Diocese of Norwich
St Benet's
Multi Academy Trust

Acorn
PARTNERSHIP

Pupil Admissions Policy

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1. Introduction

Our Christian Ethos and Values

Our academies are open to all and accepting of all regardless of faith. Our passion and ambition are to see children and young people in all our academies achieve excellent educational outcomes alongside developing and growing into their potential as individuals made in the image of God.

Our culture is one of high aspiration for all. This is rooted in our Christian values as demonstrated in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We have a desire to see our academies acknowledged as places of aspiration, high quality learning, achievement and hope making a significant contribution to the communities they serve.

All policies within St Benet's Multi Academy Trust (hereafter referred to as "the Trust") will be written and implemented in line with our Christian ethos and values.

Overall accountabilities and roles

The Trust has overall accountability for all its academies and staff. Through a Scheme of Delegation it sets out the responsibilities of the Trust, its Executive Officers, the Local Governance Committee and the Principal / Head Teacher. The Principal / Head Teacher of each academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Trust.
All employees of the Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

The Trust is the Admissions Authority for the academy and is committed to considering all applications fairly and equally. Please see appendix 3 for a list of schools in the Trust, their category, and their Published Admission Number (PAN).

In line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation the Trust and the Headteacher are responsible for consultation, application decisions and for administering any appeals. All admissions are made through the process coordinated by the relevant Local Authority.

This Admissions Policy is subject to a statutory public consultation and conforms to the 2021 Schools Admissions Code and the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, as revised by the Education Act of 2002. The policy should be read in conjunction with admissions documentation provided by your home Local Authority. The Trustees have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation.

This policy references guidance from both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils as these will be the appropriate Local Authorities for the vast majority of parents [see Appendix 1 for definition of parent] applying for places in academies within the Diocese of Norwich's boundaries which extend beyond the county of Norfolk and include parts of Suffolk.

2. Procedures for admissions

Admissions are made through the process led by Norfolk or Suffolk County Council's admission teams (see section 7 below for web links to the guidance). This policy gives you details of how to apply for admission to the academy as well as the admission principles followed by the academy as set out by the Trust. The procedures relating to each type of admission are set out in the relevant section.

3. Policy principles

We seek to be an inclusive academy, welcoming children from all backgrounds and of all abilities and we reflect this in our admissions policy. A child's level of achievement or specific needs are not a barrier to admission to the academy.

Once a place has been offered, we will seek to discuss children and their individual needs with

parents before they are admitted to the academy and seek to make any reasonable adjustments to accommodate all children.

We seek to follow all relevant legislation regarding admissions, including in the setting and application of our over-subscription criteria (see section 8).

We believe that ideally each child should be admitted to the school of their parents' choice. However, the school buildings cannot accommodate an unlimited number of children and excessive class sizes are detrimental to the education of the children in the class. The Published Admissions Numbers for the entry years for the Trust's academies are available in appendix 3. The Trust will not usually admit children into classes if their admission would cause the class size to increase above legal or practical limits, or the Published Admissions Number to be breached.

4. First Admissions for 2027-28 (Reception)

Children enter school at the start of the school year in which they become five, so children born between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023 will begin school in September 2027. A fulltime place will be offered from September for all children as detailed in the School Admissions Code 2021, paragraph 2.17.

Deferment

Where parents are offered a place for their child in the Reception Year, the law allows them to either to take up the offer full-time in September or ask to take up the offer part-time or defer entry. If a parent wishes to defer entry to later in the year the place will be held open until the child starts school. However, parents must take up the full-time place no later than the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday and must in any case take up the place before the end of the school year for which the original application was accepted.

Parents are responsible for contacting the Headteacher to discuss deferring the place.

It is expected that children will be admitted only at the beginning of term unless there are exceptional circumstances.

For children born between 1 April and 31 August 2023 ('summer born children'), admission may only be deferred until April 2028. Parents with children born between these dates would not be breaking the law by not admitting them to school until September 2028, but schools may not keep places open for the whole of the reception year until September 2028. Such parents would need to re-apply for a place from September 2028.

For summer born children parents have the right to request consideration for their child to be admitted to reception class in September 2028. Admission authorities will consider requests to defer admission in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021, paragraphs 2.17 and 2.18.

Applications for Reception Class admission September 2027 to August 2028 (i.e. for children born 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023) must be received by Norfolk or Suffolk County Councils by 15 January 2027. Second and late applications will be considered according to criteria and dates set out on Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils' admission's web pages (links in section 8).

