

## Diocesan Board of Education    October 2019

### **Pupil Admissions Guidance including oversubscription criteria**

#### Introduction

All state funded education establishments must follow the Admissions Code

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

The DBE Measure 1991 requires that VA schools and academies should seek advice from the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) regarding admissions policies, and the expectation is that such advice would be followed unless there were exceptional reasons, usually driven by local knowledge and circumstances.

During 2019 the Diocesan Board of Education has been considering the guidance it will give its schools and academies regarding admissions policies and in particular oversubscription criteria. Input has been received from a range of stakeholders including Norfolk County Council's admissions team, governors, trustees, headteachers and the national Diocesan Admissions Group.

We request that governors and headteachers read the guidance below and look to update their admissions policy in line with this guidance. You are reminded that consultations must be for six weeks and be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> January in any given year for the admissions round for September the following year (i.e. 20 months hence). We recognise formal consultation may not be possible in the autumn term 2019.

This is the first time that the Diocese of Norwich has put out such guidance. We are keen therefore to receive any feedback. The DBE plans to review this guidance in 12 months' time.

## **Guidance for School and Academy Admission Authorities**

The law relating to School Admissions is laid down in the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. There is also statutory guidance (the School Admissions Code) which is designed to assist schools in drafting their admission arrangements and which imposes mandatory obligations on schools. The School Admission Code applies to admissions to all maintained schools and academies in England.

All schools must have Admission 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. Admission arrangements are determined by Admissions Authorities. The Diocesan Board of Education produces guidance to support Admissions Authorities to determine their policies.

This document is for the Admission Authorities for VA schools and academy trusts in the Diocese of Norwich. Church of England schools are designated with a religious character. The school / academy trust's religious authority is the Diocese of Norwich. The school / academy trust must have regard to its religious authority when setting the terms of its admission arrangements.

The Diocesan Board of Education must be consulted in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014. We encourage Governing Boards and Academy Trust Boards to discuss fully how its admissions policy accords with its vision and the Church's vision for education and to look beyond the administration of places to how best to serve the local community in God's name.

We look forward to receiving your draft policies for consultation.

### **Diocesan guidance - Admissions oversubscription criteria**

Where the School/ Academy is oversubscribed (there are more applicants than places available) places will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria and in the following order of priority.

A child who has an Education Health and Care Plan naming the school or academy is required to be admitted.

1. Looked after children (children in care), previously looked after children (previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after) and children adopted from abroad
2. Siblings of children already at the school living in the catchment area [for the definition of sibling and catchment area refer to items 2 and 3 in the *definitions* section of the Appendix 1]
3. Residence within the catchment area of the school [for explanation of resident refer to item 2 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix 1. For explanation of catchment area refer to item 3 in the *definitions* section of Appendix 1].

4. Siblings of children already at the school living out of catchment [for definition of sibling and catchment area refer to items 2 and 3 in *definitions* section of Appendix I].
5. Children living out of the catchment area who have a faith and / or whose parents are committed Church members and wish them to receive an education in a school with a Church of England foundation [for explanation of committed Church member refer to item 3 in *clarifications* section of Appendix I]. They should support this application by completing the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) in Appendix 2. Within this criterion the following hierarchy will be applied:
  - I. Anglican
  - II. Other Christian denomination
  - III. Other organised religionsFor further information and advice on this criterion refer to items 5 and 6 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix I.
6. Children of staff where:
  - I. a member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made and/or
  - II. the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage
7. [**Diocesan Multi Academy Trusts only**] Children who are due to transfer and live outside the area served by the school who attend a school within **DNEAT / St Benet's MAT** at the opening date of the admissions round.
8. Resident out of the catchment area of the school [for explanation of resident and catchment area refer to items 2 and 3 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix I]

In the event of the having to use a tie-breaker to distinguish between two or more applications of equal strength, the child living the **shortest distance** from home to school in a straight line as the crow flies route should have priority [for explanation of shortest distance refer to item 4 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix I].

If the **School / Academy Trust's** decision is not to grant a place for your child, you have the right to appeal against its decision. You will be sent information on how to appeal.

