

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Trust
Admissions Policy
Thomas Whitehead Church of
England Academy
2024 - 2025

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| Policy type | Statutory Trust Policy with local context |
| Reviewed | Annually |
| Author/Responsible Officer | Headteacher/DSAMAT Admissions Advisor |
| Board to be ratified | Director Board |
| Approved by | J Jenkins |
| Date of ratification | 27th February 2023 |
| Date of next review | Autumn 2023 for 2025/2026 |

This policy is a mandatory policy for all DSAMAT Academies and must be implemented without any amendments

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Our mission, vision and values

The Trust has a clear **mission** at its core, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to flourish, rooted in God's Love - academically, socially, spiritually, physically and mentally. This is central to our work, and rooted in our Christian foundation (John 10 v 10). Our commitment to mutual flourishing within the school community is built upon our shared belief in Church of England principles. In our Trust, just as in the wider Church of England community, 'flourish' refers to prospering, thriving and growing – not shrinking out and dying. It means prayerfully encouraging all within our schools so that they might prove fruitful, successful and contented in the longer term. We seek to provide space generously for all to flourish in life and all of its structures. Equal treatment for all pupils, staff and the wider community is a core part of enabling this long term, holistic flourishing.

We have a clear **vision** about creating successful schools for the benefit of their communities. We expect any school in the Trust to continuously improve, and those graded by OFSTED as RI/Serious Weaknesses/Special Measures to make rapid progress and be able to secure an OFSTED grading of at least "Good" within 3 years post-conversion. All schools provide rich and diverse curricula which evolve to meet the needs of their children and local communities, as well as delivering educational excellence to enable them to continue to flourish in later life.

The way we work and deliver against our mission is critical to our Trust. We have shared, agreed **values** of:

Hope; Nurture; Equality; Respect; Collaboration

The Trust's vision is underpinned by a Christian values framework which is adopted by all schools. It provides clear expectations for all Trust employees on how we wish our values to impact on all areas of school life. It draws on, and is informed by, the National Church of England Vision for Education and the Diocesan Board of Education Vision.

Each school within the Trust has a personalised vision for education, developed locally to reflect the individual character and needs of the school community. This vision is underpinned by the Trust's wider vision, and agreed with the Trust, but it is owned and driven by the headteacher and their LGB.

Our community

The Trust are dedicated to delivering education that serves local communities. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those from all and no faiths, from all abilities and backgrounds. We believe in providing a high-quality education, underpinned by Christian values, which enables every child to flourish.

Underpinning all of the Trust's work is a belief in educational excellence. The Trust serves all stakeholders by providing schools with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care.

Our schools are places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually. All of the Trust's schools teach a broad and balanced curriculum within

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national guidelines focusing on core skills. This is designed to ensure that all pupils reach their academic potential and seek to enrich their experience along the way. Pupils will be enabled to succeed in an atmosphere of high expectation, aspiring to educational excellence with a firm foundation of values.

This policy forms part of our Trust governance and ensures that we are held to the highest standards as we carry out our duties.

Statement of Intent

Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy is part of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) family. At Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy, we welcome all pupils, and places at the school are offered in an open and fair way.

The number of places available is determined by the capacity of the school and is called the 'published admissions number'. The Published Admission Number for the school is 30.

The table below sets out who the admission authority is and other responsible bodies in our school.

| Type of school | Who is the admission authority? | Who deals with complaints about arrangements? | Who is responsible for arranging/providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at the school? |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Academy | Academy Trust | Schools Adjudicator | Academy Trust |

For the remainder of this document, the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust will be referred to as DSAMAT.

