

The Diocese of Derby Admissions Guidance for Schools and Academies



Our Vision

To offer our children and young people life in all its fullness.

John 10:10

The Derby Diocesan Vision for Education is a local expression of the national vision for Education from the Education Office of the Church of England

The Church's commitment to education is at least as important today as in the past with the opportunity to offer a model of education that is both thoroughly Christian in its foundation and highly attractive to others in education because of the quality of its outcomes for children and young people.

There is no neutrality in education. Every school has a particular ethos, with commitments, beliefs and value-laden practices. Amidst the variety of approaches, we are confident that our vision of education for 'fullness of life' is one that fully deserves its place in twenty-first century Britain. It is a special strength that it achieves educational excellence in a broad framework within which pupils and teachers can pursue the big questions of meaning such as 'Who am I?', 'Why am I here?', 'What do I desire?' and 'How then shall I live?'

This vision of education is at once deeply Christian in its inspiration and healthily plural in its operation.

Admissions arrangements:

The Local Authorities Co-ordinate all Admissions arrangements. Derby diocese covers schools within Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council Local Authorities and procedures can be found at:

Derbyshire

https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/schools/school_places/primary_admissions/

Derby

<http://www.derby.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/primary-school-admissions/>

Determining Admission Policies and setting over-subscription criteria:

The Diocesan Board of Education must be consulted in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014. We encourage Governing Boards and Academy Boards to discuss fully how the school's admissions policy accords with its vision and the Church's vision for education and to look beyond the administration of places to how best to serve the local community in God's name.

Determining the policy: Whom do you serve?

When determining your admissions policy, the DBE advises Governing Boards to think about this question in relation to your vision and mission statement and your service to children in the local community. The National Society (2011) says 'Church of England schools should be able to show how their Admissions Policy and practice demonstrates the school's commitment both to distinctiveness and inclusivity, to church families and the wider community.'

It states that 'an obligation to recognise and make visible those who often remain invisible through ethnic or cultural disadvantage, or through disability or poverty should underpin every admissions policy and ensure that all children in the school have opportunities to engage at a profound level with faith in general, and the Christian experience and way of life in particular.'

Does your school offer a warm welcome to all? Or in striving to meet the requirements of the code and your trust deed could it appear that some children are more welcome than others?

The School Admissions Code 2014

The Code states that:

1.37 Admission authorities must ensure that parents can easily understand how any faith based criteria will be reasonably satisfied

1.38 Admission authorities for 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.

Derby Diocesan Board of Education (DDBE) recognise that Church of England schools are not faith schools for the faithful but church schools for the community. It is therefore the advice of DDBE that Church of England Schools in the Diocese of Derby should not set Church Criteria. Admitting authorities should have regard to this advice when setting their policies.

It is, however, for the Governing Board or Board of Directors to set the admissions criteria for their school(s) in full knowledge and understanding of their local context. If it is decided to use Church Criteria these are the DDBEs recommendations:

1. Church criteria must be as easy to understand as possible.
2. The only definition used should be attendance at church.

3. Although the National Society Guidance refers to Churches recognised by 'Churches Together in England' as there are many new Christian worshipping communities that each Church school may know and have a relationship with in its area, Governing Boards may wish to broaden this definition or name specific local Christian communities.
4. The definition of 'regular attendance' should be up to the Church Leader to decide based on their knowledge of the family and the context of their church.
5. Churches can use the opportunity of families coming to church to meet them and support their discipleship, rather than having to decide who is genuine or who comes most.
6. Schools may wish to provide a simple form for Priests to sign (a supplementary information form) or accept a letter.

Church attendance may also enable schools to facilitate places for children of a Parish priest where their home is chosen because of their place of work and when this is within the normal catchment of the school.

The DDBE understands Schools' desire to support local churches in the Diocesan purpose to be 'Shaped by God' as they develop and maintain their Christian Ethos.

The DDBE encourage schools to focus any Home-School Agreement, Prospectus and other relevant documentation on making Christian ethos explicit and highlighting how families can support the ethos of the school. Furthermore, working with local Christian Churches to support current services and develop fresh expressions of Church is a powerful and effective way of serving the Church and developing the school's ethos. We look forward to working with schools to do this and to sharing good examples.

Our advice is for each Admissions authority to formulate its own policy having regard to this advice and adhering to the Admissions Code.

Warm Fires and Open Doors

'By Warm Fires I mean a vibrant and attractive sense of our Christian Identity and by Open Doors I mean a real welcome to anyone and everyone to gather around the fire.'

The Bishop of Huntingdon

'True hospitality....makes welcome and relationship possible across boundaries of faith or race or background....that welcome is the authentically Christian way of life and we see it in our schools every single day...It means engaging meaningfully and explicitly with difference....it needs to stem from a belief that God is at work in all people and a willingness to be surprised by the forms that work might take.'

Archbishop Justin Welby

Extracts from 'The Fruit of the Spirit' A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education