

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Trust

Admissions Policy

**Thomas Whitehead Church of
England Academy**

2026 - 2027

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	J Jenkins
Date of ratification	17th December 2024
Date of next review	Autumn 2025 for 2027/2028

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. 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 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.

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Statement of Intent

Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy is part of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) family. At Thomas Whitehead Church of England 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 called the 'published admissions number'. The Published Admission Number for the school is 30.

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

- a. Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy is a member of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust. In common with all church schools, it aims to provide the best possible education of each of its pupils within the context of a caring, Christian community. As a values school, Thomas Whitehead Church of England Academy is committed to reflecting the essence of Christian values within this policy.
- b. The school serves primary-aged children, from Year R to Year 6 in the parish of Houghton Regis and surrounding area. ~~The Academy is fortunate to have its own Early Years provision (Nursery and Pre-school) within the school grounds for children aged 2+.~~ Parents, carers and grandparents are most welcome to visit the school ~~and 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).
- c. 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 admissions to the Reception class for 2026-27.
- d. The school does not have any specific units or facilities for pupils with particular special needs and there are no specific facilities for pupils with physical disabilities. The school is however on a fairly level site, and all the accommodation is on one floor; there are also ramps at the main entrance and at the entrance to the playground. All classrooms may be entered without steps. As far as possible, the school will ensure that pupils with disabilities have access to the same opportunities as other pupils. As a Church school we welcome applications for children of all faiths and of none. As an inclusive school, children with any special education needs will be treated as fairly as all other applications for admission.
- e. The Local Authority (LA) operates an agreed co-ordinated admissions scheme in line with government legislation. The LA will manage the process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published each year. The Trust, as the Admission Authority, will allocate the available places in line with this policy.

2. Admissions to the reception year and application process

- 2.1 Information for Central Bedfordshire residents on completing the 'on line' application by the closing date of 15th January 2026 and notification dates of admission decisions are published in the Local Authority school admissions booklet, which is also available from their website: [Central Bedfordshire School Admissions](#) Parents living outside the Central Bedfordshire Council area must make an application via their home local authority.
- 2.2 All applications **must** be made on the **home** Local Authority's Common Application Form (CAF). The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the home LA is as advertised by that authority. Parents applying for a place under category 2.10(c) should note that failure to provide satisfactory evidence of church attendance could result in the application being placed in a lower admission category (see definitions).

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- 2.3 The school is required to abide by the maximum limits for infant classes (5, 6 and 7 year olds), i.e. 30 pupils per classteacher.
- 2.4 The school provides for the full-time admission of all successful applicants who have reached their 4th birthday by the beginning of September 2026. However, please note the following:
- (a) ~~These arrangements **do not** apply to entry to our Nursery or Pre-school intake (please see the separate admissions arrangements on the school website).~~
 - (b) ~~Parents of children currently in our Nursery or Pre-School **must** re-apply for a place in the Reception class.~~
 - (c) ~~Attendance at our Nursery or Pre-school **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 (born 1st April to 31st August) may only have admission deferred until the start of the summer term.
 - (e) If parents so wish, a child may attend on a part-time basis until the child reaches compulsory school age.
- 2.5 If parents do not wish their summer-born child to start school before the child reaches compulsory school age, then they would normally need to make an in-year application for a place in Year 1.
- 2.6 However, where the parents of a summer-born child believe that their child will not be ready to start reception in September 2026, and wish to delay their child's admission to school until September 2027, they may make an application to the Trust in writing for their child to be educated out of year group, that is, in the reception Year rather than Y1. Parents should discuss this with the school as soon as possible and are advised to make their written request at the same time as making an application for admission to the school for a Reception place for September 2026 as part of the normal admissions round. Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire should also complete the local authority's delayed admission request form ([CBC Delayed Admission Request Form](#)). The Trust will decide the application on the basis of the individual circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child (please also see paragraph 7.1 below).
- 2.7 If the request for out of year group education application is agreed, then the application for a Reception place for September 2026 can be withdrawn and a new application must be made in the following year's admissions round for a place in the reception class in September 2027. Parents whose home local authority is Central Bedfordshire must make a **paper** application in that admission round. There is no guarantee that a place will be available in that year group.
- 2.8 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

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for the September following the child's fifth birthday. Parents do not have the right of appeal against a decision not to admit their child to a year group outside their normal year group.

- 2.9 The Trust will admit a pupil with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school. These children will be admitted before any oversubscription criteria are applied.
- 2.10 When there are more applications than there are places available, the Trust will admit pupils according to the following criteria in order of priority.
- (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)
 - (b) Children living within the catchment area who have siblings attending the school at the time of admission
 - (c) Children of whom at least one parent is a practising member of the Church of England or any other Christian church
 - (d) Children living within the catchment area
 - (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.
 - (h) Any other Children

Please see the "Definitions" section for a more detailed explanation of these criteria.

