

Dear School Leaders and Clerk to governors

Admissions Arrangements 2020-2021

The admission authority of voluntary aided maintained schools is the governing body. Similarly, the admission authority of an academy (whether previously VC or VA) is the academy trust. Every year 'admissions authorities' must produce their school's admissions arrangements (Admissions Policy) for the academic year which is two years ahead of the current school year. **This means that the process for determining the 2020-2021 admissions arrangements must now begin.**

For a single academy trust (i.e. with one school only) and for voluntary aided governing bodies, it is relatively straightforward understanding that the academy board (or the governing body) is responsible for producing the admission arrangements. However, where a school is an academy within a multi academy trust (MAT), you will need to check with your MAT where the delegated authority to deal with the individual school's admission arrangements sits. Usually, it will be delegated to the local governing body of the academy, but you must check with the MAT itself.

Statutory guidelines covering procedures, processes and timescales have to be followed. The key one to know at this stage is that the admissions arrangements must be determined by the admissions authority by 28th February 2019.

To support you in this important process, the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education has produced model admissions arrangements in partnership with our Admissions Consultants (the legal firm 'Stone King'). This is part of the Board's free 'Core Foundation Provision' for all church schools. We have prepared model admissions policies for primary, middle and secondary schools as well as an Explanatory Booklet and model SIFs (Supplementary Information Forms). Admissions authorities will need to tailor the finer points within these to fit their own context.

The model policies have the same wording as the ones which the Board of Education issued for 2019-2020 (and 2018-2019) except for the dates which have been updated for 2020-2021.

The model policies issued by the Board before 2018-2019 were significantly different to our current model policies. Schools using our current model policies in 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 for the first time had to consult on them at that time.

If your school consulted upon and adopted the model admissions arrangements last year or the year before

As the 2020-2021 model policies have no changes (other than dates) then, if your school has adopted and consulted upon the 2018-2019 or the 2019-2020 model policy and you use the 2020-2021 model policy now, you will not need to consult on your policy. You will however still need to formally determine the policy. The Explanatory Booklet includes a section dealing specifically with determination of admissions policies.

If your school is adopting the model admissions arrangements for the first time this year

If you have not used one of our model policies before but plan to do so this year, please read the Explanatory Booklet carefully as the consultation process which must be followed is detailed there and it has strict time limits.

If your school has consulted upon and adopted your own admissions arrangements

Schools are not required to use the diocesan model policies but must comply with the admissions code and timescales and must include us in their consultation.

If no changes, other than dates, are planned in your policy for 2020-2021 then there is no need to consult now subject to the rule that there must be consultation every 7 years (see the Explanatory Booklet and next section for details)

If your school has not consulted upon its admissions arrangements for 7 years

An important reminder that **all schools** must consult on their admissions arrangements at least once every 7 years even if there have been no changes. Admissions authorities which have not consulted since their 2013-2014 arrangements will, therefore, need to do so this year.

Explanatory Booklet

We have added 2 subsections to last year's 'version'. These are (iii) and (vi) and they are added to the 'Faith in the Oversubscription Criteria' section of the Explanatory Booklet (section C). Subsection (iii) clarifies the role of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland with regard to individual local churches. Subsection (vi) follows questions raised last year about Messy Church and Breakfast at Nine Services.

These are the 2 new subsections

(iii) By way of further explanation as to what constitutes a member of 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland', these are churches in the form of denominations, not individual congregations. 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' is an umbrella group and it includes the national ecumenical bodies (very basically defined as bodies which aim at achieving universal Christian unity and church union through international interdenominational organisations) for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. In the case of England this is 'Churches Together in England'. Again member churches are denominations in England at a national level, not individual local churches. However often the national offices of the church denomination will have lists of the local churches that are part of their denomination.

(vi) The question of whether attendance at Messy Church or Breakfast at Nine services (and similar type services) should count towards attendance at a Recognised Church has been raised. The diocesan view is that such attendance should count and indeed the model policy is not restrictive in that regard. However if a school considers that these services should not count then this will need to be made expressly clear in the admission arrangements. As these services are, usually, on a once a month basis, the alternative is to raise the minimum attendance at church requirement to more than once a month over the relevant period. If such changes are to be made to your existing arrangements then this will trigger a formal consultation.

When draft / finalised Policies must be sent to the Diocese

Please note if your school plans to have different criteria to demonstrate membership of faith or practice than those in the model arrangements then the admission authority **must** send a draft to the diocese for its observations **before** any public consultation. The finalised policy would also then need to be re-sent to the diocese as part of the full consultation.

This also applies if your school is seeking to have an Admissions Policy which is not based on our model policy.

Timetable for 2020-2021 Admissions

I have copied the full timetable from the Explanatory Booklet below. However it is important that the full Explanatory Booklet is read by admissions authorities.

October 1 st 2018 to January 31 st 2019	Consultation of 6 weeks to take place in this period
February 28 th 2019	Date by which governors must determine admission arrangements every year
February 28 th 2019 onwards	The governors must publish the determined admission arrangements on the school website and keep it on the website until the end of the Offer Year.
February 28 th 2019	Date by which Admission Appeal timetable is to be published on your school website
March 15 th 2019	Date by which determined arrangements are sent to the Local Authority
May 15 th 2019	Deadline for lodging objection to Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA)
August 8 th 2019	Deadline for governing bodies to provide admission arrangements information to the local authority to allow them to compile composite prospectus.
October 31 st 2019	National closing date for secondary school applications
January 15 th 2020	National closing date for primary school applications
March 1 st 2020	National offer day for secondary schools
April 16 th 2020	National offer day for primary schools

Please can all correspondence with the diocese about admissions arrangements be sent to Pam Clemett – pam.clemett@salisbury.anglican.org. Thank you.

With my best wishes to all admissions authorities,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Revell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Neil Revell
Lead School Improvement Adviser