

DIOCESE OF

ST ALBANS

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Trust

Admissions Policy

Thomas Whitehead CE Academy

2023 - 2024

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	Mike Bailey
Date of ratification	28 th February 2022 *consultation period 13/12 – 24/01
Date of next review	Autumn 2022 for 2024/2025

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

Thomas Whitehead CE Academy is part of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) family. At Thomas Whitehead CE 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 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

- 1.1 Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy is a member of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust. In common with all church schools, we aim to provide the best possible education for each of our pupils within the context of a caring, Christian community.
- 1.2 As a Values school, we are committed to reflecting the essence of Christian Values within this policy.
- 1.3 The school 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, 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).
- 1.4 The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust is responsible for the admission of pupils to Thomas Whitehead Church of England 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 2023.

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 15/30 hours per week term time only through Central Bedfordshire Council and top up fees for any non-funded sessions are charged per session (morning or afternoon) which is paid in advance. 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 the school main office and completed forms should be returned there.

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 February 2023. Parents are notified of the outcome within two weeks of the closing date.

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The intended number of admissions to Nursery for the school year 2023/2024 is 34. 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.

Application forms are available from the school main office and completed forms should be returned there.

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 their child to be educated "out-of year group" i.e. in 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 (if available) 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.

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- 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 2023/2024 is 30.
- 4.10 Applications for admission to the **Reception Year** in September 2023 should be made to their home Local Authority https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions. 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 The Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust, as the admission authority will admit over the school's published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated the last available place as an exception 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 are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement, even if the school is full.**
- 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 living within the catchment area who have siblings attending the school at the expected time of admission (see definition)
 - c) Children of whom at least one parent is a practising member of the Church of England (see definition)

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- d) Children living within the catchment area of the ecclesiastical parish of Thomas Whitehead
- e) Other children with siblings at the school at the time of admission
- f) Children of staff at Thomas Whitehead CE Academy
- g) Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address (see note 4)

Note 1. 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).

An 'adoption order' is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'child arrangement order' is an order setting out the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 12 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)

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society."

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.

www.achurchnearyou.com

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 pupil's home address will be regarded as the address of the parent / carer 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 / carers at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which 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 original official documentation e.g. council tax bill, a recent utility bill (gas, electricity or water), a rental agreement, child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information. The home address will be measured using the computerised, 'straight line', mapping system operated by the LA. [My Central Bedfordshire](#)

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Note 5. Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances: 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.

Fair Access Protocol

- 7.1 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. Children will also be admitted above the PAN if necessary.

In Year Application

- 8.1 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. [Applying for a place during the academic year.](#)

9 Waiting List

- 9.1 In the event of more applications than available places the School Admissions Team will maintain a waiting list. These applications will go onto this list in a position determined by the criteria. If a place becomes available in the school, it will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list. The same process applies when applying for a place during the 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 School Admissions Team at the LA. Parents have a right to attend or be represented at the appeal hearing. Legal representation will seldom be necessary or appropriate. [LA Admissions Appeals Procedure](#)

11 Monitoring and Review

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 The policy will be reviewed annually.

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