



ADMISSION GUIDANCE 2024/25

Introduction

The School Admissions Code ('the Code') published in September 2021 applies to all admissions from that date.

These guidelines are intended to support the governing board of Church of England Voluntary Aided ('VA') schools and academies as they consider their admissions policies. The admission authority in a VA school is the governing board; for an academy it is the academy trust.

Governing boards should consider their admission arrangements in the light of their own vision and mission statement. Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE) recommends that the school's vision is included at the top of its admissions policy, so the two can be seen in conjunction.

Model admission arrangements have been produced, which both meet the requirements of the Code 2021 and support the principles that ODBE would like to encourage.

Schools and academies with a Sixth Form must provide details of arrangements for Sixth Form entry following the requirements of the Code 2021. Model Sixth Form policies are not provided.

Whilst this guidance and model admission arrangements are not prescriptive, schools 'designated as having a religious character' must take account of and reflect any guidance from the Diocese when constructing 'faith-based admissions arrangements'. If a school does not follow this guidance, there should be a written statement saying why it has disregarded it.

1 Consultation on Admissions Policies for 2024/25

The admission arrangements must be ‘determined’ or formally approved and adopted by 28 February every year.

A formal consultation must be held if any changes to the admission policy are proposed eg to over-subscription criteria, catchment area, etc. There is no need to consult on increases in published admission number (PAN), but any decreases must be consulted on. Any increase must be notified to the LA and published on the school’s website. In addition, every school must consult at least once every seven years. If the school has not consulted for the past seven years, it must undertake full consultation for 2024/25 even if no material changes are proposed.

Formal consultations must start on or after 1 October 2022, last at least 6 weeks and be concluded no later than 31 January 2023. The suggested timeline is as follows:

By mid-September 2022 or earlier if possible

Send the draft admission policy for 2024/25 to ODBE (katie.paxton@oxford.anglican.org). The Code 2021 (para 1.38) makes clear that the Diocese **must** be consulted **before** any wider consultation, including with the local authority (LA). ODBE will consider policies and endeavour to respond with comments. The draft policy should be amended and resubmitted as necessary.

November/December 2022

Where there is a need for wider consultation (paragraphs 1.45-1.47 of the Code), schools must ensure that their draft policy is:

- published clearly on their websites (with details of how comments can be made, to whom and by what date – at least 6 weeks from the date it is posted on the website and no later than **31 January 2023**)
- sent to the LA and any other LA when the school is close to the borders of its own LA and particularly where there is a tradition of taking pupils from other LA areas
- sent to all other admission authorities within the “relevant area” (usually the LA) – VA schools, academies, foundation schools, free schools, etc. Primary schools do not need to consult secondary schools.
- available to parents of children between the ages of 2 and 18 – this is difficult for infant and primary schools, but sending it to local libraries, play groups, nurseries, doctors’ surgeries, etc. could be considered as well as placing a notice at the entrance to the school.
- Available to others who might have an interest in the proposed arrangements – eg local churches, parish councils, etc.

It is important that the school keeps evidence of its consultation – email trails, copies of posters and a list of places they were displayed, newspaper adverts, etc. to prove that the consultation has been carried out effectively.

Admission authorities cannot delegate the responsibility of consulting to the LA.

December 2022- January 2023

Receive and consider any comments on draft policies.

The governing board must ‘determine’ (ie formally agree) the policy for 2024/25 by **28 February 2023**. The approval by the board should be clearly minuted.

Once determined, the school must notify all those consulted or who would have been consulted had consultation been necessary (including ODBE) and the governing bodies of all community and VC

schools in the LA. The policy must be sent to the LA as soon as possible before **15 March 2023** so that the LA can publish on its website no later than that date details of where the determined arrangements for all schools, including academies, can be viewed. The policy must be posted on the school's website with details of how any objections to it can be referred to the Schools Adjudicator (www.schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk) no later than **15 May 2023**.

2 Oversubscription criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school must be admitted before consideration is given to any other applicants. This is NOT an oversubscription criterion. The school must admit a child in these circumstances even if there is no place.

There must be oversubscription criteria which will be used to allocate places when there are more applications than places. The order of the criteria will dictate how allocation will be made.

