



**Elements**

**Diocesan Learning Trust**

Flourishing together, in the love of God.

# **Admissions Policy**

**Date Approved: October 2022**



## OUR VISION

Our vision has been developed to enable the coming together of like-minded Primary Schools in Dudley – schools that are separate, discrete **elements** that choose to coalesce as a cohesive whole to speak with one shared voice in education for the Borough. Each person in these school communities, children, and adults alike, are also **elements** in bringing to fruition an education that enables their own flourishing and that of others. They are unique individuals, each with their own agency and characteristics, but who have an exponential effect when working together with a shared vision and purpose.

This is the vision in which the headteachers, governors and wider stakeholders have placed their trust and it is essential that it is upheld at every stage.

Each school, despite sharing some similarities, has its own unique context, community, culture, ethos, vision, and values. These will be honoured at all times as part of Elements Diocesan Learning Trust.

The vision is deeply rooted in, and is an outworking of, the Church of England's Vision for Education. Elements Diocesan Learning Trust is committed in being 'Deeply Christian: Serving the Common Good', inspired by the particular scripture in John 10:10 where Jesus declares ***'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'***. These words, combined with the vision's four main guiding **elements** - educating for Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills; Hope & Aspiration; Community & Living Well Together; and Dignity & Respect form the core vision for Elements Diocesan Learning Trust. At times, it is expected that interpretation of what the vision means in practice will vary between individuals and that there will be differences of opinion. At such times, discussion around decisions and actions will be respectful, honouring the four strands of the vision itself and remembering the original reasons for this collaboration.

These core **elements** of the Church of England's Vision for Education have supported the formation of our founding core values:

## OUR VALUES

- **Wisdom** – The decisions we take are wise and are based on informed discussions and evidence and aimed at ensuring we achieve the best outcomes for all without forsaking our values
- **Hope** – we have hope for a positive future and always finding positive outcomes
- **Honesty** – we are honest with all inside and outside our organisation, whilst being sensitive to how we deliver these messages
- **Community and Helpfulness** – we work in co-operation and partnership with all staff and wider stakeholders
- **Dignity and compassion** – we treat all those within and outside our organisation with dignity, irrespective of the circumstances, and we show everyone compassion for the difficulties that they are experiencing
- **Respect** – we are respectful to all, dedicated to ensuring inclusivity and diversity with those that we work with and for others that meet and our actions may affect.
- **Integrity** – we have strong principles rooted in our Christian mission that lead our actions and decisions

## DOCUMENT SUMMARY

### PRINCIPLES:

*ELEMENTS DIOCESAN LEARNING TRUST HAS AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY WHICH AIMS TO MAXIMISE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET PARENTAL PREFERENCE. THE TRUST DOES NOT SUPPORT THE USE OF SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS POLICIES BASED ON APTITUDE OR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.*

**The admission arrangements set by the Trust ensure that the process is fair and equitable for all.**

### LEGAL CONTEXT:

#### SCHOOL STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORK ACT 1998 AS AMENDED BY THE EDUCATION ACT 2002

- The Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (Primary Schools)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2012
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children)(England)Regulations 2005
- School Admissions Code 2021

### DESIRED OUTCOMES OF ELEMENTS DIOCESAN LEARNING TRUST'S ADMISSION POLICY & SCHEME:

- To maximise the opportunity for parents' preferences to be met and for trust catchment children to be able to attend their preferred community or voluntary controlled primary school wherever requested.
- To enable parents to make informed preferences and to ensure that the Trust implements a fair and transparent admissions policy for the benefit of all parents who wish to express preferences for Elements' primary schools.
- To keep to the minimum the number of parents who are not allocated a place at any of their preferred primary schools.
- To ensure that all parents receive only one offer of a school place at the same time, irrespective of the schools or for which they are applying, through coordination of the process alongside Dudley Council.

## ELEMENTS DIOCESAN LEARNING TRUST PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NORMAL AGE OF ENTRY IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

Children will not be discriminated against as laid down by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, The Human Rights Act 1998 and The Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and The Equality Act 2010.

**All preferences, regardless of ranking, will be assessed against the following criteria to allocate the available places at our Trust primary schools that are oversubscribed i.e. receive more applications than can be accommodated.**

- a) First priority for admission shall be given to relevant looked after children or children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangement order, or special guardianship order.
- b) Second priority for admission shall be given to children with a “serious and ongoing medical condition” where the preferred community or voluntary controlled school is the most appropriate school to meet the condition. *See notes below for clarification.*
- c) Third priority for admission shall be given to children who have a brother/sister, half-brother/sister (where the children share one common parent), or step-brother / step-sister, living at the same address and who will still be attending the preferred school in the academic year 2023/24.
- d) Any places that remain available once the above applicants have been admitted will be filled according to those children who live closest to the school, determined by a straight-line measurement in metres, from the home address to the main entrance of the preferred school.

