

ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ADMISSIONS POLICY

2020/2021

School Ethos statement

St John's Church of England Academy values highly its Christian ethos, its close links with local Churches and the Diocese of Durham. We provide a distinctively Christian, yet inclusive, environment in which each child is motivated to acquire skills for life and a love of learning. As a church school, we welcome applications from Christian families, and those of other faiths or none. We ask all parents applying for a place at our school to respect this ethos and its importance to the whole school community.

Introduction

The governing body are the admissions authority for the academy. Governors made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2014 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities. This arrangement follows consultation with the Local Authority, all other schools in the area and all other Admission Authorities in the area.

Our admission limit to the Reception year in 2020 is for 30 pupils.

Admission arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2020

Parents (*Parent* is defined in law (*The Education Act 1996*) as either: any person who has 'parental responsibility' (defined in the *Children Act 1989*) for the child or young person; or any person who has care of the child or young person) wishing to apply for the Reception Year in September 2020 must complete the common application form provided by the home Local Authority (LA). **This form must be completed even if your child attends our Early Years Unit** or other school nursery /pre-school setting. The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents/carers live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than **15 January**. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered after all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by the home LA.

Over-subscription criteria

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming St John's Church of England Academy will always be offered places. If there is then greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because, immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order.

By a "looked-after child" we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. An

adoption order is one made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46).

A 'child arrangements order is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14).

A 'special guardianship order' is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order).

2. Children previously in state care outside of England. This refers to children who were previously in state care outside of England, and have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Children previously in state care outside of England means children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings. In the case of children adopted from state care overseas, the admissions authority will require evidence that a child is eligible by asking the child's parents or carers for appropriate evidence of their previously looked-after status.

3. Children who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that their child attends St John's Church of England Academy rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from a doctor or other appropriate professional person involved with the family.

When applying under criterion, you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring St John's Church of England Academy. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child's or your own case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

4. Children who have an older sibling attending the academy at the time of their admission. Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.

5. Faith place: Children of practising Christian families at the heart of any Anglican church, or church in a Covenantal relationship with the Church of England, and wish their child to be educated in accordance with the teachings and practice of the Church of England. 'At the heart of the church' means they are regular worshippers, which normally means one who worships usually once or twice a month. To accommodate difficult patterns of work and relationship, account will be taken of week-day worship. The worshipper could be the child for whom the application is made or one or both parents. Applications for faith places must be supported by a completed supplementary form ('Application for a Faith Place') and supported by an authorised minister or two office holders of the church or faith community

6. Children who live nearest to the school: The deciding factor will be the distance from the front door of the home address (the front door of a block of flats) to the main school gate as

designated by the Local Authority. This will be measured using the local authority's GIS system/the local authority computerised measuring system with those living closest to the school receiving priority.

7. Other children

Distance Tie breaker

Where there are places for some, but not all, applicants within a particular criterion, distance from the front door of the home address (the front door of a block of flats) to the main school gate as designated by the local Authority will be the deciding factor. This will be measured using the local authority's GIS system/the local authority computerised measuring system with those living closest to the school receiving priority. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the academy will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.

Home Address

The home address is used for applying the admissions criteria. This must be where the child mainly resides Monday to Friday. You must not give the address of child minders or other family members who share in the care of your child. For parents with more than one property, reference should only be made to the property in which they and the child (children) mainly reside. If the main address has changed temporarily, for example, where a parent resides with extended family during a period of sickness or takes up temporary accommodation due to building works/renovation, then the home address remains that at which the parent was resident before the period of temporary residence began. However if you have sold your property (exchanged contracts) and have moved into temporary accommodation, you will be required to provide evidence of your situation and a decision will be made based upon the evidence provided. Where there are shared care arrangements, the home address will be where the child resided for the majority of the week or where a court has determined their home address should be. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

Waiting Lists

The school maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place, and the parents ask for the child's name to be added to the waiting list. The order of priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over-subscription, and does not depend on the date on which an application is received. No account is taken of length of time on a waiting list. The school periodically seeks confirmation that parents wish a child to be kept on the waiting list. Waiting lists will be maintained until 31 December of the admission year.

Fair Access

The school participates in D

Darlington's LA's Fair Access Protocol. This covers, for example, children who have moved into our area after the normal admission round, or who need to move school as a result of severe bullying or social issues. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

Multiple births

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both twins (and all the children in the case of other multiple births) even if this meant

exceeding the agreed admission number for Reception or the number of places in other year groups in the relevant admission year.

Appeals

Where a parent has been notified that a place is not available for the child, every effort will be made to help the parent to find an alternative school. Parents who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals are available from the school.

Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school

The School Admissions Code requires school admission authorities to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. However, a child is not required to start school until they have reached compulsory school age following their fifth birthday. For summer born children (those born after 1 April) this can sometimes be almost a full school year after the point at which they could first be admitted.

Some parents may feel that their child is not ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents are entitled to request in writing that:-

- their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age, or
- the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age The school will hold any deferred place for the child, although, in the majority of cases, we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.
- the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until the term after the child reaches compulsory school age.

The child must, however, start school full-time in the term after their fifth birthday.

If parents of summer born children wish to defer entry as outlined above and wish them to be admitted to the Reception Year in the term following their fifth birthday, rather than year 1, then parents should apply at the usual time for a place in September of the current academic year together with a written request that the child is admitted outside of his or her normal age group to the Reception Year in September the following year providing supporting reasons for seeking a place outside of the normal age group. This should be discussed with the Head Teacher as soon as possible. If their request is agreed, and this should be clear before the national offer day, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before any place is offered and they should reapply in the normal way for a Reception place in the following year. If their request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any offer of a place in the current academic year (NB it will still be subject to the over-subscription criteria in this policy) or to withdraw their application and apply for a year 1 place the following year. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full with children transferring from the previous Reception Year group.

Further information and advice on the admission of summer born children is available from The Admissions Team at Darlington Local Authority, DFE guidance and admissions code on The Gov.UK website (WWW.gov.uk?government/publications/school-admissions-code).

Appeal where application is outside normal age group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits

and circumstances. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the head teacher in advance of applying for a place. The governors may ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.