity of provision within London Borough of Barnet's maintained sector to better reflect the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of its population.

Category

5. The category of school that it is proposed be established (a foundation or foundation special school and, if so, whether it is to have a foundation, a voluntary school, a community or community special school, or a local authority maintained nursery school) and, if required by section 10, a statement that the Secretary of State's consent has been obtained to publish the proposals.

It is proposed that the new school will be voluntary aided. It was not necessary to gain the Secretary of State's consent to publish the proposal.

Ethos and Religious Character

6. A short statement setting out the proposed ethos of the school, including details of any educational philosophy, which it is proposed that the school will adhere to.

Menorah High School for Girls is a school with a Charedi (strictly orthodox) Jewish religious designation which meets the needs of strictly orthodox Jewish families who desire a strictly orthodox Jewish education for their daughters. The school aims to instil in its students a firm foundation that will prepare them for a life of committed Torah observance. The school seeks to provide a broad and balanced education based on Torah values combined with the National Curriculum.

The school aims to enable its students to become outstanding citizens within the Jewish and wider community. The school will develop the girls' abilities to a level such that on graduation they will be able to enter a Seminary, and subsequently further educational institutions of their choice in this country or abroad.

The Menorah High School for Girls commitment is to empower its students to achieve academic and personal excellence, combined with a positive understanding and

adherence to all aspects of orthodox Jewish practice, through the provision of a nurturing, dynamic educational framework.

7. If it is proposed that the school is to have a religious character, confirmation of the religion or religious denomination in accordance with whose tenets religious education will, or may be required to be provided at the school; and a statement that the proposers intend to ask the Secretary of State to designate the school as a school with such a religious character.

The school will have a Strictly Orthodox Jewish religious character. The proposer intends to ask the Secretary of State to designate the school as a school with such a religious character.

8. Where it is proposed that the school—

- (a) has a religious character, evidence of the demand in the area for education in accordance with the tenets of the religion; or
- (b) adheres to a particular philosophy, evidence of the demand for education in accordance with that philosophy that is not already met in other maintained schools or academies in the area.

(a) The strictly orthodox Jewish community in the London Borough of Barnet and neighbouring local authorities has grown significantly over the last 10 years. There are only 330 newly available *maintained* year 7 places each year) in Barnet secondary Jewish Schools. 150 of these are available in an Orthodox school. This category urgently needs greater accommodation by the state sector which can be provided by the successful entrance to the maintained sector of Menorah High School for Girls.

Pupil numbers and admissions

9. The numbers (distinguishing between compulsory and non-compulsory school age pupils), age range, sex, and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is to be made at the school.

The new school will cater for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 and provide places for 220 girls. The admission number for the school on the opening date will be 44. The school will also establish a sixth form and the admission number on the opening date will be 37.

Admission Arrangements

10. Except in relation to proposals for special schools, the proposed admission arrangements and over-subscription criteria for the new school including, where the school is proposed to be a foundation or voluntary school which is to have a religious character—

- (a) the extent to which priority for places is proposed to be given to children of the

school's religion or religious denomination; and
(b) the extent, if any, to which priority is to be given to children of other religions or religious denominations or to children having no religion or religious denomination.

As a faith school, and in accordance with the School Admissions Code, if the School is oversubscribed it prioritises Charedi girls (strictly orthodox Jewish girls). In order for an application to be prioritised within the admissions criteria on the grounds of Charedi (strictly orthodox) Jewish faith, parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit a supplementary information form (SIF) proving their commitment to specific articles of Charedi practice, answering specific questions. Siblings of existing pupils will also have to fill in a supplementary information form. Confirmation of the above will be required from the Rabbi of the synagogue which the parents attend or from a Charedi Rabbi who is well acquainted with and knows the family.

Where applications for admission of children exceed the number of places available, girls will be prioritised on the basis of the following criteria in the order set out below:

- a. Charedi Jewish girls who are 'looked after' or were previously 'looked after' as defined by the Schools Admissions Code.
- b. Charedi Jewish girls with medical or social grounds for admission to this school in particular. Supporting evidence from a suitably qualified professional will be required.
- c. Charedi Jewish girls with sisters at the School at the time of application. A sister must live permanently at the same address as the child for whom the application is being made. This includes half-sisters, stepsisters and foster sisters who live permanently as a family unit at the same address.
- d. Other Charedi Jewish girls
- e. Other girls who are 'looked after' children or previously 'looked after' children in public care
- f. Other girls

Where the school is named in a girl's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational Needs, that girl will be admitted to the school and will be counted against the admission number.

The admissions criteria has been scrutinised by officials at the London Borough of Barnet and complies with the School Admissions Code. The full admissions criteria for the school can be found at Annex A.