Applications are processed by Norfolk County Council or Suffolk County Council on behalf of the Trust and decision letters are sent to all applicants on 16 April 2027 ("national offer day").

5. Transfer to Junior School 2027-28 (Year 3)

The transfer to junior school admission round covered by this policy is for children in their last year at an infant school (aged 7+ on 1 September 2026). These children are 'due to transfer', which is the term used in the admission rules.

Applications for transfer to junior school admissions September 2027 to August 2028 must be received by Norfolk or Suffolk County Councils by 15 January 2027. Second and late applications will be considered according to criteria and dates set out on Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils' admission's web pages (links in section 8).

Applications are processed by Norfolk County Council or Suffolk County Council on behalf of the Trust and decision letters are sent to all applicants on 16 April 2027 ("national offer day").

6. Transfer to Secondary School 2027-28 (Year 7)

The transfer to secondary admission round covered by this policy is for children in their last year at a primary or junior school. Parents must apply for a place in Year 7 at a secondary school via the relevant Local Authority. Places are not reserved for those who do not apply.

Applications for transfer to secondary school admissions September 2027 to August 2028 must be received by Norfolk or Suffolk County Councils by 31 October 2026. Second and late applications will be considered according to criteria and dates set out on Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils' admission's web pages (links in section 8).

Applications are processed by Norfolk County Council or Suffolk County Council on behalf of the Trust and decision letters are sent to all applicants on 3 March 2027 ("national offer day").

7. How parents can apply for their child to be admitted to a St Benet's MAT academy

Parents can apply online or by using a paper-based application form.

Completed paper application forms should be returned to
The Admissions Team, Children's Services, Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH

Or for Suffolk residents
The Admissions Team, Children's Services, Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Parents can apply online, and find further information, at:
Norfolk – https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/admissions
Suffolk - https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

8. Admissions oversubscription criteria

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

Where the 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.

1. Looked after children (children in care) and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. 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

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. Children who are resident 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 1].

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 1]. 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

For further information and advice on this criterion refer to items 5 and 6 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix 1.

This criterion only applies to academies with a Church of England designation. See Appendix 3.

6. Children who are eligible for the service premium. A pupil is eligible for the service premium if:
   a) one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full time reserve service);
   b) they have been registered as a 'service child' on the January school census at any point since 2016;
   c) one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme.

7. 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

8. Children who are due to start school or to transfer and live outside the area served by the school who attend a school within St Benet's MAT at the opening date of the admissions round.

9. Children who are 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 1]

In the event of the having to use a "tie-break" 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 should have priority [for explanation of shortest distance refer to item 4 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix 1].

If the Academy or 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 by the local authority admissions team.

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-break 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 2027.

9. In-year applications and applications to other year-groups

The Trust follows the accepted procedures agreed with Norfolk County Council/Suffolk County Council in considering applicants at all other times of the year. The PAN per year group, as well as the upper limit on class sizes, is maintained (as far as possible) throughout the school. The Trust applies the oversubscription criteria where necessary. No waiting lists are maintained for year groups other than the first admission year (Reception, Year 3, Year 7).

The following process applies for in-year application:

1. Applications are not normally considered more than one term ahead of the date the place is required and only one application per school year is allowed. For full details of the process please refer to the relevant Local Authority's website.

2. Parents wishing to transfer their children from one school to another where there is no change of address should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the Headteacher of their current school before applying for another school or academy.

3. Parents who wish to make an in-year application for a place at a Norfolk academy should contact Norfolk County Council who will consult with the Academy and offer the place if one is available.

   For any Suffolk academy the Headteacher should be contacted – Suffolk County Council do not administer in-year admissions.

4. When a place becomes available in a year group that has been full at this academy, any applicant refused a place for that school year in the last 15 school days and any applicant for whom an appeal has been lodged and is still to be heard, will be considered alongside any new applications. The place will be offered to the pupil ranked highest in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The Academy is responsible for recording recent applications within the 15 school day period and managing this part of the process.

5. All applications will be processed by Norfolk County Council or by the Trust's Suffolk academies within 15 school days and the decision communicated in writing.

6. If the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the Trust will apply the published oversubscription criteria (see section 9) to determine the offer of places. Any unsuccessful applicant has the right to appeal the decision to an independent panel and details of how to do this will be included in the decision letter.

7. When an offer of a place is made and the child already has a place in a local mainstream school, Norfolk County Council will offer the place from the start of the following term. The child will remain on roll at the previous school until they take up the place at this academy.

