

Chichester DBE

Admission Oversubscription Criteria Guidance

We recommend to all schools:

1) To prioritise all looked after children or previously looked after children; Faith schools must give top priority to such children of their faith group and top priority to those not of the faith group above all other applicants not of the faith. However, we recommend giving top priority to all such children. Such children are deserving of our compassion and should benefit from the Christian care expected in our schools.

2) To consider giving a high priority to children with special medical or social circumstances which affect their education or ability to get to school. This criterion is definitely NOT about educational needs. Usually there is a strong argument on physical / geographical grounds for a particular school. The Code indicates that this is an acceptable criterion, but schools must be clear whether it is the child's needs or the parents' needs which are considered, citing the example where either parent or child has a disability that might make travel to a school further away more difficult. It could be that both needs are important for primary but only the needs of the child for secondary. For this category, professional, written evidence must be provided. Schools must also give a clear explanation of how this evidence will be used, and state that it should set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the most suitable school and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school.

3) To admit a proportion of local children regardless of faith as appropriate to each school. The Dearing report highlighted the need for the Church schools, in the words of the late Lord Runcie when he was Archbishop of Canterbury, to Nourish those of the faith; Encourage those of other faiths; Challenge those who have no faith. Given this view of the schools as the centres of the Church's mission, as well as the need for community cohesion, the DBE encourages schools to provide a Christian service to as many local families as appropriate for their situation.

4(a) Where faith commitment is used as a criterion then regular attendance at worship must be the measure used. Worship attendance should generally be at public worship on Sundays or other days of the week. It must always be verified by a member of the clergy, or a church officer and it is recommended that a signed supplementary information form (SIF) is used rather than a reference which might be challenged in an appeal if it is not clear enough about how the criteria. We recommend that the parents/carers are responsible for returning this form to the school, not the clergy. It is important that the only information requested in any SIF is that needed for attendance at worship, other information is gathered in the CAF, the form used to submit an application to the LA.

4(b) To have clear, transparent criteria against which faith commitment will be assessed. The DBE recommends this takes the form of a single hurdle based on regularity of attendance over a set period of time. It is better to set a time period for when attendance will be measured, for example, two years at the time of application.

5) If you are considering making changes to your oversubscription criteria, you must consult with the diocese before going out to any wider consultation.