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### IMPORTANT NOTES THAT SUPPORT THE ABOVE CRITERIA

- Relevant looked after children means children who are looked after by a Council in accordance with section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 and who is (a) in care of a Council, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Council in the exercise of their social services functions.
- 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.
- An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoptions and Children Act 2002. A Child Arrangement Order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. 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 accordance with legislation, a child with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) will be offered a place at the school named in the EHCP as the most appropriate to meet the child’s individual needs, this may reduce the number of places available for children who do not have an EHCP.
- If applying under the medical criterion, parents must provide supportive information from their child’s Medical Consultant at the time of application in order to be considered under this criteria. This supportive information

should include information about the needs of the child and should detail the difficulties the child would experience if they attended another school. Parents should also indicate why the preferred school is the most appropriate to meet their child's medical condition rather than any other school. Neither the Academy nor the Trust will seek to obtain medical evidence on behalf of parents.

- Any child not obtaining a place in our Academy will be advised about the independent appeals process.
- Definition of brother or sister also relates to adopted or fostered children living at the same home address.
- The home address is considered to be the child's (along with their parents') genuine principal place of residence at the time of the allocation of places i.e. where they are normally and regularly living. If a child is resident with friends or relatives (for reasons other than guardianship), the friend's or relative's address will not be considered for allocation purposes. *NB If your address changes you must notify the Local School Board before the closing date for applications. **Trustees' reserve the right to withdraw a place subsequently found to have been based on fraudulent or intentionally misleading information.***
- Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the school week, then the home address will be determined as the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week. Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes. At least one item of proof must demonstrate where the child lives. It is expected that parents will agree on school places before an application is made, and it may be necessary to request evidence from the parents to confirm that this is the case. Elements Diocesan Learning Trust is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.
- Special conditions will apply in the event that one child from a set of twins or triplets does not gain admission to the preferred school through the admissions criteria. The Council will exceed the admission number for the school concerned to prevent separation of twins / triplets.
- Random allocation will be used as a tie-break in category (d) above to decide who has the highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the school is the same.

## DEFERRED ENTRY TO RECEPTION CLASS

Parents have the right to retain a place offered and request that their child be admitted to Reception Class later during the 2023/2024 academic year or until the term after the child reaches compulsory school age, if they so wish. Parents can also request that their child takes up the place part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

### **Application Process (Normal Age of entry into reception Class)**

All applications will be co-ordinated via the home Local Authority of the applicant. Further details and timescales are set out in the Local Authority's Co-ordinated scheme which is available from The Academy Office or Dudley School Admissions Service.

## ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF THEIR NORMAL AGE GROUP.

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. Parents should make their application to the relevant Trust Academy setting out the reasons why they believe their child should be taught outside their chronological age group.

In addition, the parents of summer born children (children born between 1 April and 31 August) may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out their normal age group – to Reception rather than Year 1. These parents will need to make an application alongside children applying at the normal age which should explain why they believe it is in the child's best interest to be admitted outside their normal age. This should include information such as professional evidence and why an exception should be made in the case of the child. A decision as to whether this is an appropriate course of action will be made by the Trust which will take into account the circumstances of the case.

**Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year group.**

## LATE APPLICATIONS

Preferences that are received after the closing date for receipt of applications will only be considered after applications that were received within the deadline have been dealt with.

Only in exceptional circumstances will a late application be considered alongside those applications that were made within the deadline. Supportive documentary evidence must be provided by the parent / carer at the time of application.

## WAITING LISTS

If a school is oversubscribed and children have been refused admission because other children have a higher priority for admission under the published admissions criteria, then those applicants who are unsuccessful will be asked if they wish to be placed on a waiting list.

Children on the waiting list will be ranked in accordance with the published admissions criteria and the list will operate from the point of allocation until the 31st August 2024. After this point the waiting list will no longer be in operation and places that become available will be allocated on a first come first served basis. If more than one application is received at the same time, the oversubscription criteria, as detailed on pages 5 and 6, will be used to determine which applicant will have the place.

Inclusion on a school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available there.

A child's position on a waiting list is not fixed and is subject to change during the year i.e. they can go up or down the list, depending on other children's applications.

Places that become available between the point of allocation and 31 August 2024 will be offered to children according to their ranking on this list i.e. those ranked highest will be offered first.

## REPEAT APPLICATIONS

It is not the Trust's Policy to consider repeat applications in the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in the circumstances of the applicant.