All unsuccessful applicants are placed on a waiting list that is maintained in the rank order of the oversubscription criteria (taking into account the distance tie-breaker if appropriate). This does mean that the position of applicants on the list could change during the lifetime of the waiting list. If, at any time, the number of pupils to be admitted falls below the PAN then the available place(s) will be offered to the applicant(s) at the top of the waiting list. This waiting list ceases to be valid on 31 December 20?? [**enter relevant year**]

## APPENDIX I

### Definitions:

1. Parent is defined as all people with parental responsibility for the child, including legal guardians
2. Sibling is defined as brothers or sisters living at the same address including adopted children, step-brothers, step-sisters and children in foster care within a family unit.
3. Catchment area: All Diocesan schools and academies prioritise children living in the local area and within the Admissions Policy this is described as the school catchment area. Detailed information regarding catchment areas is available at [www.wherellive.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.wherellive.norfolk.gov.uk) or [www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions).

### Clarifications:

1. The applicant for admission must be the parent or legal guardian of the child for whom admission is sought.
2. “Resident” is defined as the place where your child usually lives. We may need proof of this address. We will not treat your child as ordinarily resident if you rent or own a second home in the catchment/defined area or if you use another address to give the impression that your child lives in the catchment/defined area so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school. It does not apply to proposed moves into the designated area which have not taken place at the time an application is considered – unless proof, such as Exchange of Contracts or a signed Tenancy Agreement, can be provided at the time of application or exceptional late application. We will consider Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children moving into an area as ‘Resident’ in that area when they apply for a school place.
3. Committed Church member is defined as one who has attended worship at least once a month on average for at least 1 year prior to the date of the application. A completed Supplementary Information Form (SIF) should be submitted to support this (see Appendix 2).
4. We will measure the distance by a straight line (‘as the crow flies’). All straight line distances are calculated electronically by the LA using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the co-ordinates of each property and provides the address-point between which straight line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.

In the unlikely event of two or more applicants living the same distance and competing for a single place, lots will be drawn by someone independent of the school to determine the successful applicant.

5. Other recognised Churches are those in full membership of Churches Together in England (or in full membership of a federation of Churches that is in full membership of Churches Together in England.) or the Evangelical Alliance. Further details can be obtained from the following websites:  
<http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/42314/Home.aspx>  
<http://www.eauk.org/>
6. Applicants who wish to be considered as committed adherents of other organised religions will be required to show an equivalent level of commitment to that described for Christian applicants and provide a letter signed by their local faith Leader. Other recognised organised religions are Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism.
7. Multiple births – if the final place at the school or academy is offered to a twin/triplet etc. and the remaining sibling(s) would ordinarily be refused a place, the Governors will offer places to the remaining sibling(s). It is not the Governors policy to separate twins/triplets etc. even when their admission would breach infant class size legislation.
8. Shared Responsibility: Where a child lives with separated parents who have shared responsibility, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Both parents must provide evidence in writing to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of the application.  
In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week with both parents, evidence of the main contact address will be required to support the application. Both parents must agree in writing which address is to be used as the 'ordinarily resident' address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

APPENDIX 2

INSERT LOGO

Supplementary Information Form for applications to

\_\_\_\_\_ **Name of School / Academy.**

- This is not an application form. Applications for a school place must be made following the **Norfolk or Suffolk** County Council process.
- This form may be completed if **ANY** of your preferences are for

\_\_\_\_\_ **Name of School / Academy** – it is not compulsory to complete this form in order to make a valid application, but the information it contains may assist the **School / Academy Trust** (as the Admissions Authority) in applying their oversubscription criteria.

- Please refer to the details of the school’s admissions criteria before you apply.

*N.B. Forms which are altered or which contain incorrect information (eg address, date of birth, etc) will be considered invalid and this may prejudice your application.*

**Full name of child:**

.....

**Date of Birth:** .....

**Current permanent address:**

.....

.....

**Contact Telephone Number:** .....

***If you wish your application to be considered under priority 5 of the oversubscription criteria please complete this form as fully as possible.***

Which Church do you attend?

.....

Please tick if you attend church at least monthly

To be completed by your Parish Priest/Vicar/Minister.  
(If there is currently no minister in post a senior church officer may sign)  
*I can confirm, to the best of my knowledge, that the above information is accurate.*

Signed.....

Dated.....

Name.....

Position.....

Address.....

.....

The information collected on this form may be passed to schools or to other Local Authorities as part of the admissions procedure. The information will be passed to the school to which the child concerned is finally allocated, where it will form part of the pupil database maintained by that school. Any personal information you provide will be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

*I can confirm, to the best of my knowledge, that the above information contained in this form is true.*

Signed.....

Dated.....

Name.....

Relationship to child .....

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM to:

\_\_\_\_\_ name and address of school / academy

\_\_\_\_\_

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