

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Admissions Policy

2020 - 2021

Thomas Whitehead CE Academy

Policy type	Local Academy Policy
Adopted by the Trust Board	26 th February 2019
For review	Annual
Person responsible	DSAMAT Admissions Adviser

This policy is a mandatory policy for all DSAMAT Academies and must be implemented with no amendments.

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1. Introduction and General Principles

- 1.1 **Thomas Whitehead is a Church of England Academy and in common with all church schools, aims to provide the best possible education for each of its pupils within the context of a caring, Christian community.**

As a Values school, we are committed to reflecting the essence of Christian Values within this policy.

- 1.2 Thomas Whitehead CE Academy principally serves primary aged children, from Year R to Year 6 in the parish of Houghton Regis, although, if there is space, places will be offered to children living outside the area if parents request it. We are also fortunate to have our own Early Years provision – Ducklings Pre-School within the school grounds for children aged 2+. Parents, Carers and Grandparents are most welcome to visit the school / 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). We will meet the needs of anyone enquiring about, or visiting our School having regard to their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, social background, religion, ethnicity or those with English as a second language and endeavour to provide this policy in other languages upon request.
- 1.3 The Academy is a member of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust which is the admitting authority for the school.

2. Admission to Pre-school

- 2.1 We accept 2 and 3 year olds into pre-school with the exception of 3 year olds that are eligible for nursery. Children are funded for 15 hours per week term time only through Central Bedfordshire Council and top up fees for any non-funded sessions are charged at £12 per 3 hour session (morning or afternoon) which is payable on a half termly basis. We also accept childcare vouchers. There is no closing date for applications and applications are considered throughout the year as long as places are available. Sessions are run from Monday to Friday term time only. Session times are as follows:

Morning Session 8.45am - 11.45am

Lunch Club 11.45am - 12.15pm

Afternoon Session 12.15pm - 3.15pm

- 2.2 Pre-School is able to take 24 children in the morning session and 24 in the afternoon session. Priority will be given to funded 2 year olds and will then be in line with the schools general admissions criteria (see below). Application forms are available from pre-school and completed forms should be returned there. A place in pre-school is not a guarantee of a place in Nursery.

3. Admission to the Nursery

- 3.1 Children are normally admitted into the **Nursery** at the beginning of the school year (September) in which their 4th birthday falls. They will be offered as 15 free hours per week. The closing date for applications to the **Nursery** is 13th February 2019. Parents are notified of the outcome within two weeks of the closing date. The intended number of admissions to Nursery for the school

year 2019/2020 is 44. The offer of a place in the Nursery is not a guarantee of a place in the reception class. Application forms are available from the school office. Completed forms should be sent to the school office.

4. Admissions to the Reception Year

- 4.1 The school admits children into the **Reception Class** at the beginning of the school year (September) in which their 5th birthday falls. Normally all children are offered a full-time place from September. However please note:
- (a) These arrangements **do not** apply to our Nursery intake.
 - (b) Parents of children currently in our Nursery **must** re-apply for a place in the Reception class.
 - (c) Attendance at our Nursery **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 may only have admission deferred until the start of the summer term.**
 - (e) Parents can request part-time attendance until the child reaches compulsory school age.
 - (f) Where a parent of a **'summer-born' child (1 April – 31 August)** wishes their child to start school in the autumn term following their fifth birthday, the Trust will consider the request.
- 4.2 If parents do not take up the offered place before the end of the academic year of entry, then they would have to re-apply for a place in Year 1
- 4.3 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 may request this and should discuss it with the school as soon as possible. Such applications will be considered by the Trust on a case by case basis. Each case will be judged on its individual merits but to admit out of year group would require exceptional and extenuating circumstances and professional evidence explaining why the child's needs cannot be met in the chronological year group.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 Where a parent's request has been agreed, they **must** make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 The published admissions number for the school year 2020/2021 is 44.