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1. Introduction and General Principles

- a. Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy is a member of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust. In common with all church schools, it aims to provide the best possible education of each of its pupils within the context of a caring, Christian community. As a values school, Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy is committed to reflecting the essence of Christian values within this policy.
- b. The school serves primary-aged children, from Year R to Year 6 in the parish of Houghton Regis and surrounding area. The Academy is fortunate to have its own Early Years provision (Nursery and Pre-school) within the school grounds for children aged 2+. Parents, carers and grandparents are most welcome to visit the school and nursery to see the children at work, to meet the staff and ask any questions they may have. Visits can be arranged by telephoning the school office (01582 865466).
- c. The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust is responsible for the admission of pupils to Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy and admits 30 pupils to the Reception class each September. This published admission number (PAN) has been agreed by the Trust and applies to the year 2024.
- d. The school does not have any specific units or facilities for pupils with particular special needs and there are no specific facilities for pupils with physical disabilities. The school is however on a fairly level site, and all the accommodation is on one floor; there are also ramps at the main entrance and at the entrance to the playground. All classrooms may be entered without steps. As far as possible, the school will ensure that pupils with disabilities have access to the same opportunities as other pupils. As a Church school we welcome applications for children of all faiths and of none. As an inclusive school, children with any special education needs will be treated as fairly as all other applications for admission.

2. Admissions to the reception year and application process

- 2.1 The Local Authority (LA) operates an agreed co-ordinated admissions scheme in line with government legislation. The LA will manage the process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published each year. The Trust, as the Admission Authority, will allocate the available places in line with this policy. The Trust cooperates with the LA to ensure children are admitted under the Fair Access Protocol and will be prioritised above those on the Continuing Interest list. FAP children will also be admitted above the PAN if necessary.
- 2.2 The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the home LA is as advertised by that authority. Information for Central Bedfordshire residents on completing the 'on line' application and notification dates of admission decisions are published in the Local Authority school admissions booklet, which is also available from their website: [Central Bedfordshire School Admissions](#). Parents living outside the Central Bedfordshire Council area must make an application via their home local authority. All applications **must** be made on the **home** Local Authority's Common Application Form (CAF). Parents applying for a place under category 2.13(c) should note that failure to provide satisfactory evidence of church attendance could result in the application

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being placed in a lower admission category (see definitions).

- 2.3 The school is required to abide by the maximum limits for infant classes (5, 6 and 7 year olds), i.e. 30 pupils per class.
- 2.4 The school provides for the full-time admission of all successful applicants who have reached their 4th birthday by the beginning of September 2024. However, please note the following:
- (a) These arrangements **do not** apply to our Nursery or Pre-school intake (please see the separate admissions arrangements on the school website).
 - (b) Parents of children currently in our Nursery or Pre-School **must** re-apply for a place in the Reception class.
 - (c) Attendance at our Nursery or Pre-school **does not** guarantee a place in Reception.
 - (d) Parents offered a place may defer the date of their child's admission until later in the year, or until the child reaches compulsory school age. Summer born children (born 1st April to 31st August) may only have admission deferred until the start of the summer term.
 - (e) If parents so wish, a child may attend on a part-time basis until the child reaches compulsory school age.
- 2.5 If parents do not wish their summer-born child to start school before the child reaches compulsory school age, then they would normally need to make an in-year application for a place in Year 1.
- 2.6 However if parents wish such a child to be educated "out-of year group" i.e. in the Reception Year rather than Year 1 they should discuss it with the school as soon as possible before making an application in writing to the Trust. Such applications will be considered by the Trust on a case by case basis. Each case will be judged on its individual merits and in the best interests of the child but to admit out of year group would require exceptional and extenuating circumstances and professional evidence (if available) explaining why the child's needs cannot be met in the chronological year group.
- 2.7 All such parents should apply for their child's normal age group at the usual time and may submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time.
- 2.8 The Trust will respond to this request prior to the offer of a place being made. If the request is agreed to, the application can be withdrawn for that year before the place is offered.
- 2.9 If the request is refused, parents may decide whether or not to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or refuse it and make an in-year application for admission into Year 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday.
- 2.10 Where a parent's request has been agreed, they **must** make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.
- 2.11 Parents do not have the right of appeal against a decision not to place the child in a year group outside their normal age group.

