

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Trust

Admissions Policy

St James' CE Primary 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 | 27 th 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

St James' C of E Academy is part of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) family. At St James' C of E 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 call the 'agreed 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. St James' C of E Academy is a member of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust. The school serves the parish of Biddenham and surrounding area. It provides an education, for children aged 4 – 11, within the setting of a Christian community for all children regardless of faith, gender or race.
- b.
- c. The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust is responsible for the admission of pupils to St James' C of E 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 site is not level, and the main school buildings are not on a single level; three classrooms are accessed using either steps or a ramp. 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.
- e. 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. Application process

- 2.1 The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the home LA is as advertised by that authority. Information for Bedford Borough residents on completing the 'on line' application and notification dates of admission decisions are published in the Local Authority Admissions booklet, which is also available from their website: [Bedfordshire Borough Council Admissions](#). Parents living outside the Bedford Borough area must make an application via their home local authority.
- 2.2 All applications **must** be made on the **home** Local Authority Common Application Form (CAF).
- 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 admission of all successful applicants who have reached their 4th birthday by the beginning of September 2024. However, please note the following:
 - (a) 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

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- 1st April to 31st August) may only have admission deferred until the start of the summer term.
- (b) 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.
- 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 definitions)
 - (b) Children who will have a sibling attending the school at the time of admission.
 - (c) Children with very exceptional medical needs which only St James’ C of E Academy can meet.
 - (d) Children of staff employed by the school.

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- (e) Children whose home address lies within the ecclesiastical parish of St James's Biddenham, as shown on the map attached to this policy. A more detailed map of the parish can be found at www.achurchnearyou.com
- (f) Any other children

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 designated point on the school site, namely the pedestrian gate. In the event of children living in a block of flats, priority will be given to the child's whose flat number is lower. Where two children live the same distance from the school the Trust will use an independently-supervised, random draw in order 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 chronological age group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet their individual needs. If parents 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

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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 14 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.

'Very exceptional' Medical Grounds

'Very exceptional' medical grounds refers to cases where there are exceptional medical reasons which make it essential that a child should attend St James' C of E Academy and where St James' C of E Academy is the only school locally that could meet the child's needs. A medical report from the child's doctor or consultant must be submitted with the application form, setting out valid medical reasons why it is essential for the child to be admitted to St James' C of E Academy and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The Trust reserves the right to seek further information in order to determine whether it is essential for a child to be admitted to the school on medical grounds. Admission on medical grounds cannot be considered where the medical condition relates to that of a parent, brother or sister or other relative/childminder.

Children of staff

The Trust will give priority under category 2.13 (d) to admit children of staff where either or both of the following circumstances apply: a) where the 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 b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. The staff member must be the child's biological or adoptive parent or have legal parental responsibility for the child and the child must have lived at the same address as the parent employed by the school for at least one year at the time of application.

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Home Address

A pupil's home address will be regarded as the address of the parents or guardians with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. This will not usually include grandparents, aunts or uncles. Where a child spends time with parents at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the pupil is ordinarily resident and where the child spends the majority of the school week (Mondays to Fridays) including nights. If there is any query on the home address this will be checked against official documentation e.g. council tax bill, a recent utility bill (gas, electricity or water) or family tax credit information

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 Bedford Borough Admission Team: : [Bedfordshire Borough Council Admissions](#) In considering any applications for in-year admissions the Trust will take account of the Infant Class Size Limit.

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. The waiting list will be maintained until 31st December 2024.

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: [Appeals Process Bedford Borough Council](#)

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.

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