Diocese of Bath and Wells - Admissions Policy

**The Role of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE)**

Church of England schools must, as required by the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 1991, consult with their diocese about proposed admission arrangements before any public consultation. ‘Schools Admissions Code 2021.’

Therefore, one of the functions of the DBE is to review and respond to any proposed changes in a church schools’ admissions arrangements. Governing boards have a duty to consult the DBE before anyone else. Church schools are required to have regard to DBE guidance when formulating their admissions criteria. School Adjudicators refer to Diocesan guidance and expect a professional dialogue with diocesan advisers when determining objections about church school admissions arrangements.

**Diocesan Guidance for Admissions Authorities**

* Admissions authorities must ensure that they are compliant with the Schools Admissions Code 2021.
* Admissions authorities must consult on their admissions arrangements every seven years, even if no changes are to be made.
* We recommend that admission matters and key dates are planned into the operational calendar of the governing board.
* Admissions authorities must formally agree and minute their admissions arrangements every year, even if no changes have been made.
* Admissions authorities must publish their admissions arrangements on their website.

**Diocesan Guidance on the use of Faith Based Oversubscription Criteria**

In the instance that there are more applications than available places, the admissions authority must use their agreed oversubscription criteria to allocate places. The DBE does not give a definitive list of acceptable oversubscription criteria. The most common examples are set out in the Admissions Code 2021.

The Admissions Code states that: “Schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character (commonly known as faith schools) may use faith-based oversubscription criteria and allocate places by reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.”

However, after careful consideration The Diocesan Board of Education advises that faith -based oversubscription criteria should not be used in admission arrangements.

Church schools within our diocese are schools for all; those of the Christian faith, those of other faiths and those with no religious faith. Our schools are places for the whole community to be welcomed into with impartiality. If we believe in community and dignity, evidenced through just systems, we should not set up exclusive criteria but actively build communities and promote living well together whilst ensuring all are treated with dignity and respect. Bath and Wells Diocesan Board of Education advises that this principle is explicitly reflected within church school admission arrangements.

All church schools are inclusive, and sustainable, providing the highest quality of education for all pupils, enabling individuals and whole communities to flourish.

DBE Strategic Plan 2022