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- 2.12 The Trust will admit a pupil with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school.
- 2.13 When there are more applications than there are places available, the Trust will admit pupils according to the following criteria in order of priority.
- (a) All 'looked after' children (LAC) or children who were previously 'looked after' (PLAC) including those children who appear to the Trust to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (IAPLAC) (see notes)
 - (b) Children living within the catchment area who have siblings attending the school at the expected time of admission (see notes).
 - (c) Children at least one of whose parents is a practising member of the Church of England (see notes)
 - (d) Children living within the catchment area of the ecclesiastical parish of Thomas Whitehead.
 - (e) Other children with a sibling at the school at the time of admission
 - (f) Children of staff at Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy
 - (g) Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address (see notes)

3. Notes

a) If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, the tie break will be the distance the pupil lives from the school, measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised mapping system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The local authority will measure the distance from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the Trust, namely the school's front gate. In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the Synergy Admissions database to allocate the place.

b) Pupils who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that name the school will be admitted to the school, even if the school is full.

c) Where a place is offered to one twin or multiple birth child the other twin or multiple birth sibling(s) will also be admitted, even if the school is full and, if necessary, as exceptions to the infant class size rule.

d) Pupils identified for admission through the 'Fair Access Protocol' will also be admitted even if the school is full and above any children on the continuing interest list.

e) The school's policy is that children should normally be educated in their correct

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chronological age group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet their individual needs. If parents/carers believe that their child should be educated in a different year group then they should at the time of application submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family, stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age group. Applications will be considered by the Trust who will make their decision in the best interests of the child, based on the individual circumstances of each case, including the view of the child's parents and of the headteacher, the child's social, academic and emotional development, medical evidence (where relevant) and whether or not the child has previously been educated out of year group. If the application is refused this does not constitute the refusal of a place and there is no right of appeal from the Trust's decision.

Definitions

'Looked after' children

The Children's Act 1989 defines a child who is 'looked after' as a child or young person who is accommodated by the local authority (Section 20) or a child or young person who is the subject of a full care order (Section 31) or interim care order (Section 38). Previously looked after children will be prioritized under category 2.13(a) if they were looked after immediately before being adopted or becoming subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order. 'Adopted' refers to an adoption order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'child arrangements order' is an order setting out the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians)

In state care outside of England means in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Sibling

A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

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Practising members of the Church of England (2.13(c))

To qualify under this category, at least one of the child's parents must be baptised and must have attended the principal act of worship of a Church of England or other mainstream Christian church at least once a month for a period of twelve months prior to the date of application and be continuing so to attend at the time when the Trust considers the application. Evidence of church attendance must be provided by completing the relevant section of the application form and having this endorsed by the applicant's priest or minister.

Applicants who have attended more than one church within the twelve months before the closing date for applications should also provide a letter from the priest or minister of the previous church in order to evidence the required period of attendance.

Children of staff (2.13(f))

The Trust will give priority to the children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

- (a) Where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the date of application; and/or
- (b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Home Address

The address given on the application form must be the child's permanent home address at the closing date for applications.

If a child lives at more than one address because childcare arrangements are shared, the Trust will consider the address for admission purposes to be the one where the child sleeps for most of the school week (Sunday to Thursday), unless the application is supported by a copy of a Court Order stating that a different address must be used for school admission applications.

If a child lives at two different addresses equally, the application must include a copy of any Court Order which states the address to be used for school admission purposes. Where there is no such Court Order in place, parents should make a single joint application naming one address. If a joint application is not submitted, a range of evidence will be requested to enable the Trust to determine the principal parental address for school admission purposes.

Please note that applications submitted by separated parents will be subject to the same address verification checks as all other applications.

4. In-Year Admissions

- 4.1 Children will be admitted at other ages where there are vacancies. Requests for admission into other year groups should be made to the Central Bedfordshire Admission Team: [Applying for a school place during the academic year](#). In considering any applications for in-year admissions the Trust will take account of the Infant Class Size Limit.

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5. Waiting List

- 5.1 All children who are unsuccessful with their applications will be placed on a waiting list. Applications will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria in 2.13 above and a child's place in the list can change as other children join or leave it. Waiting lists for all year groups will be maintained until the end of the summer term of the academic year of intended entry.

6. Appeals Process

- 6.1 Parents who have not been allocated a place for their child have a right to appeal to an independent panel and will receive information about the appeals process with the refusal email or letter from the local authority: authority [School Admission Appeals](#)

7. Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 The Trust has delegated to the Local Governing Board the responsibility for reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of this policy in discussion with the DSAMAT Admissions Adviser. The Trust will approve all major changes to this policy. The policy will be promoted and published throughout the Trust.

- 7.2 The policy will be reviewed annually.