



St John's
Church of England
Academy

Part of the



**Durham &
Newcastle
Diocesan
Learning
Trust**

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2024-2025

ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

Headteacher: Mr M Ramsay B.A (Hons) Primary Education

www.stjohnsceaacademy.co.uk

School Ethos Statement

St John's Church of England Academy values highly its Christian ethos, its close links with St John's Church, other 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, enabling them to be the best they can be. 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

We intend to admit up to 30 pupils to the Reception class each academic year. The DNDLT Trust Board are the admissions authority and have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code, 2021 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.

Admission Arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2024

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for the Reception Class in September must complete the common application form provided by Darlington Borough Council (DBC). This form must be completed even if your child attends our nursery or other school nursery/pre-school setting. The form must be returned to Darlington Borough Council 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 out by the Local Authority.

Over-subscription Criteria

Children 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, previously looked after children**, but ceased to be so because, immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order and **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. (see Note 2 and Note 3)
- 2 **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



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must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family. (See Note 4)

- 3 **Children with a sibling link on the roll of the academy at the time of the application.** A sibling refers to a brother, sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother /sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner who lives at the same address as that sibling who will be attending the academy at the time of their admission. (See Note 5 & 6).
- 4 **Faith Place:** Children of practising 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. Families need to be 'At the heart' of the church and be regular worshippers, which normally means worships at least once per month. The worshipper could be the child for whom the application is being 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. Supplementary Forms can be obtained by accessing the LA's website at www.darlington.gov.uk/admissions and clicking on 'Apply online'. (See Note 7)
- 5 **Children who live nearest to the school.** This will be the distance from the front door of the home address (See note 8) to the main school gate as measured by the Local Authority. (See Note 6)

Tie Breaker

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the distance (see Note 6) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 5 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school 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.

All Other Admissions

Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. Applications must be made directly to the Local Authority. Admissions outside the normal age group will be dealt with as indicated below. If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria 1- 5 above), a place will be offered.

Waiting Lists



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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. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. 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 Darlington's Local Authority'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.

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.

Some parents may feel that their child is not ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday and the child's parents are entitled to:-

- defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made; and



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- where the parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age

If parents wish to exercise the above rights they should discuss this with the Head Teacher as soon as possible to confirm arrangements and specify their choice in writing as follows: -

- that they wish their child to attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age, or
- that 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.
- that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until the term after the child reaches compulsory school age provided this is not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year.

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 Headteacher 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 class 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 **Admissions Department at the Town Hall, Darlington.**

Admission Outside Normal Age Group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group should be made in writing and 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 Headteacher in advance of applying for a place. Parents should apply in the normal way together with a written request that the child is admitted outside of his or her normal age group to



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the requested year group in September the following year, providing supporting reasons for seeking a place outside of the normal age group. 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.

Appeals

There are established arrangements for appeals against non-admission. Details are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. It should be noted that, in the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school does not consider any further application in the same school year (1 September – 31 August), unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment area to inside it.

Parents who wish their children to attend the school are most welcome to visit. Arrangements can be made through the school office.

Notes

Note 1

“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.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school for advice.

Note 2

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).



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Note 3

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.

Note 4

When applying under criterion 3 (exceptional medical or social needs), 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.

Note 5

By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/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. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 6

The distance from the home address (see note 8) to the school will be measured by the LA using the shortest walking route judged to be safe (lit at regular intervals and paved/tarmacked).

Note 7

Families need to be 'At the heart' of the church and be regular worshippers which normally means worships at least once per month over a period of at least 12 months. The worshipper could be the child for whom the application is being 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. Supplementary Forms can be obtained by accessing the LA's website at www.darlington.gov.uk/admissions and clicking on 'Apply



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online'. In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for worship, the requirements of these admission arrangements in relations to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

Note 8

By normal home address, we mean the child's home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. 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.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with his/her GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.



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We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, before considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.



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Application for a Faith Place

This form must be completed by the parent/carer for whom application is made if they are applying for a place at St John's Church of England Academy under criterion 5 of its admission policy. The information provided will be used in accordance with the data protection act 1998.

SECTION 1

Child's details

Legal Surname ... Surname Used

First Name (s) Middle Name(s)

Date of birth: Boy [] Girl []

Home Address:

Post Code:

SECTION 2

Parent/Carer's details

Title: Mr [] Mrs [] Miss [] Other

First name(s)..... Surname

Relationship to Child

Do you have Parental Responsibility for this child? Yes [] No []

Daytime Tel no: Mobile no:

SECTION 3

Church/faith community details

Place of worship:



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The worshipper is:

The child ☐ One of his/her parents/carers ☐ One of his/her family ☐ (please tick)

If you have attended the church/faith community for less than one year, an additional 'Application for a Faith Place' form is needed from your previous church/faith community to support your application.

SECTION 4

Minister's Endorsement

The named parent/carer in section 2 has applied for admission of their child to St John's Church of England Academy for a place under criterion 5 of its Admissions Policy and require this section to be completed by a minister or two office holders of the church/faith community.

1. Please tick to indicate the length that the child or parent/carer has been known to the church/faith community:

- ☐ Has been known to the church/faith community for **at least one year**.
- ☐ Has been known to the church/faith community for **less than one year**.
- ☐ Is not known to the church/faith community or unable to support the application.

2. Please tick to indicate the capacity in which the child or parent/carer is known to the church/faith community, where applicable.

- ☐ As a worshipper at the church/faith community
- ☐ Other

3. Please tick to indicate the statement which best describes the pattern of worship of the child or parent/carer, where applicable.

- ☐ Worships typically at least once a week.
- ☐ Worships typically at least once a month.
- ☐ Worships typically less than once a month.

4. Other information relevant to the application

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5. I confirm that I am a minister or office holder at the named church/faith community in section 3. I confirm that all the information given is accurate. I am aware that any place offered on false information may be withdrawn.

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Position held:

Contact Details:

SECTION 5

Parent/Carer's signature

I am the parent or have parental responsibility for the child named. I confirm that all the information given is accurate. I am aware that any place offered on false information may be withdrawn. If my circumstances change, e.g. house move, I will inform Darlington Borough Council in writing.

Signed:

Date:

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED BY 15 JANUARY PLEASE RETURN TO – SCHOOL ADMISSIONS, TOWN HALL, DARLINGTON, DL1 5QT