8. Appeals process

If the decision is not to grant a place for your child, you have the right to appeal against this decision. You will be sent information on how to appeal by the Local Authority. Annual Admission round appeals must be heard within 40 school days. In-year appeals must be heard within 30 school days. There is no

deadline for the submission of appeals which are independently administered.

Unsuccessful applicants and appellants who are still unable to secure a place at this academy may only submit a fresh application if there has been a significant change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school, for example a house move.

If there is no significant change in circumstances, you can make another application for the following academic year, but this will not normally be considered more than one term ahead of the date when you want your child to start at the school.

9. Children out of year group

It is expected that children will normally be educated within their chronological year group. However, the Headteacher will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned in line with the School Admissions Code 2021. A request for admission out of year group can only be considered where the school has places available.

The admissions authority, the Trust, has delegated authority for this type of admission to the Headteacher. Parents can make a request to the Headteacher in writing. This will need to include, where relevant, any supporting evidence. The Headteacher will make a decision and will seek advice from the Trust as needed.

The academy will write to parents with the outcome including the reasons for the decision. If the request is refused, you should be given the details of how to complain to the school.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust and provided to academies annually but, in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021, will only be subject to public consultation every seven years unless changes are proposed (other than the correction of closing dates and definitions of school years).

Consultation will last for a minimum of six weeks and will take place between 1 October and 31 January of the year before the arrangements are to apply (e.g. For a policy to apply to applications in 2026 – for admission in September 2027 onwards consultation must be completed by 31 January 2026).

Consultation allows for parents, other schools and academies, the Diocese, Local Authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about the proposed admission arrangements.

Appendix 1

Definitions:

1. Parent is defined as all people with parental responsibility for the child, including legal guardians.

2. Sibling: Where the child has a sibling in the school or a sibling has already been offered a place at the school, and where the sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission but not in the sixth form.

   The term 'sibling' includes: natural, half, step, and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent/carer; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion.

3. Catchment area: All the Trust's 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.whereIlive.norfolk.gov.uk or 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. "Ordinarily resident" we define as the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or a grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school; we consider this to be a fraudulent application. Where a child lives at two or more addresses, 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. Separate evidence in writing from each parent must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.

   In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents will be required to state 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.

   If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice in order to resolve the matter.

   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. A "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 in support (see Appendix 2).

4. All straight-line distances are calculated electronically by the Local Authority using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey to plot the co-ordinates of each property and provides the address-points 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:

   https://cte.org.uk/about/whos-who/member-churches/
   http://www.eauk.org/

6. Multiple births – if the final place at the Academy is offered to a twin/triplet etc. and the remaining sibling(s) would ordinarily be refused a place, the Headteacher will offer places to the remaining sibling(s). It is not the Trust's policy to separate twins/triplets etc. even when their admission would breach infant class size legislation.

Appendix 2

Supplementary Information Form

School Name ……

If you wish your application to be considered under <u>Priority 5</u> of the oversubscription criteria please complete this form as fully as possible.

- **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 a Church of England Academy in the Diocese of Norwich.**

- **It is not compulsory to complete this form in order to make a valid application, but the information it contains may assist the 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 (e.g. address, date of birth, etc) will be considered invalid.

Full name of child	
Date of Birth	
Current permanent address	
Contact Telephone Number	
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. The Trust will use the information you have provided in your application for a school place in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Further information will be available from the academy and the academy's website.

To be completed by parent/carer	
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 provide this form to the academy to which you are applying.

Appendix 3

Index of schools to which this admissions policy applies.

School name	School First Admission Year	School Denomination	PAN
Acle Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	30
Alburgh-with-Denton Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	15
Catfield Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	10
Dickleburgh Church of England Primary Academy & Pre-School	Reception	Church of England	30
Diss Church of England Junior Academy	Year 3	Church of England	45
Diss Infant Academy & Nursery	Reception	None	30
Garboldisham Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	15
Happisburgh Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	16
Harleston Sancroft Academy	Reception & Year 7	Church of England	60 / 100
Hickling Church of England Infant Academy	Reception	Church of England	8
Little Plumstead Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	30
Morley Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	20
Newton Flotman Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	15
Pulham Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	15
Scole Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	15
St Mary's Church of England Junior Academy	Year 3	Church of England	45
St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy & Nursery	Reception	Church of England	15
Sutton Church of England Infant Academy	Reception	Church of England	15
Tacolneston Church of England Primary Academy	Reception	Church of England	15