



## 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 schools within the Trust, and will act in accordance with the DfE School Admissions Code, the School Admissions Appeals Code, other laws relating to admissions, and relevant human rights and equalities legislation.

This document describes the overarching principles of how admissions are determined for DBAT schools.

- 3.1 The Trust is the overarching admissions authority and will determine the admission arrangements for each school.
- 3.2 This document must be read in conjunction with the Diocese of Bristol Board of Education Advice on Admissions and the current edition of the DfE's Schools Admissions Code.

## 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 school places are fair, clear and objective.
- 4.2 All schools 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 school.
- 4.3 DBAT will determine admission arrangements, including PAN, every year by 28<sup>th</sup> February in the determination year.
- 4.4 The 'determination year' is always the school year a year before the September admission, so for admission in 2025, determination must take place in 2023-2024.
- 4.5 Once arrangements have been agreed, they must be published on the school and Trust websites by 15<sup>th</sup> March of the determination year.
- 4.6 Copies must also be sent to the Diocese and the Local Authority by 15<sup>th</sup> March of the determination year.

## 5. Published Admission Number (PAN)

- 5.1 DBAT Trustees must consider all changes to PAN.
- 5.2 DBAT is not required to consult on PAN where the proposal is to increase or keep the same PAN.
- 5.3 DBAT must publicly consult any proposed decreases to PAN.
- 5.4 DBAT must inform the Local Authority if they have determined a PAN that is higher than in previous years and make specific reference to the change on their website.

## 6. Essential elements of an admissions policy

- 6.1 To comply with the Schools Admissions Code, admissions policies must include:
  - The Published Admission Number (PAN) for the age group or age groups at which children normally be admitted to the school
  - An explanation of how applications should be made
  - A commitment to accept all children who apply if there are places for them
  - Acceptance of the school's obligation to take children with statements of special educational need or Education and Health Care plans that name the school
  - 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 to keep a waiting list until at least 31<sup>st</sup> December following the September of admission
  - Arrangements for parents to make an appeal if their application is not accepted

## 7. Oversubscription criteria

- 7.1 Trustees will review the oversubscription criteria available to schools within the Trust on an annual basis.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Oversubscription criteria must be in line with those set out in the DfE's School Admissions Code.

- 7.4 The first oversubscription criterion must always be Looked After, Previously Looked After and Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After children.
- 7.5 Admissions arrangements must include an effective, clear and fair tiebreaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated.
- 7.6 All oversubscription criteria must be clearly explained, such as:
- 7.6.1 **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).
  - 7.6.2 **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.
  - 7.6.3 **Catchment areas:** must be designed so that they are reasonable and clearly defined.
  - 7.6.4 **Social and medical need:** clear definition of how the need will be defined and what supporting evidence will be required.
  - 7.6.5 **Faith-based:** Schools that wish to set aside places for children of the Christian faith and wish to use this as an oversubscription criterion will need to use a Supplementary Information Form (SIF). Please consult paragraphs 1.36 to 1.38 of the Schools Admissions code and Appendices 1 and 3 of the DBE’s advice on admissions.
  - 7.6.6 **Children of staff at the school:** clear definition of who is eligible and must be in line with the DfE’s Schools Admissions code, paragraph 1.39.
  - 7.6.7 **Children eligible for pupil premium, early years premium or service premium:** clear definition of who is eligible and must be in line with the DfE’s Schools Admissions code, paragraph 1.40 to 1.41.

## 8. Consultation

- 8.1 Before any changes are proposed to admissions arrangements, DBAT will first publicly consult on those arrangements (including any supplementary information form) within the timescales and expectations set out in the School Admissions Code.
- 8.2 DBAT will consult with the Diocese about the proposed admissions arrangements before any public consultation.
- 8.3 If DBAT changes its Level 2 policy, all schools in the Trust must go out to public consultation with the groups specified in paragraph 1.47 and in line with the requirements set out in paragraph 1.48 of the DfE School’s Admission Code.
- 8.4 If a school changes its oversubscription criteria, it must go out to public consultation with the groups specified in paragraph 1.47 of the DfE School’s Admission Code and in line with the requirements set out in paragraph 1.48 of the DfE School’s Admission Code.

8.5 Schools are responsible for carrying out any consultations on their admissions arrangements.

8.6 Consultations must last for at least 6 weeks and take place between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> January in the determination year.

8.7 If there have been no changes a school must carry out a consultation on its arrangements at least once every 7 years.

8.8 DBAT will consult with the following parties, in line with the DfE School's Admission Code:

a) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen	The school parental community
b) Other persons in the relevant area* who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions	The Trust position is that all stakeholders <b>directly impacted</b> by the admissions process, within the relevant area, should be consulted with. This relates to point c) and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nursery schools, pre-schools and primary schools</li> <li>- Other educational bodies that may be impacted by the admissions policy (Alternative Provision, SEND bases and SNRB, playgroups etc.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst members of community groups may have a personal vested interest, there are no other groups who would be consulted on this measure related to Admission. The Trust and the school may take into consideration representations at its own discretion, but this would not be part of this consultative group.</p>
c) All other admissions authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools do not need consult secondary schools)	
d) Whichever of the governing body and the local authority is not the admission authority	The Local Authority
e) Any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority	Only applicable to Ridgeway Farm and Lydiard Millicent schools
f) In the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination	The Diocese

\* Relevant area = the area for a school (determined by its local authority and then reviewed every two years) within which the admissions authority for that school must consult all other prescribed schools on its admission arrangements.