3. Notes

- a. 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 mapping system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The local authority will measure the distance from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the Trust, namely the school's front gate. In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the Synergy Admissions database to allocate the place.
- b. Pupils who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that name the school will be admitted to the school, even if the school is full.
- c. Where a place is offered to one twin or multiple birth child the other twin or multiple birth sibling(s) will also be admitted, even if the school is full and, if necessary over PAN and/or as exceptions to the infant class size rule.
- d. Pupils identified for admission through the 'Fair Access Protocol' will also be admitted even if the school is full and above any children on the continuing interest list (and over PAN, if necessary). Parents of children who are entitled to be considered under the Fair Access Protocol may also make an in-year application to the school.

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Definitions

'Looked after' children

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).

Previously looked after children will be prioritized under category 2.10(a) if they were looked after immediately before being adopted or becoming subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order. 'Adopted' refers to an adoption order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'child arrangements 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)

In state care outside of England means in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Sibling

A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or fostered brother or sister where care has been arranged by a local authority, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the applicant should be living at the same address as the sibling. Where the applicant lives at more than one address, the sibling must live at the same address as the applicant child for the majority of the school week. The sibling must be on the roll of the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

Practising Members of the Church of England or any other Christian church

Practising members of the Church of England or any other Christian Church means that at least one of the child's parents has attended a service of public worship at least once a month for a period of at least twelve months prior to the date of application at any Church of England church or any other Christian church which is a member of Churches Together in England, the Evangelical Alliance or Affinity. Parents applying under this category must also complete the Central Bedfordshire Church of England Confirmation of Religious Affiliation form and have this countersigned by their priest or church leader using this form [Applying for a school on religious / faith grounds | Central Bedfordshire Council](#); you can also request a copy of the form from the school office. All completed Religious Affiliation forms must be returned direct to Central Bedfordshire School Admissions.

Catchment

The catchment area is the ecclesiastical parish of Houghton Regis. Parish boundaries can be checked by visiting this website: www.achurchnearyou.com and typing "Houghton Regis" into the search box. Please contact the school office for assistance if you have any difficulties in accessing

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this map online.

Children of staff (2.10(f))

Priority under this category will be given 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. The staff member must be the child's biological or adoptive parent or have legal parental responsibility for the child and the child must live permanently at the same address as the staff member.

Home Address

The address given on the application form must be the child's permanent home address at the closing date for applications.

If a child lives at more than one address because childcare arrangements are shared, the Trust will consider the address for admission purposes to be the one where the child lives for the majority of the time, unless the application is supported by a copy of a Court Order stating that a different address must be used for school admission applications.

If a child lives at two different addresses equally, the application must include a copy of any Court Order which states the address to be used for school admission purposes. Where there is no such Court Order in place, parents should make a single joint application naming one address. If a joint application is not submitted, a range of evidence will be requested to enable the Trust to determine the principal parental address for school admission purposes.

Please note that applications submitted by separated parents will be subject to the same address verification checks as all other applications.

4. In-Year Admissions

- 4.1 Children will be admitted at other ages where there are vacancies. Requests for admission into other year groups should be made to the Central Bedfordshire Admission Team: [Applying for a school place during the academic year](#). In considering any applications for in-year admissions the Trust will take account of the Infant Class Size Limit.
- 4.2. Parents of children entitled to be considered under a Fair Access Protocol may also make an In Year application to the school as described in 4.1.

5. Waiting List

- 5.1 All children who are unsuccessful with their applications will be placed on a waiting list. Applications will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria in 2.10 above and the list will be re-ranked each time a new name is added to the list, so a child's place in the list can change as other children join or leave it. Waiting lists for all year groups will be maintained until the end of the summer term of the academic year of intended entry.

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6. Appeals Process

6.1 Parents who have not been allocated a place for their child have a right to appeal to an independent panel and will receive information about the appeals process with the refusal email or letter from the local authority: [School Admission Appeals](#)

7. Applications for education out of year group

Children are normally educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet their individual needs. However if parents wish their child to be educated in a different group they must make a request in writing to the Trust, at the time of application, for their child to be admitted out of year group and should enclose with their request any evidence they wish the Trust to consider in support of that request. Requests should be made by letter addressed to the Trust. The Trust will make its decision in the best interests of the child, based on the individual circumstances of each case, including the view of the child's parents and of the headteacher; the child's social, academic and emotional development; where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether or not the child has previously been educated out of year group; and whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. If the request is agreed there is no guarantee that a place will be available in the desired year group and if the request is denied there is no right of appeal from the Trust's decision; reasons will however be given for the Trust's decision. Please see paragraphs 2.5 to 2.8 of this policy for applications for delayed entry to Reception of summer-born children].

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 The Trust Board is the admission authority for the Academy and has the responsibility for reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The policy will be approved by the Trust Board and promoted and published throughout the Trust.

8.2 The policy will be reviewed annually.

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