



Admissions and Appeals Guidance

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v1.0	Sept 2015	Jo Baker	Initial issue
v2.0	Sept 2018	Louise Beale	Review and update address to Craven Road
v3.0	Sept 2019	Louise Beale	Form removed from document
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1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMISSIONS

- 1.1. The Dioceses of Coventry Multi Academy Trust (the Trust) is the Admission Authority for the academies within the Trust.
- 1.2. The Academy Governance Committee of each academy is delegated to act on behalf of the Trust in respect to the management of academy admissions.

2. ADMISSIONS POLICIES

- 2.1. The Trust provides a trust wide admissions policy, Academy Governance Committees make recommendations in line with the needs of their community.
- 2.2. Amendments to the Trust wide Admissions policy must be sent to the Trust for review by **31st August** at the latest each year in order to ensure there is time for public consultation. The Trust will review the proposed changes to ensure they are in accordance with current Schools Admissions Code and equality legislation.
- 2.3. The Admission policy should contain:
 - the published admission number (PAN).
 - the oversubscription criteria. The highest priority should be given to looked after or previously looked after children
 - a statement that all children who name the Academy in their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) **must** be admitted
 - an effective, clear 'tie breaker' for two applicants who cannot be separated
 - a clear definition of what constitutes a home address and the evidence required
 - how distance from the academy is measured, including provisions for parents with shared responsibility
 - a clear definition of sibling including step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living at the same address
 - a clear definition of the supporting evidence required if social and medical need is used as an oversubscription criteria
 - clear information on how membership or practice of faith is to be demonstrated if priority is given in the admission arrangements on these grounds (supplementary information forms)
 - a statement that if the academy is not oversubscribed then all applicants must be offered a place regardless of academic ability, gender, religion, disability, ethnicity or country of origin
 - the process for dealing with in-year admissions
- 2.4. Admissions arrangements must be determined by **28th February each year** and the Trust must send their determined admission arrangements to the Local Authority as soon as possible before **15th March each year**.

3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR ADMISSIONS POLICIES

- 3.1. When changes to the current Admissions Policy are proposed the Trust must have completed the consultation process on the changes to their admission arrangements, including changes to any supplementary information forms where applicable, that will apply for admissions applications for the following academic year by **31st January**.
- 3.2. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult. However the Trust must consult on their admissions arrangements at least once every **7 years** even if there have not been changes in that period.
- 3.3. Consultation **must** last for a minimum of 6 weeks and **must** take place between 1st October and 31st January in the determination year.
- 3.4. The Trust must consult with:
 - (a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
 - (b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the academy have an interest in the proposed admissions such as nurseries, community groups and local churches;
 - (c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
 - (d) the Local Authority(s);
 - (e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities; and
 - (f) the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination including the Diocesan Board of Education
- 3.5. For the duration of the consultation period, the Trust **must** publish a copy of their full proposed admission arrangements (including the proposed PAN) on their website together with details of the person within the academy to whom comments may be sent and the areas on which comments are not sought.
- 3.6. The Trust **must** also send upon request a copy of the proposed admission arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed above inviting comment. Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals.
- 3.7. The Trust is not required to consult on the PAN for an Academy where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN but **must** consult where they propose a decrease to the PAN.
- 3.8. The Trust **must** notify the Local Authority of their intention to increase the PAN and reference to the change should be made on the website.

4. ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

Entry into Reception, Year 3 and Year 7

- 4.1. The Local Authorities (both Coventry and Warwickshire) operate a coordinated admissions scheme in compliance with the Schools Admissions Code. The purpose of the scheme is to simplify the admissions process for parents whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Coordination establishes a mechanism that ensures, as far as is reasonably practicable, that every parent of a

child who has applied for a place at a maintained school or academy is sent a single offer of a school place by the local authority in which their home address falls.

Details of the coordinated admissions schemes are available online at the following:

For Coventry schools: – www.coventry.gov.uk/admissions

For Warwickshire schools: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions

- 4.2. Parents who wish their children to be admitted to the academy must complete the Common Application Form and return it to the relevant Local Authority by the published date. If a Common Application Form is received by the academy it should be forwarded to the Local Authority **as soon as possible**.

Supplementary Forms

- 4.3. Where the Trust has opted to use supplementary forms as part of the admissions policy these should be returned to the relevant academy.
- 4.4. When supplementary forms are received by the academy the Local Authority should be informed **as soon as possible** so the Local Authority can verify if a Common Application Form has also been completed by the parent and, if not, contact the parent to ask them to complete one.

Processing Applications

- 4.5. The Local Authority will notify the academy of every application that has been made for the academy regardless of ranking by the date set out in the Coordinated Admission Scheme. The information provided to the academy will include all relevant details in order that the academy can apply their own oversubscription criteria to any waiting lists.
- 4.6. The Local Authority will list the applicants ranked according to the academy's oversubscription criteria by a date set down in the Coordinated Admissions Scheme.
- 4.7. Under the Coordinated Admissions Scheme parents will be notified if they have been allocated a place at the academy in writing by the Local Authority.

5. RIGHT TO APPEAL

- 5.1. Where a place at the academy has not been offered the parents will be notified of the reason that the place has not been offered and provided with information about their statutory right of appeal against the decision.
- 5.2. Parents who contact the academy regarding an appeal should be given the contact details for the Clerk to the Independent Appeals Committee and a copy of the Appeals Information Form to complete.
- 5.3. The contact for admissions appeals on behalf of the Multi Academy Trust is:

For Coventry Schools: Joanne Evans, Admissions and Appeals Officer, Diocese Board of Education, The Benn Education Centre, Craven Road, Rugby, CV21 3JZ

Email: joanne.evans@coventrydbe.org

Tel: 01788 422016

For Warwickshire Schools: Appeals are made online, here: [Appeal the outcome of a school placement – Warwickshire County Council](#)

6. LATE APPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Late applications (i.e. those received after the published closing date) will only be considered by the Local Authority after those who applied on time.