Early Years Provision

11. Where the proposals are to include provision for pupils aged two to five—
(a) details of how the early years provision will be organised, including the number of full-time and part-time pupils, the number of places, the number and length of sessions in each week, and the services for disabled children that will be offered;
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(b) how the school will integrate the early years provision with childcare services, and how the proposals for the establishment of the school are consistent with the integration of early years provision with childcare;

- (c) evidence of parental demand for additional provision of early years provision;
- (d) assessment of capacity, quality and sustainability of provision in schools, and in settings outside of the maintained school sector which deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage within three miles of the school; and
- (e) the reasons why schools and settings outside the maintained school sector which deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage within three miles of the school and which have spare capacity, cannot make provision for any forecast increase in the numbers of such children.

Not applicable

Sixth Form Arrangements

12. Where it is proposed that the school will provide sixth form education, how for 16 to 19 year olds in the area the proposals will—
- (a) improve the educational or training achievements;
 - (b) increase participation in education or training; and
 - (c) expand the range of educational or training opportunities available to them.

The school will:

- (a) provide educational opportunities at least on a par with the sixth forms of Jewish secondary schools in surrounding areas;
- (b) Increase participation among local Jewish young people in post-16 education;
- (c) Increase the choice and diversity of post-16 education available to local young people, particularly those from strictly orthodox families who would like to spend their entire school career within local strictly orthodox schools.

Special educational needs provision

13. Whether the school will have provision that is recognised by the local authority as reserved for children with special educational needs and, if so, the nature of such provision.

The school will adopt an inclusive approach to all children with SEN and disabilities but will not offer any specific reserved provision.

14. Details of the proposed policy of the school relating to the education of pupils with special educational needs.

Menorah High School for Girls will offer learning and behaviour support to mainstream school pupils identified as having special educational needs. Appropriate provision will be made at Wave 1 (The whole class level) through differentiation, at Wave 2 through small focussed groups, and through Wave 3 which provides individualised highly personalised interventions. This, of course, includes provision for pupils with education health care plans.

Further detail can be found in the full SEN policy which is at Annex B.

15. Where the school will replace existing educational provision for children with special educational needs—

(a) a statement on how the proposer believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements

in the standard, quality and range of educational provision for these children;

(b) details of the improvements that the proposals will bring in respect of—

(i) access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment with reference to the local authority's Accessibility Strategy;

(ii) access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support or outreach services;

(iii) access to suitable accommodation; and

(iv) supply of suitable places.

Whilst the school is not exclusively a special school, it will provide:

(i) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment;

(ii) improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and/or outreach services;

(iii) improved access to suitable accommodation; and

(iv) an improved supply of suitable places.

Single Sex School

16. Where the school is to admit pupils of a single sex—

(a) evidence of local demand for single sex education and how this will be met if the proposals are approved; and

(b) a statement giving details of the likely effect the new school will have on the balance of provision of single sex education in the area.

(a) The local strictly Orthodox Jewish community have a strong preference for single sex education as evidenced by the existing number of single sex Jewish schools, the vast majority of which are independent

(b) Whilst the new school will create approximately 220 state funded school places for girls, the school plans to federate with Menorah Grammar School for Boys and assist them to enter the state funded system, which will create a balance of places which would appeal to the growing strictly orthodox Jewish community (see question 22 for more details).

17. Confirmation that the school will meet the general requirements in relation to the curriculum contained in section 78 of EA 2002 and an outline of any provision that will be in addition to the basic curriculum required by section 80 of EA 2002, in particular any 14-19 vocational education.

The new school will meet the general requirements in relation to the curriculum contained in section 78 of the Education Act 2002. In addition, the opportunities presented by of the school will enable the development of new, innovative and creative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

The school will be teaching a timetable with 60% secular studies (National Curriculum) and 40% Jewish studies.

In addition to the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum subjects and a full range of GCSE subjects, PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) will be integrated into many areas of the curriculum, including form time and the Jewish Studies programme.

The school prioritises cross-curricular links in order to maximise the effectiveness of teaching time and increase the relevance of the children's learning.

The School's 14-19 provision will encompass a range of A level subjects and vocational courses, combined with a challenging Jewish Studies programme.

Relevant experience of Proposers

18. Evidence of any relevant experience in education held by the proposers including details of any involvement in the improvement of standards in education.

