
Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust

DBAT Nursery Admissions Code

Level: 1

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1) Policy Statement

Although the Trust is the overarching admissions authority for its Academies, it is the delegated responsibility of each Academy to determine their own admission arrangements for nursery classes and set them out in a policy to take account of their particular circumstances. It is essential that these policies are clear, fair and consistent both with Christian principles and this guidance.

2) The Responsibilities of Local Boards

a) Local Boards are responsible for:

- annually determining their nursery admission arrangements;
- carrying out any consultation on nursery admission arrangements;
- publishing admission arrangements on their websites.

b) These responsibilities cannot be delegated to the Principal so it is usual for a Local Board to set up a small admissions committee or subgroup.

3) Consultation on Nursery Admission Arrangements

Academies are responsible for carrying out any consultations on their nursery admission arrangements. If an Academy proposes to change its nursery admission arrangements then the proposed changes must be sent to the Diocesan Admissions Officer for approval before going out to local public consultation.

4) Determination and Publication of Nursery Admission Arrangements

Academies must determine or agree their nursery admission arrangements every year even if there have been no changes and no consultation has taken place. This determination should take place at the same time as the determination of main school admission arrangements. The “determination year” for school admissions is always the school year which is two years before the September admission, so for admission in September 2019 determination must take place in 2017/18, completed by January 2018. Once nursery arrangements have been agreed they must be published on the Academy’s website and a copy sent to the DBAT central team.

5) Guidance on writing nursery admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria

The two paragraphs below are from the School Admissions Code. While this code does not apply to nursery admissions, they are useful to consider when writing a nursery admissions policy. They show the principles of the admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria of school admissions:

‘In drawing up their admission arrangements, admission authorities must ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated.’

‘Oversubscription criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. Admission authorities must ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs, and that other

policies around school uniform or school trips do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child. Admission arrangements must include an effective, clear and fair tie-breaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated.'

Nursery admission policies should include:

- The age range of the nursery
- The number of places at the nursery
- The sessions offered
- Any charges (eg for additional hours)
- An explanation of how applications should be made, a copy of the application form and the closing date for applications
- The date when parents will hear whether their application has been successful
- A commitment to accepting all children who apply if there are places available

Oversubscription criteria

If there are more applications than places available the school will need to decide on and outline the criteria they will use when deciding which children will be allocated places. These should be written in a way that is easy to understand by parents, and should be fair, transparent and straightforward to implement. Schools may wish to consider one or more of the following (bulleted below) when deciding on oversubscription criteria and the order in which they are applied. (NB Children aged three or four years old who have an Education, Health and Care plan which names the school nursery must be offered a place.)

- Looked after Children (Children in Care) and all previously Looked after Children
- Children who are the subject of a recognised child protection plan (under current legislation and drawn up by social care services) where a specific school nursery placement is identified
- Siblings (either at the school or the nursery, or either)
- Date of birth - for example you may choose to allocate places in each school year group in date of birth order (oldest to youngest)
- Distance from school
- Children who are ordinarily resident in a defined catchment area
- Children who are already in your provision and wish to extend their hours with you
- Children of UK service personnel
- Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers

The final criterion should always be 'All other children'.

We do not recommend that faith is used as an oversubscription criterion for nursery admissions policies.

Any terms used (eg Looked after children, siblings) should always be defined within the policy. Any policy referring to a defined area must include a map of that area, with boundaries.

Tie Break

If it is not possible to distinguish between applicants in a particular category (a tie break), schools will need to consider how they will resolve this, eg, through random allocation. This should be detailed in the admission arrangements.

Waiting lists

Schools will need to consider if and how they operate waiting lists. Details of this should be included in admission arrangements.

Finally, schools should make it clear that a place in the nursery class does not guarantee a place in the reception class of the school.

6) Appeals

As nursery provision is non-statutory, the school's decision will be final. There is no formal right of appeal. However, the Local Board should establish a group to consider any concerns expressed by parents regarding the allocation of places. If they agree that a child should have been offered a place then the child should be offered the next available place.