If the school is not oversubscribed, then all applications **MUST** be offered a place.

The oversubscription criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective and procedurally fair and comply with all relevant legislation. Definitions should be included of terms to ensure that there is clarity and these should reflect those included in legislation/guidance or used by your local authority.

A) Looked after children and previously looked after children

The highest priority **MUST** be given to looked after children and previously looked after children who have been adopted. The criterion must include any children who “appear to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted” (internationally adopted, previously looked after children - IAPLC). The admission authority is responsible for determining whether a IAPLC child is eligible

B) Siblings

Care must be taken over the drafting of this criteria bearing in mind the timing of when it will be applied ie it is impossible to know for certain whether a sibling will still be at the school at a date in the future. ODBE suggests: “with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school”. The Code also permits schools to give some priority to siblings of former pupils so that it would be acceptable to omit this phrase.

C) Church affiliation

ODBE is keen to ensure that all its schools nurture and develop their distinctiveness as church schools, recognising the heritage of those established before the 1870 Schools Act which were set up for the education of the poor of the parish. ODBE encourages its schools which are their own admission authorities to remain as inclusive as possible. To aid schools and academies in an inclusive approach, ODBE recommends that governing bodies consider admission criteria which minimise the impact of faith and, where possible, not to use church affiliation criteria in their admissions policies.

ODBE model policies do not include faith-based/church affiliation admissions criteria. Should you wish to retain them, please contact ODBE and local clergy for advice. **If you continue to use church affiliation criteria, you should include in your policy the reasons for not following the Diocesan guidance.**

Where schools previously made variations to their admission arrangements to cover the situation where churches closed during the Covid pandemic, these will continue to form part of the arrangements going forward until removed. A further variation to remove the amendment would need public consultation.

Definitions

It is essential that terms used are clearly defined to provide clarity whilst being manageable and appropriate for local worship patterns:

Church attendance: Wording such as ‘committed member’, ‘actively involved in their local church’, ‘practising Christian’, etc. must be clearly defined. A letter from the priest or minister simply recommending the admission of a child would not be sufficiently objective. ODBE recommends that you use the regular attendance of a parent (not both parents as this could discriminate against one-parent families) or a parent and the child as the determining factor in deciding church affiliation. E.g. ‘attendance on average twice a month for the two years preceding the date of application at a Sunday or midweek worship service’. Sometimes there are difficulties when a parent is unable to attend church, e.g. because of serious illness. In such cases, a clear letter from the parish priest, minister, etc. would be needed explaining why the parent who is a committed member of the church is unable to fulfil the attendance requirements.

“Christian Church”:ODBE recommends that schools use membership of ‘Churches Together in England’ (CTIE) or the ‘Evangelical Alliance’ (EA). Talk to your local clergy about whether this is likely to cause an issue in your area.

Previous church attendance: Where parents have not lived in the area for long enough to satisfy the attendance requirements at a particular church, schools should be prepared to take into account aggregate attendance at a previous church and the new church with two SIFs being completed.

D) Social and medical criteria

ODBE recommends that a social/medical criterion immediately after the looked-after children criterion. This is in line with the practice in most local authorities across the Diocese. There are likely to be very few cases which meet the stringent requirements to prove the need; the onus is on the parent to provide evidence that clearly demonstrates why your school (and only your school) can meet their specific needs. ODBE also recommends that the medical or social needs of a parent should be considered under such a criterion and reference is made in the model policies to ‘families’.

E) Catchment Area

The catchment area should be clearly defined. If the criteria uses the same method to measure distances as the LA, the policy should repeat the actual wording used by the LA to indicate how those distances will be measured to avoid confusion. If a different form of measurement is being used, it should be made very clear in the policy, describing how it works.

F) Pupil premium priority

Priority may be given to children eligible for pupil premium, service premium or early years pupil premium within their oversubscription criteria, but it is not a requirement. Schools introducing such priority must make clear in their admission policies what information evidence of their eligibility for the relevant pupil premium is required. Where the LA does not include an appropriate question on the CAF, a school would need to seek the information on a supplementary information form (‘SIF’). Parental consent would be needed for the LA or a child’s current school to disclose pupil premium eligibility in connection with an application.