8.9 Before starting a consultation process, Heads should review the guidance given in the DfE Admissions Code to ensure all criteria are met.

## 9. Co-ordinated admissions arrangements

9.1 Schools must take part in the co-ordinated admissions arrangements for the normal admissions round organised by their local authority.

## 10. Allocating places

- 10.1 Schools will be given the names of applicants from the co-ordinated admissions process by the local authority.
- 10.2 If oversubscribed, the Head and senior administrator at the school will rank them according to their determined oversubscription criteria.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 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.
- 10.5 The admission authority must keep a clear record of any decisions on applications, including in-year applications.

## 11. Waiting lists

- 11.1 Each school must maintain a clear, fair, and objective waiting list until at least 31st December of each school year of admission, stating that each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria.
- 11.2 Priority must not be given to children based on the date their application was received.
- 11.3 Looked after children or previously looked after children allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over those on a waiting list.
- 11.4 Heads and senior administrators in school will be responsible for reordering the list according to the published oversubscription criteria.
- 11.5 Each time there is a change to the waiting list, the Academy Council must be informed so that it can be assured that the correct oversubscription criteria have been fairly and consistently applied. This information will be supplied in the Head's written report which is shared with Academy Councils three times per year.

- 11.6 Trustees will receive this information as a standing agenda item in their meetings. Central Trust Senior Leadership will also receive this information for their operational planning.

## 12. In-year admissions

- 12.1 Admissions authorities must inform the local authority by 1<sup>st</sup> August at the latest each year whether they intend to be part of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme for the following 1 September to 31 August (where this is offered) or whether they will be managing their own in-year admissions.
- 12.2 Schools must set out by 31<sup>st</sup> August, on the school's website, how in-year applications will be dealt with from 1<sup>st</sup> September until the following 31<sup>st</sup> August. They must set out how parents/ carers can apply for a place, provide the application form (if not part of the in-year co-ordination scheme), set out when parents will be notified of the outcome, and details about the right to appeal. If schools are to be part of the in-year co-ordination scheme, they must provide information on where parents can find details of the scheme.

## 13. Appeals

- 13.1 Schools must publish on their website information for parents setting out how they can appeal if their application for a place has been unsuccessful by 28<sup>th</sup> February each year.
- 13.2 If the parent decides to appeal, then this must be heard by an Independent Appeals Panel.
- 13.3 All DBAT schools will subscribe to the local authority's appeals process.
- 13.4 Appeals must take place in line with the DfE's School Admissions Appeal Code.

## 14. Variations

- 14.1 Once admission arrangements have been determined for a particular school year, they cannot be revised by the admissions authority unless such revision is necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement of the DfE's School Admissions Code, admissions law, a determination of the Schools Adjudicator or any misprint in the admissions arrangements.

## 15. Roles and responsibilities

### Board of Trustees:

- Determine the admissions arrangements for schools in the Trust and, with reference to the Diocesan Guidance and this policy, set these out in a policy
- Review the outcomes of all consultations
- Receive pupil number reports from Education team



### Academy Councils:

- Determine the oversubscription criteria for their school
- Ensure admissions arrangements are published on their websites in line with the DfE timeframes
- Ensure the process is fair and in line with this Admissions Code
- Receive pupil number reports and waiting list updates from Head

### Heads

- Carry out any consultation on admissions arrangements (as delegated responsibility as local agent)
- Respond formally to any issues raised as part of the consultation process
- Post all information relating to admissions arrangements on school website in line with DfE timeframes
- 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

- Collate consultation feedback
- 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
- Advise on consultation requirements
- Receive and forward consultation feedback

### Trust Administrator

- Update policies following feedback from LA, the Diocese and Trustee recommendations
- Circulate policies to relevant parties within the Trust and to external parties
- Ensure Trust website is updated with policies within the timeframe set out by DfE

## 16. 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)
July 2015	Whole document	New document	New document
July 2019	Whole document	Review of document	-
May 2022	Whole document	Whole document	In line with new DfE School Admissions Code and to reflect Scheme of Delegation
May 2023	Whole document	Dates updated	Annual review by Education committee
May 2023	Section 8	Guidance added on who should be part of a consultation process	DBAT CEO
June 2024	Whole document	Remove reference to Education committee	To reflect current governance arrangements
June 2024	Front page	Remove registered address	Updated registered address

Policy Owner	<b>Education Directorate</b>
Policy Approved by	<b>Trustees</b>
Date Adopted	<b>June 2022</b>
Last Review Date	<b>June 2024</b>
Next Review Date	<b>June 2025</b>
Level	<b>Level 1</b>
<i>DBAT Policy levels:</i>	
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