

# SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

## ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS CHECKLIST



| Issue  | Comments   | ✓ |
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| <b>Dates and publication of admission arrangements</b> | It must be made clear in the admission arrangements the year to which they apply. Deadlines dates may change from year to year. The arrangements must be published on the school's website: two policies will be "current" at any one time – the policy for in-year admissions and the policy for the following year's reception, year 3 or year 7 admission arrangements. (Even where no changes are made for the following year, the arrangements will apply to different academic years and this should be made clear.)   |   |
| <b>Ethos statement</b>                                 | The Board recommends that schools include an ethos statement as an introduction to their admission arrangements which sets out for parents the fact that the school has a Christian ethos. The following model statement may be adapted:<br><br><i>..... Church of England School has a distinctive ethos which is at the heart of this school and provides an inclusive, caring and supportive environment where children learn and flourish in a setting shaped by Christian values. We welcome applications from all members of the community and we ask all parents/carers to respect the Christian ethos of our school and its importance to our community.</i>                               |   |
| <b>Number of pupils</b>                                | Policy should include the number of places available in each relevant age group (ie, the age group in which pupils are admitted, normally reception for primary/infant, year 3 for junior and year 7 for secondary; schools with sixth-forms must provide the number of places for pupils admitted from outside the school, ie, those not transferring from year 11). If foundation/open places are used, the number of places in each category must be given.   |   |
| <b>Siblings definition</b>                             | Definition should be provided so it is clear how the governing body interprets this. Schools may wish to adopt the definition used by the LA to provide consistency, or the SDBE definition: <i>Qualifying siblings are brothers and sisters, half-brothers and -sisters, step-brothers and -sisters, foster and adopted brothers and sisters who share the same home.</i>   |   |
| <b>Nearness definition</b>                             | Definition should be given: eg, straight line, shortest safe walking distance; also the points from which the measurements are taken, eg, from front door/central point of child's home to school's main gate/central point of school. Schools may wish to adopt the definition used by the LA to provide consistency. Where schools use the LA's Geographical Information System (GIS), or similar, this should be stated.<br><br><b>Blocks of flats:</b> Applicants from the same block of flats will be treated equally regardless of the floor on which they live.   |   |
| <b>Definition of "regular worshipper" etc</b>          | Whatever term is used in the admission criteria to describe commitment to a church, it must be defined so that parents can understand its meaning, eg, attendance at worship twice a month for two years. If governing bodies use other indicators of commitment these should be described in the policy. The Board believes that there can be no universal definition of commitment, or practising member of a church, this is something that each governing body must consider for itself. In primary schools the local context of the parish will be an important factor. Governing bodies should familiarise themselves with the Board's guidance on defining church criteria (see pages 8-9). |   |

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| <b>Evidence of religious commitment</b>                                 | A written church reference confirming church commitment should be sought, ideally a supplementary form signed by both parent and clergy, or other responsible person in the church. It must be made clear to parents that this is required and that failure to complete a supplementary form or to supply a clergy reference will mean that their application is not considered under the church criteria. (See below Supplementary Information Form.)  |   |
| <b>Looked after children and previously looked after children (LAC)</b> | Top priority must be given to all looked after children and previously looked after children (hereafter referred to as LAC) regardless of faith. In the traditional type of admission policy, therefore, LAC should be first in the list of criteria with no caveat about faith commitment. In foundation and open place policies, LAC should be top priority in both categories; this would mean that LAC applying for a foundation place would have to fulfil the foundation criteria, this would probably only be an option for committed Christian foster-carers.   |   |
| <b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>                                  | Pupils with statements of special educational need apply to schools through a separate process: schools must not, therefore, give priority to these pupils in their admission criteria. The School Admission Code states clearly that this is not an oversubscription criterion because once a school is named on the statement it must take the pupil whether, or not, a place is available. Governing bodies must be consulted prior to the school being named and may either accept the placement, or oppose it on certain prescribed grounds. Further guidance is given in Annex 4.   |   |
| <b>Special medical or social needs</b>                                  | <p>There is no requirement on schools to include a criterion giving priority to those with special medical or social needs, but the Board encourages schools to do so as part of the church school's wish to serve those most in need. However, admission under this category should be exceptional. The following is a suggested wording:</p> <p><i>Children with an exceptional and professionally supported medical or social need for a place at this school. This must be supported by written evidence at the time of application, eg, from a specialist health professional, social worker or other care professional. The evidence must set out the reasons why this school is the most suitable school and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school.</i></p> <p>Governors should make it clear what supporting evidence is required; the onus is on parents to make the case.</p> |   |
| <b>Tie-breaker</b>  | All policies must have a tie-breaker to determine between applicants where the cut-off for admission falls within one of the admission criteria. Schools must publish how they would deal with such a situation. Normally distance is used, but schools should be aware that there may be rare occasions when two applicants will live equidistant from the school. In such cases admission may be determined by the drawing of lots, but this must be stated.  |   |
| <b>Supplementary form</b>   | The supplementary form must only ask for information needed to apply the admission criteria which is not supplied through the Common Application Form. In general, therefore, this will only relate to the foundation applicants or the "church" criteria. The supplementary form should be included in the consultation documentation. The Board has a model form for schools to adapt. Schools which admit a proportion of pupils according to aptitude and grammar schools may require completion of a supplementary form.   |   |