- 4.10 Applications for admission to the **Reception Year** in September 2020 should be made in accordance with the Local Authority's co-ordinated scheme. The timescales for the application process are set out in the Starting School Booklet. **Parents applying for a place in the Reception Year under priority 3 or 5 should ensure that their form is endorsed by their vicar or priest. Failure to produce satisfactory evidence of church membership could result in the application being placed in a lower admissions priority.**

5. Twins and multiple births

- 5.1 Where the last available place is offered to a twin or multiple birth sibling the other twin or sibling(s) will be admitted to the school as exceptions to the infant class size rule.

6. Admissions priority order

- 6.1 Where applications exceed the number of places available the following priority order will be used to determine the offer of places. In the event where the application of the criteria below results in the situation where there are more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, the distance priority (6) below will be used as "tie-breaker" to resolve the matter.
- 6.2 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 measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The distance will be measured from the address point of the pupil's home to the school's front gate. Priority will not be given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.
- 6.3 In line with the School Admissions Code of Practice, priority will be given to "looked after children".
- 6.4 Pupils who have an Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement, even if the school is full.**
- I. All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after' but immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to adoption, child arrangement or special guardianship order. (see note 1)
 - II. Children who have a sibling attending the school at the expected time of admission (see note 2)
 - III. Children of whom at least one parent is a practising member of the Church of England (see note 3)
 - IV. Children of whom at least one parent is a practising member of another mainstream Christian church (see note 3)
 - V. Children of whom at least one parent is a practising member of other world faiths (see note 4)
 - VI. Children whose applications do not fall into categories 1,2,3,4,5, will be admitted in order of proximity of home to school, measured as a straight line from the school's front gate to their home.

Note 1. A “looked after” child is a child who is in the care of the local authority, or being provided with accommodation by the local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989. A previously ‘looked after’ child is one who immediately after being ‘looked after’ became subject to adoption, residence or special guardianship order. An ‘adoption order’ is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and now includes those adopted under the Adoption Act 1976. A ‘child arrangement order’ is an order setting 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. Under section 8 of the Children Act 1989 defines ‘special guardianship order’ as an order appointing one or more individuals to be the child’s special guardianship (or special guardians)

Note 2. A sibling refers to 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.

Note 3. Practising members of the Church of England or other mainstream Christian Churches means that at least one of the child’s parents is baptised and that the parent attends the principal act of worship of the church at least once a month for a period of twelve months prior to the date of application and is continuing so to attend at the time when the Trust considers the application. Application forms must be endorsed by the priest or minister of the church.

Should applicants have moved into the area within the twelve months before the closing date for applications, then a letter from the priest or minister of the previous church will be needed to confirm attendance.

Note 4. A practising member is defined as one who has attended faith meetings at least once a month in the period of twelve months prior to the date of application and is continuing to do so at the time when the governors consider the application. Application forms must be endorsed by an official of the faith community.

7. Fair Access Protocol

- 7.1 Pupils identified for admission through the In-Year Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted before other pupils on the waiting list even if the school is full.

8. Application forms for the Reception Year and Years 1- 6

- 8.1 These are available from the school or Local Authority. Parents can also apply online or a form can be downloaded from the Local Authority website. Completed forms should be submitted by the published deadline. Requests for admission into year groups other than Reception should be made on the In-Year application form and in accordance with the Local Authority’s co-ordinated scheme for In-Year admissions. The form is available from the school or Local Authority and can also be downloaded from the Local Authority website.

9. Waiting List

- 9.1 All children who are unsuccessful with their application will be placed on a waiting list and if places become available pupils will be admitted using the above mentioned criteria. The waiting list for all year groups will be maintained for one academic year.

10. Appeals Procedure

- 10.1 Parents who have been refused a place for their child have a right to appeal to an independent panel (except Nursery) and information about the appeals process will be sent to them. The appeal should be sent to the Clerk to the Appeals Panel. Parents have a right to attend or be represented at the appeal hearing. Legal representation will seldom be necessary or appropriate.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1 The Trust has delegated to the Academy Council / Regional Academy Executive 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.
- 11.2 The policy will be reviewed annually.