G) Children of staff

Schools can prioritise children of staff where either they have been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of the application for admission and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Supplementary information forms (SIFs)

To avoid confusion, SIFs should only be used where there is a need to obtain information not available from the CAF, eg on church attendance, eligibility for pupil premium, previous siblings, etc.

Co-ordination of in-year admissions

Some LAs in the Diocese provide for in-year co-ordination of applications, but the Code does not require this – it is up to individual LAs to decide whether or not to offer this service. VA schools and academies do not have to participate unless they wish to do so, but they must provide the LA with details of the application and its outcome so that the LA can keep up-to-date figures on the availability of places. Where a school decides not to take part in a LA's in-year co-ordination scheme, it must provide its own application form. Paragraphs 2.23-2.31 of the Code give details applicable to in-year admissions and schools should be aware of the requirements.

Waiting list

When oversubscribed, the admission authority must maintain a waiting list for at least one term in the academic year of admission. The policy must be made clear in the published arrangements and be clear, fair and objective. It must not give priority to children on the basis of the date that their application was received or when their name was added to the list. The oversubscription criteria must be used to rank children on the waiting list.

Deferred entry and admission of children outside of their normal age group

Parents may request that their child's entry be deferred until later in the year where they are still below compulsory school age. The admission authority must consider the circumstances of the case. It is not possible to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday nor beyond the year for which the original application was accepted.

Where parents seek a place for their child outside the normal age group, the admission authority must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child.

MODEL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2024/25

NOTE: This policy must be tailored to the school's individual requirements.

A paragraph setting out the school's ethos. E.g. "XYZ School has a distinctive Christian ethos which is at the centre of school life. We provide an inclusive, supportive and caring environment, shaped by Christian values in which children can learn and flourish. We welcome applications from all members of the community without reference to ability or aptitude, and irrespective of whether they are of the Christian faith, another faith or no faith, but we expect parents to respect the Christian ethos of our school." or "XYZ School values highly its Christian ethos, its close links with local churches and the Diocese of Oxford. We provide a distinctively Christian, yet inclusive, environment in which each child is motivated to acquire skills for life and a love of learning. As a church school, we welcome applications from Christian families, and those of other faiths or none. We ask all parents applying for a place at our school to respect this ethos and its importance to the whole school community."

The governors have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes (where relevant) and equal opportunities.

There are ___ places (the published admission number or PAN) available.

DELETE THIS SECTION FOR ALL BUT PRIMARY, INFANT OR FIRST SCHOOL ADMISSION:

Admission arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2024

Pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1 September – 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose child was born between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2024.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 September 2024 and 31 March 2025 may defer entry until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term beginning in January or April after his or her fifth birthday). The school will hold the deferred place for the child (provided it is taken up during the school year 2024/25), although children may benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 1 April 2025 and 31 August 2025 (summer born children) parents can defer the date that their child is admitted to school but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age ie when they reach their fifth birthday. They should apply in the normal way for a Reception place in September 2024.

Until the child reaches compulsory school age, s/he may attend part-time. If parents wish to exercise this right, they should discuss detailed arrangements with the head teacher.

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for the Reception [Foundation] Year in September 2024 must complete the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than 15 January 2024. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered after all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be sent by the home LA on 17 April 2024.

DELETE THIS SECTION FOR ALL BUT JUNIOR SCHOOL ADMISSION:

Admission arrangements to Year 3 in September 2024

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for a Year 3 place in September 2024 must complete the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than **15 January 2024**. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered **after** all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by the home LA on **17 April 2024**.

DELETE THIS SECTION FOR ALL BUT SECONDARY ADMISSION:

Admission arrangements to Year 7 in September 2024

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for a Year 7 place in September 2024 must complete the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than **31 October 2023**. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered **after** all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by the home LA on **1 March 2024**.

Over-subscription criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming XYZ School will always be offered places.

If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

- 1 Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted. (See Note 2)
- 2 Families who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that their child attends XYZ School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family. (See Note 3)
- 3 Children with a normal home address (See Note 4) in [catchment area description] and with a sibling (see Note 5) on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
- 4 Children with a normal home address in [catchment area description]
- 5 Children with a normal home address outside the [catchment area description] **and** with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
- 6 Other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance (see Note 6) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 6 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.