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| <b>Waiting list</b>   | Waiting lists are compulsory for the normal year of entry under the Admissions Code and the list must be drawn up in accordance with the admission criteria and maintained for at least one term. A statement to this effect and any additional arrangements must be included in the policy.   |   |
| <b>Appeals</b>  | A statement to the effect that parents not offered a place have a right of appeal to an independent panel should be included. Schools must allow 20 school days for parents to appeal.   |   |
| <b>Application procedure and timetable</b>                      | <p>Information about how to apply, deadline dates for receipt of forms etc. Reference should be made to LA's co-ordinated arrangements. A form of words is suggested below, but this may need to be adapted to fit the local co-ordinated scheme. Schools may wish to specify the outline timetable.</p> <p><i>The School is part of the locally agreed co-ordinated admission arrangements and the timescales for applications to be received and processed are those agreed with the local authority. Parents must complete their home local authority's Common Application Form and return the form to their Authority; if applying for a place at this School, parents must name this School as one of the preferences on the Common Application Form. Parents who wish to apply for a foundation place/under the church criteria (delete as appropriate) must also complete the school's supplementary form and return this to the School by the CLOSING DATE. Failure to return the supplementary form will mean that the school cannot consider the application under the church criteria, in this case the application will be considered under the next most appropriate criteria based on the information on the Common Application Form. On-line applications may be made via (insert WEB LINK); more information is available in your local authority's admission booklet or on the local authority's website.</i></p> |   |
| <b>Late applications</b>  | Information about how applications received after the deadline will be dealt with. Schools must follow the LA's co-ordinated scheme.   |   |
| <b>Separate entry to nursery</b>                                | It should be made clear that admission to the nursery is separate and does not guarantee a place in the reception class. Any priority given to nursery applicants should ensure that families that live near the school, those who choose other nursery provision, or those who have recently moved to the area are not disadvantaged compared with other families.  |   |
| <b>Deferred entry/ part time entry (Reception classes only)</b> | <p>It is expected that all children entering reception classes do so in September, but parents may request to defer entry, and or request part-time entry. The following wording is suggested for inclusion in admission arrangements.</p> <p><i>The School admits children to the reception class in the September of the school year in which a child attains the age of 5 years. (The school year runs from 1 September to the 31<sup>st</sup> August.) Parents/carers applying for a place in the reception class may request to defer entry to the reception class until the beginning of the term after their child is five years old, but cannot defer entry beyond the end of the school year. Parents/carers may also request that their child attends part-time until their child reaches compulsory school age.</i></p>   |   |
| <b>Separate entry to sixth form</b>                             | Include information about any separate entry requirements to the sixth form, if applicable.  |   |
| <b>Ability/ aptitude</b>  | Include information about any testing arrangements, if applicable.   |   |