## THE TRUST COMPLIES WITH DUDLEY COUNCIL'S COORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME FOR NORMAL AGE OF ENTRY CHILDREN

### The Council's Coordinated Primary Admissions Scheme – 2023/2024 Academic Year

*The following scheme will apply to all primary school admission authorities within Dudley MBC.*

#### Part I – The Scheme

##### The Primary Common Application Form (PCAF)

1. Dudley Council will devise a standard application form known as a Common Application Form (PCAF), which will enable parents of children to apply for admission to Dudley primary schools.
2. Parents will be encouraged to complete an online application and paper forms will only be issued on request by the Admissions Service.
3. Parents will be issued with a leaflet explaining the application process and timetable during October 2022.
4. The PCAF will enable parents to express up to six school preferences in ranked order and to give reasons for those preferences.

##### Supplementary Application Forms

5. The Academy's Local School Board for which Dudley Council is not the Admissions Authority can require parents to provide additional information on a supplementary form where that information is relevant to the school's admissions policy. Where a supplementary form is required it must be returned to the school concerned by the published closing date.
6. If a school, where the Local School Board is the Admission Authority, receives a supplementary form it will not be treated as valid unless the parent has also completed the PCAF.
7. Parents will be required to return the completed PCAF to Dudley Council by **15 January 2023 (National Closing Date)**. **Applications received after this date will be treated in accordance with the procedure for late applications.**

##### The Process for Determining Offers & Timetable

8. Ranked preferences for maintained schools within Dudley are required to be received electronically from surrounding Council areas by 27 January 2023. These preferences will be merged into Dudley's database.
9. Ranked preferences for maintained schools outside Dudley Council will be forwarded electronically to the other Councils by 27 January 2023.
10. Where an admission authority chooses to apply its own admissions policy, Dudley Council will forward details of the applications received, together with any supporting information provided by the parent to the governing body by 13 February 2023.

11. By 3 March 2023 all admission authorities will have considered its applications and provided the Council (where it is not Admission Authority) with a list of those applicants in accordance with its admissions criteria.
12. Surrounding Councils will be sent electronic lists of pupils living within their area who have been provisionally allocated places in Dudley Schools by 10 March 2023.
13. Potential offers to be made by other Councils and admission authorities will be considered against the rankings made by the parents concerned and the highest ranked school for which the child meets the admission criteria will be provisionally allocated.
14. Dudley and surrounding Councils will send each other the results of the offers by 28 March 2023.
15. Where a Dudley child does not meet the admissions criteria for any of the preferred schools, a place will be allocated at the nearest Dudley school to the child's home address with a space available.

### **Decision Letters**

16. Email decisions to parents who applied online will be released after 2.00pm on 17 April 2023. Where the Council does not have email information for parents, they will be notified of their decision by letter issued 2nd class post on 17 April 2023
17. Offers being made to Dudley children on behalf of a voluntary aided school, a foundation or a school in the neighbouring Council will be sent by Dudley Council on behalf of the relevant admissions authority.
18. Dudley Council will notify Dudley applicants of all decisions relating to the preferences expressed on the PCAF, including those for other admission authorities within Dudley on this date.
19. This letter will provide information about the statutory right of appeal against decisions not to allocate places at requested schools and /or contact details for the appropriate admissions authority for advice.

### **Waiting Lists and Late Applications**

20. Dudley Council will maintain waiting lists for Community & Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools, and for those own admitting authority schools who have agreed for us to do so, from 17 April 2022 until the 31 August 2024. Further information is provided within the admissions policy.
21. There will be exceptional circumstances in which a late application will be considered for a Dudley School alongside those applications that were made within the deadline.

#### **Applications Made During the Year ( i.e. In-Year Admissions)**

22. Applications received for places in year groups other than at the normal age of entry to primary school will be treated as in-year admissions. The Local School Board will consider in year applications in accordance with the admissions criteria and school numbers.

### **Part 2 – Timetable for Coordinated Admissions Scheme**

15 January 2023 Closing Date for Return of Dudley PCAF.

By 27 January 2023 Details of applications to be sent to other Councils and to be received from other Councils.



- 13 February 2023 Details of applications to be sent to other Admission Authorities within Dudley.
- 3 March 2023 All Dudley Admission Authorities who allocate own places to provide the Council with list of applicants in criteria order.
- By 10 March 2023 Dudley Council and surrounding Councils to share results of 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of results.
- 28 March 2023 Dudley Council and surrounding Councils finalise allocation of places.
- 17 April 2023 Dudley Council to email/post letters to its residents advising them of the outcome of their school preferences (except for those parents of children with an EHCP).