



Nursery Admissions Code

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1. Introduction

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) is a multi-academy trust with a faith designation and a Christian religious ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive. Distinctive in the sense that all decisions about the nature and purpose of the Academy are taken through the lens of Christian values, inclusive in the sense that all students and staff are equally valued for their uniqueness in the eyes of God and their belonging to the school community.

2. Ethos statement

Vision

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) shares the Church of England's Vision for Education 2016, "Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good", which includes four basic elements wisdom, hope, community and dignity. We aim to deliver values-led education with the very best outcomes for children and young people.

Purpose

To provide high quality education enabling young people to flourish and grow: spiritually, in love and in understanding.

3. Scope/ aims

DBAT, as admission authority, is responsible for admissions for all nurseries and preschools within the Trust and will act in accordance with relevant human rights and equalities legislation.

This document describes the overarching principles of how admissions are determined for DBAT nurseries and preschools.

- 3.1 The Trust is the overarching admissions authority and will determine the admission arrangements for each nursery.
- 3.2 The information in this Code applies equally to all DBAT nurseries and preschools.

4. Overall principles behind setting arrangements

- 4.1 In drawing up their admissions arrangements, DBAT will ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of nursery places are fair, clear and objective.
- 4.2 All nurseries must have admissions arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the nursery.
- 4.3 Nursery admission policies will be reviewed annually.
- 4.4 Once arrangements have been agreed, they must be published on the school and Trust websites.

5. Numbers of available places

- 5.1 Board of Trustees must consider all changes to the number of places available at a DBAT nursery.
- 5.2 The numbers and ages of children admitted to the nursery must comply with the legal space requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

6. Essential elements of an admissions policy

6.1 Nursery admissions policies should include:

- The age range of the nursery
- The number of places at the nursery
- The sessions offered
- Any charges (e.g. for additional hours)
- An explanation of how applications should be made, a copy of the application form and the closing date for applications
- The date when parents will hear whether their application has been successful
- A commitment to accepting all children who apply if there are places available
- Acceptance of the nursery's obligation to take children with statements of special educational need or Education and Health Care plans that name the nursery
- Recognition that priority will be given to looked after or previously looked after children
- A set of oversubscription criteria which are reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation, and are in keeping with the school's Christian principles
- A tiebreaker to show children who meet each particular criteria can be put in order of priority
- Arrangements for parents to make an appeal if their application is not accepted

6.2 Nurseries must make it clear that a place in the nursery does not guarantee a place in the reception class of the school.

7. Oversubscription criteria

7.1 Oversubscription criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. DBAT will ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs, and that other policies around school uniform or school trips do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child.

7.2 Admissions arrangements must include an effective, clear and fair tiebreaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated.

7.3 All oversubscription criteria must be clearly explained, such as:

7.3.1 **Siblings:** clear definition of what is meant by 'sibling' (e.g. whether this includes step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address or siblings who are former pupils of the school).

7.3.2 **Distance:** clear definition of how distance from home and school in the arrangements will be measured, including how the 'home' address will be determined and the point in the school from which all distances will be measured. This should also include provision for cases where parents have shared responsibility for a child following the breakdown of their relationship and child lives for part of the week with each parent.

- 7.3.3 **Catchment areas:** must be designed so that they are reasonable and clearly defined.
 - 7.3.4 **Social and medical need:** clear definition of how the need will be defined and what supporting evidence will be required.
 - 7.3.5 **Children of staff at the school:** clear definition of who is eligible and should be in line with the DfE's Schools Admissions code, paragraph 1.39.
 - 7.3.6 **Children eligible for pupil premium, early years premium or service premium:** clear definition of who is eligible and should be in line with the DfE's Schools Admissions code, paragraph 1.40 to 1.41.
- 7.4 Faith is not recommended as an oversubscription criterion for nursery admission policies.

8. Allocating places

- 8.1 Following the agreed closing date, if oversubscribed, the Head and senior administrator at the nursery will rank applications according to their determined oversubscription criteria.
- 8.2 High-level detail of the ranked list will be shared with Academy Council members. Academy Council members are responsible for assuring themselves that the correct oversubscription criteria have been fairly and consistently applied. The Academy Council will in turn report high-level numbers and assurance of the process to the Board of Trustees.
- 8.3 A decision to offer or refuse admission must not be made by one individual in an admission authority; this must be done by the whole governing body, or an admissions committee established by the governing body.
- 8.4 The admission authority must keep a clear record of any decisions on applications, including in-year applications.

9. Waiting lists

- 9.1 Nurseries will need to consider if and how they operate waiting lists. Details of this should be included in admission arrangements.

10. Appeals

- 10.1 As nursery provision is non-statutory, the school's decision will be final. There is no formal right of appeal. However, the Academy Council should establish a group to consider any concerns expressed by parents regarding the allocation of places. If they agree that a child should have been offered a place then the child should be offered the next available place.
- 10.2 Schools must publish on their website information for parents setting out how they can appeal if their application for a place has been unsuccessful.

11. Roles and responsibilities

Board of Trustees:

- Determine the admissions arrangements for nurseries in the Trust and, with reference to this code, set these out in a policy
- Receive pupil number reports from Education team

Academy Councils:

- Determine the oversubscription criteria for their nursery
- Ensure admissions arrangements are published on their websites
- Ensure the process is fair
- Receive pupil number reports and waiting list updates from Head

Heads

- Post all information relating to admissions arrangements on school website
- Share all information relating to admissions with Trust Administrator and Academy Council in a timely manner
- Responsible for ranking all applications received in line with the criteria in the policy

Clerk to Board of Trustees

- Ensure policies are approved within the correct timescales

Clerks

- Ensure oversubscription criteria are considered by Academy Councils within the correct timescales
- Inform Trustees of any changes to oversubscription criteria
- Receive and forward consultation feedback

Trust Administrator

- Circulate policies to relevant parties within the Trust

12. Our Ethos and Values

As identified at the opening of this policy, our structure and approach here is underpinned by our Christian ethos and values, focused on an ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive.

In our adoption and subsequent adaptation of this policy we have asked ourselves two clear questions: “Is this policy and practice underpinned by our vision and values?” and “What is the impact of our vision and values on those subject to the policy?”. This is a key focus of our ongoing development of policy and practice.

History of most recent policy changes and review period

Date	Page	Change(s) made	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation)
June 2017	Whole document	Admissions Code developed for use by Academies in drawing up their nursery class admissions policy	Clare Stansfield
Feb 2023	Whole document	Whole document	In line with new DfE School Admissions Code and to reflect Scheme of Delegation
June 2024	Front page	Removed registered address	Update registered address
Sept 2024	Pg 1 and 3	Remove references to Education committee	

Policy Owner	Education Directorate
Policy Approved by	Education Committee
Date Adopted	June 2023
Date Reviewed	September 2024
Next review date	1 year
Level	Level 1
DBAT Policy levels:	
LEVEL 1	DBAT policy for adoption (no changes can be made by the Academy Council; the Academy Council must adopt the policy)
LEVEL 2	DBAT policy for adoption and local approval, with areas for the Academy to update regarding local practice (the main body of the policy cannot be changed)
LEVEL 3	DBAT model policy that the Academy can adopt if it wishes
LEVEL 4	Local policy to be approved by the Academy Council