Menorah High School for Girls has sought to recruit individuals to its trustee and governing body who have experience within the field of secondary education or voluntary work for non-profit organisations. Current experience includes:

- A governor of the school who has served for 14 years since founding the school. Has also served as a governor of an integrated nursery for children with and without special educational needs.
- A second governor of the school who has served for 14 years since founding the school, and is now currently serving as the chair of governors. Has also served a member of a wider body of school governors.
- A governor of the school who is a chartered accountant and is also a trustee of an education charity
- A governor of the school who heads the finance committee and has done so for the past 5 years. Chair of trustees and founder of a charity which provides numerous courses and assistance into employment for over 2,000 people every year. Trustee of an education charity.

Effects on standards and contributions to school improvements

19. Information and supporting evidence on—
(a) how the school will contribute to enhancing the diversity and quality of education in the area; and
(b) how the school will contribute to school improvement.

a) The proposed school will increase parental choice and diversity of provision by increasing the maintained secondary school options available to Jewish parents in the London Borough of Barnet and surrounding boroughs. The school will provide access for strictly orthodox Jewish children to Jewish and secular education within the maintained sector, in response to considerable demand for such education in the London Borough of Barnet and neighbouring local authorities. The school will increase the diversity of provision within Barnet's maintained sector to better reflect the religious,

ethnic and cultural diversity of its population. Planned improvements to the school building will enable the school to gradually increase its provision, which will respond to local demand from parents for an increase in school places.

The new school will offer a style of education not widely available in the maintained sector in Barnet. An important focus of this school is the integration of the secular (National Curriculum) and Jewish Studies with the aim of raising achievement and achieving excellence in both.

b) Menorah High School for Girls is already a high performing independent school and was judged *good* by Ofsted at its last inspection. A recent privately commissioned review of the school in May 2015 found it to be *good* with *outstanding* features. The school's most recent GCSE and A level results found it to be well above the national average in terms of progress and outcomes. This is expected to increase once the school has become maintained, receives delegated funding for school improvement activities and has access to challenge and support from the wider partnership of Barnet schools. Planned improvements to the school building will provide improved facilities for pupils and staff which will contribute to improved educational standards.

The school provides a differentiated and personalised curriculum which seeks to meet the needs of individual children. This is thoroughly planned, monitored and reviewed to ensure a high quality in content and delivery. The curriculum is enriched by the offering of extra-curricular activities to nurture pupils' emotional intelligence and create a well balanced "whole child".

Approval of these proposals will contribute to the overall quality of education in the Authority. In particular

- Standards of achievement are currently above the national average and we expect the standards of educational provision to continue to rise in the new secondary school,
- The most recent Ofsted reports for Menorah judged overall effectiveness for the school as *good*.

Whole school ethos, policies and schemes of work will ensure the continuity and progression in the National Curriculum and provide opportunities to improve further teaching and learning and the raising of standards across the secondary age range. Menorah High will work in partnership with other schools to share good practice and learn from their successes within and beyond the curriculum.

Location and Costs

20. A statement about—

(a) the area or particular community or communities which the new school is expected to serve;

(b) the location of the site or sites including, where appropriate, the postal address or addresses;

(c) the current ownership and tenure (freehold or leasehold) on which the site will be held, and if the site is to be held on a lease, details of the proposed lease;

(d) whether the site is currently used for the purposes of another school and if so why the site will no longer be required by the other school;

(e) the estimated capital costs of providing the site and how those costs will be met (including the extent to which the costs are to be met by the proposers and the local authority) and how the proposers intend to fund their share of the costs of implementing

the proposals (if any);

(f) whether planning permission is needed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and when it is anticipated that it will be obtained;

(g) confirmation from the Secretary of State or local authority (as the case may be) that funds will be made available (including costs to cover any necessary site purchase).

(a) This site is in the London Borough of Brent but is only there because a suitable site in the London Borough of Barnet could not be found. The school will serve primarily the strictly orthodox Jewish community of Barnet, but may attract strictly Orthodox families with girls from neighbouring Boroughs.

(b) The school will occupy a single site. The permanent school will be located at 105 Brook Road, Dollis Hill, London NW2 7BZ.

(c) The freehold of the permanent site is currently owned by Shemen Limited and is made available to the Menorah High School for Girls Trust. The current building on the site has been refurbished in recent years, and will continue to be refurbished in order for it to remain in good condition.

(d) The site is currently used for the independent school, which will become the voluntary aided school.

(e) The estimated ongoing costs of maintaining and improving the school premises are likely to be in the region of £50,000 to £75,000 p.a. for the next three years. The costs of this will be met by an independent charitable trust. Full details of this arrangement have been sent to the London Borough of Barnet including a premises development plan.

(f) Planning permission is not currently required for any of the school's proposed works in its current premises development plan

(g) No funding will be required from the Secretary of State or the Local Authority for premise works.

