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**Admissions Advice for Voluntary Aided Church Schools and Academies**

**September 2023**

Dear Colleague,

I hope that the new school year has stared well for you. There are some actions that need to take place this term concerning admissions, as the process for admission arrangements for the 2025-2026 school year must begin this term.

The [SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CODE](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001050/School_admissions_code_2021.pdf) contains the mandatory requirements and statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, schools adjudicators and admission appeals panels.

**Admissions Policy 2025-2026**

If you are proposing any changes, other than dates or adopting new wording/definitions that are DfE prescribed, there will need to be a full consultation – which is a legal process – between
1 October 2023 and 31 January 2024. The consultation must last for a minimum of six weeks and a number of bodies must be consulted, see [School Admissions Code](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001050/School_admissions_code_2021.pdf), 1.45 -1.48 (pages 18-19). Please contact me if you are proposing any changes to your 2025-2026 Admissions Policy, as soon as possible, for support with this. Also please note that church schools must consult with the Diocese, see [School Admissions Code](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001050/School_admissions_code_2021.pdf) section 1.38 (page 16).

There is also a statutory duty for admission authorities to consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period- I will be in touch with schools individually if this applies to your school.

Otherwise, if you are just changing dates, your proposed 2025-2026 Admissions Policy (and SIF, if religious criteria forms part of your oversubscription criteria) will need to be determined by
28 February 2024, please make sure that this is minuted. If you would like me to check that your proposed policy is compliant, before it is determined, please send me a copy by 31 October. These determined admissions arrangements must then be sent to George Beard and us and published on your website by 15 March 2024.

Please contact me at sue.todd@cofesuffolk.org or Georgina Beard george.beard@suffolk.gov.uk
if you need further information and assistance in reviewing your admission policy.

**Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies**

* If you are a **Voluntary Aided (VA)** school then you and your governors are the Admissions Authority for the school.
* If you are an **Academy in a Multi Academy Trust** (MAT) then the Directors of your Multi Academy Trust are the Admissions Authority for your school.
* If you are a **standalone Academy** then your Board of Directors is the Admissions Authority for your school.

Usually Boards of Directors delegate all operational powers to their Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) so all the school types above will largely ask the Headteacher, supported by governors, to manage the day to day running of Admissions, sorting out all Admissions in YR and managing in year admissions too. But the responsibility and accountability is as stated above.

The role of the Admissions Authority is to:

1. Manage the policy and any changes and alterations
2. Carry out a consultation if applicable
3. Determine the policy in good time for it to be sent to the

Local Authority george.beard@suffolk.gov.uk and the

Deputy Diocesan Director of Education sue.todd@cofesuffolk.org

by February 28 of the year preceding the year of the policy.

As always, if you have any queries about the contents of this email, please contact me.

With very best wishes for the new academic year

Sue

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Deputy Diocesan Director of Education
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