All Other Admissions

Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. Applications must be made directly to the school on a form available from the school. [There may be voluntary co-ordination arrangements in place in ABC LA in which case the school must decide whether it wishes to participate in these.].

If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria 1-6 above), a place will be offered.

In-year admissions or admissions at the beginning of school years other than Reception will only be considered by the Governing Body up to half a term [using the three term year] in advance of the desired date for entry. For example, for entry in January, the application will not be considered until after the October half term break.

If parents are moving house, the school will ask for evidence of the move when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces personnel and crown servants are exempt). If you are returning from elsewhere, to live in a home that you own we will require evidence to show that you have returned. We will also ask for evidence that any previous house owned has been sold or is being sold. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

Admission outside normal age group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully, eg for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances and a decision made based on what is in the pupil's best interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the head teacher in advance of applying for a place. The governors may ask relevant professionals for their opinion. If a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

Waiting Lists

The school maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place, and the parents ask for the child's name to be added to the waiting list. The order of priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over-subscription and does not depend on the date on which an application is received.

Multiple births

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both twins (and all the children in the case of other multiple births) even if this meant exceeding the agreed admission number.

Fair Access

The school participates in ABC LA's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

Appeals

Any parent not offered a place for their child at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. Details of appeals arrangements are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. In the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school will not consider any further application for a child in the same school year (1 September – 31 August), unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment area to inside it.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from the Admissions Secretary at the school [contact details – phone and email]

Notes

Note 1: “Parent” is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

- a) any person who has ‘parental responsibility’ (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or
- b) any person who has care of the child or young person.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school for advice.

Note 2: By a “looked-after child” we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted, subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A ‘child arrangements order’ is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A ‘special guardianship order’ is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (eg a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). A “looked-after child” includes any child who appears to have been in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Note 3: When applying under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs), you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring XYZ School. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child’s or your own case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

Note 4: By normal home address, we mean the child’s home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child’s parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the

judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with his/her GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (eg a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

There are special arrangements for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting or crown servants returning from overseas. If the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares the relocation date, and if there is a place available, it will be offered even though there is not an intended address or the family is not yet living in the area.

Note 5: By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 6: The straight line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured by ABC LA's Geographical Information System.

[append catchment area map]

1 CHILD'S DETAILS

First name

Middle name(s)

Legal surname

Sex Male/Female

Date of birth ___/___/_____

Normal home address (the address and postcode at which the child normally lives). Please enclose address evidence.

.....
.....

Postcode

If moving home, please provide the new home address (the address at which the child **will** be living). Please enclose address evidence.

.....
.....
.....

Postcode

Name and address of current or most recent school

.....
.....
.....

Postcode Telephone number

2 YOUR DETAILS

Name of parent/carer living at home address above

Title First name Surname

Relationship to child

Email address

Daytime telephone number

Mobile telephone number

3 FURTHER INFORMATION

Date admission required ___/___/_____

Does the child have any brothers or sisters attending the school? Yes/No

If 'Yes', please give name of the youngest sibling attending the school

.....

Does the child have an EHC (Education & Health Care Plan) Yes/No

If 'Yes', which Local Authority maintains this Plan?

Is the child 'looked after' by a Local Authority or was s/he previously 'looked after'? Yes/No

If 'Yes', please provide details.

[Any other questions needed to apply the school's oversubscription rules – eg disability, medical/social needs, previous sibling attendance, etc.]

4 DECLARATION

I certify that I have parental responsibility for the child named in Section 1 above and that this application has the agreement of any other parent/carer with parental responsibility for the child.

I have read the school's admission policy.

I confirm that the information I have provided is to the best of my knowledge correct and up to date. I understand that if I give any false or deliberately misleading information on this form and/or any supporting papers or withhold any relevant information, this may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of a place at the school for my child.

I authorise the school to contact my child's previous school.

Signature of parent/carer

Date: ___/___/_____

Supplementary Information Form attached yes/no (delete as appropriate)