Travel

21. The proposed arrangements for travel of pupils to the school.

In accordance with its planning consent, the school has developed a School Travel Plan. Its aim is to maximise the use by pupils and teachers of public transport and walking and to significantly minimise private car use. Car sharing is encouraged where possible.

Federation

22. Details of any proposals for the school to be established as a federated school.

The school is currently working with Menorah Grammar School for Boys located in Abbots Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 0QS in the London Borough of Barnet, as partners with plans to form a federation based in the London Borough of Barnet at the boys' school. A key element of the proposed federation involves the schools working in partnership to support each other's development. It is hoped that by gaining Voluntary Aided status, the proposed new Menorah High School for Girls can support Menorah Grammar School for Boys in its development, including gaining Voluntary Aided status in London Borough of Barnet in due course. This would ensure new state funded places for both boys and girls within London Borough of Barnet.

Voluntary aided schools

23. Where the school is to be a voluntary aided school—

- (a) details of the trusts on which the site is to be held; and
- (b) confirmation that the governing body will be able and willing to carry out their obligations under Schedule 3 to SSFA 1998.1

- a) The permanent site will be wholly owned by the Menorah High School for Girls Trust which is making the site available to Menorah High School for Girls.
- b) The governing body is able and willing to carry out its obligations under Schedule 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Foundation Schools

24. Where the school is to be a foundation or foundation special school, confirmation as to—

- (a) whether it will have a foundation and if so, the name or proposed name of the foundation
- (b) the rationale for the foundation and the particular ethos that it will bring to the school;
- (c) the details of membership of the foundation, including the names of the members;
- (d) the proposed constitution of the governing body; and
- (e) details of the foundation's charitable objects

Not applicable

Independent schools entering the maintained sector

25. Where a school is an independent school entering the maintained sector-

- (a) a statement that the requirements of section 11(3) are met;
- (b) a statement as to whether the premises will meet the requirements of the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 and, if not,
 - (i) details of how the premises are deficient; and
 - (ii) details of how it is intended to remedy the deficiency

- (a) The requirements of section 11 (3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 are met.
- (b) The purpose built premises are fully compliant and functional for the school's use. A recent report has identified a number of ongoing repairs / improvements which has been incorporated in to a Planned Maintenance Program, the cost of which is contained in 20 (e). The London Borough of Barnet has full details of this plan, including a full building survey.

Consultation

26. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—

- a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

a) The complete list of those consulted includes the following:

- Staff members of the school
- Parents of students of Menorah High School for Girls
- Chairs of governors of maintained primary schools in the London Borough of Barnet (89 schools)
- Chairs of governors of all maintained secondary schools in the London Borough of Barnet (25 schools)
- Chair of governors of all Jewish maintained and independent primary and secondary schools in the London Borough of Barnet and neighbouring local authorities
- Trade Unions who may represent staff at the existing independent school and who also represent staff at other schools who may be affected by the proposal
- Ward councillors in which the school is located
- The London Borough of Barnet Director of Children's Services and the Director of Adults and Communities
- The London Borough of Brent education team
- A range of Jewish organisations: Chief Rabbi's office, Board of Deputies; Jewish Leadership Council; Partnerships for Jewish Schools; National Association of Jewish Orthodox Schools; United Synagogue
- MPs for Hendon, Finchley & Golders Green and Brent Central
- Councillors for Dollis Hill Ward
- Members of Cabinet
- London Borough of Barnet officers

b) Three meetings were held:

The first was a meeting with parents of pupils of Menorah High School for Girls who were very pleased to hear that the school would be applying to become a Voluntary Aided School and asked questions about what the implications would be. Minutes can be found at Annex C.

The second meeting was open to the public and details were distributed with the consultation letter of 23 June 2015. Three people attended the meeting and a presentation about the proposal was given by the Chair of Governors. Governors and trustees led a tour of the site. Attendees were positive with the proposal and posed some questions about why the school wanted to become Voluntary Aided. Full minutes of this meeting can be found at Annex D.

The third meeting was for staff of the school who were also very pleased about the school's proposal to apply for Voluntary Aided Status, and asked questions about salaries and conditions. Minutes can be found at Annex E.

c) The consultation included a survey by which responses could be given. 106 responses to the survey were received with 92% indicating they agreed with the proposals and 82% strongly agreeing. Out of the remaining 8%, two respondents claimed to disagree but wrote supporting statements. Two respondents raised concerns over changes to school policy as a result of becoming voluntary aided, whilst the final comment was inflammatory and factually incorrect. In addition to the survey, six letters of support were received from parents, two primary schools and one other orthodox school. The proposers were encouraged by this level of support.

d) Copies of the consultation documents are at Annex F. These were made available by email and on the school's website.