7. WAITING LISTS

- 7.1. After the allocation of school places the academy will be responsible for maintaining their own waiting lists. The position on the list will be determined by applying the published oversubscription criteria and not by date of receipt. This will mean a position will change if a later application is received from someone with a higher priority according to the oversubscription criteria.
- 7.2. A name will only be removed from the waiting list if a written request is received from the parent or if the offer of a place that becomes available is declined.
- 7.3. Periodically parents may be asked to confirm in writing if they wish to remain on the waiting list.

8. IN YEAR ADMISSIONS

- 8.1. An in-year admission application is one that is made outside of the normal transfer between schools, for example when a family moves house part way through the school year.
- 8.2. The Local Authority co-ordinates in year admissions for the academy. Applications should be made via the Common Application Form and should be sent directly to the Local Authority, the supplementary form if relevant should be sent to the academy.
- 8.3. The Local Authority will notify the academy if an in-year admission application has been received. Places available are determined by whether the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources. Where more applications have been received than places available the academy will apply the oversubscription criteria and inform the Local Authority of the application rankings.
- 8.4. The academy should notify the Local Authority Admissions Office within the number of days specified within the agreed time frames of receipt of an application if a place can (or cannot) be offered.
- 8.5. Decision letters will be issued by the Local Authority on behalf of the academy. These will include appeals information where an applicant has been unsuccessful.

9. IN YEAR ADMISSIONS WAITING LISTS

- 9.1. The academy will be responsible for maintaining a waiting list for places for in year admissions. The position on the list will be determined by applying the published oversubscription criteria and not by date of receipt. This will mean a position will change if a later application is received from someone with a higher priority according to the oversubscription criteria.
- 9.2. The waiting lists should be reviewed termly and parents may be contacted to see if they wish to remain on the waiting list.

10. IN YEAR FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOLS

- 10.1. The purpose of Fair Access Protocols is to ensure that, outside normal admissions rounds, unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable and hard to place children are offered a place quickly so that the amount of time a child is out of school is kept to a minimum. It should not be used as a means to circumvent the normal in-year admissions process.
- 10.2. Both Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council operate an in-year Fair Access Protocol (FAP) which is detailed in their Coordinated Admissions Schemes.
- 10.3. The academy should work collaboratively, taking into account the needs of the child and those of the academy. There is no duty to comply with parental preference when allocating places through the Protocol but it is expected the wishes of the parents are taken into account.
- 10.4. When seeking to place a child under a Protocol, all schools should be treated in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.
- 10.5. The academy must respond to requests by the Local Authority to admit a child under Fair Access Protocols within the agreed time frames.
- 10.6. It is expected that the academy will agree a starting date for the child or set out the reasons for refusal in writing to the local authority within the agreed time frames.
- 10.7. Where directed to take a child the academy can appeal by referring the case to the Schools Adjudicator within the agreed time frames. The Chief Executive Officer of the Multi Academy Trust must be informed **immediately** of the decision not to accept a child under the in-year fair access protocol before the Local Authority is notified.
- 10.8. If the academy has not agreed a start date for the child within the agreed time frames the Local Authority can apply for a direction from the Secretary of State via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Further information on dealing with in year fair access procedures is available from the DfE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-in-school-admissions>

11. MANAGEMENT OF THE APPEAL PROCESS

- 11.1. The Trust acts in accordance with all relevant provisions of the current School Admissions Code, and the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Education.
- 11.2. Parents will be offered the right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admissions decision.
- 11.3. The Independent Appeal Panel will be independent of the Trust and panellists will be trained to act in accordance with all relevant provisions of the current Schools Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code.

12. RECOVERING THE COSTS OF AN APPEAL FROM THE ESFA

- 12.1. Funding to help meet the costs of up to 20 appeal panel hearings is included in the budget for an academy.
- 12.2. Where an academy has more than 20 appeal panel hearings, academies can make a claim to the ESFA for £180 per admission appeal panel hearings above the 20 hearings already covered within the academy's funding.
- 12.3. To make a claim the Multi Academy Trust will submit an invoice and covering letter to the DfE setting out:
 - The total number of admissions appeal panel hearings held in the academic year: and
 - The total number of admission appeal panel hearings for which the academy wants to make a claim
 - That the claim is a true and fair one.

Records should also be kept of the costs incurred for auditing purposes.

13. HANDLING COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE APPEALS PROCESS

- 13.1. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on behalf of the Secretary of State cannot review or overturn decisions of independent admission appeals panels. It can only consider where panels were set up and acted in accordance with the School Admissions and the School Admissions Appeals Code.
- 13.2. There are three possible outcomes of the ESFA's investigation:
 - The appeal panel complied with the code
 - The appeal panel did not comply with the code but this or any maladministration has not caused an injustice in terms of a decision
 - The appeal panel wasn't set up in accordance with the code or there has been maladministration of the appeal process which has or may have caused an

injustice.

- 13.3. If the ESFA's finding is that the panel was not set up in accordance with the Code, or maladministration has or may have caused an injustice, it will require a fresh appeal to be heard by a new panel. If its findings are otherwise it is very unlikely that a fresh appeal will be required.
- 13.4. The Secretary of State, and the ESFA that acts on his/her behalf, cannot review or overturn the decision of an independent admissions appeal panel. The decision of the panel can only be overturned by the Courts where the appellant is successful in applying for a judicial review of the decisions.

Further information is available from the Department for Education Website.

APPENDIX - FORMS

Admissions Appeal Forms are available from the Trust website here:

<https://www.covmat.org/multi-academy-trust-policies/>