

# School Admissions Policies – please read and review your policy

**For the attention of:** headteachers and governing bodies of academies, free schools and voluntary aided schools (Headteachers and governing bodies of community or voluntary controlled schools do not need to do anything as the local authority manages their admission policy)

Having undertaken a review of most schools' admission policies, the Pupil and Student Services Team considers that many schools have some compliance issues. Please use the below checklists to determine whether your school's policy is compliant. We recommend all own admission authority schools consider this during the summer term board meetings, so if consultation is required, there is sufficient time to plan this for the autumn term (see end of this document). This will be for the policy for the 2027-28 intakes.

## Actions required:

- to consider the compliance of the school/academy admission arrangements with the School Admissions Code 2021 (checklist below to support this)
- to ensure compliance with the requirement for consultation (at least once every 7 years) by 31 January 2026
- to ensure the determined admission arrangements are published on the school website and sent to the local authority by 15 March 2026

Following the submission of admission policies for 2027-28 on 15 March 2026, the local authority will be referring to the School Adjudicator any admission policies that remain non-compliant.

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## Considering the Compliance of Admission Arrangements

**To assist you in deciding whether your admission policy is compliant or requires any changes, please consider your admission policy carefully against the following checklist:**

	Relevant section of School Admissions Code (2021)	Yes/no
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does your admission policy clearly state the PAN for your main school intake? (reception or year 7) If you increase your PAN, you must notify the LA and publish on your website that you are increasing your PAN. Any decrease in PAN requires full consultation (see the end of this document)</li></ul>	1.2 – 1.4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does your policy clearly state how parents can apply for places? If your policy refers to a closing date, please ensure this is clearly stated as 15 January (primary) and 31 October (secondary). (Do not use terms such as "as published by the council" to refer to the date).</li></ul>	15d and footnote 8	

	Relevant section of School Admissions Code (2021)	Yes/no
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your admission policy state that children with an Educational, Health and Care Plan <u>naming your school</u> must be offered a place? (any mentions of Statement of Special Educational Needs should be removed from your policy)</li> </ul>	1.6	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your admission policy state that Looked After Children, previously Looked After children and Children adopted from outside of England (IAPLAC) have highest priority for admission? (Faith schools can prioritise faith LAC above non-faith LAC)</li> </ul>	1.7, 1.37	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you provide a definition of Looked After, previously Looked After Children and Children adopted from outside of England in your policy? (Please remove any references to residence orders)</li> </ul>	1.7	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is your admission policy reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair and compliant with legislation (including Equalities legislation)?</li> </ul>	1.8	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our admission policy does not directly or indirectly disadvantage any particular racial/social group, child with a disability or special educational need, and any other school policies (school uniform, trips) do not discourage applicants (tick yes if compliant)</li> </ul>	1.7-1.9	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is an effective, clear and fair tie-breaker included in your policy for the occasion where there are two pupils to be offered a place who cannot be separated in any other way under your admission criterion?</li> </ul>	1.8	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our admission policy does not name any independent fee-paying schools as feeder schools (tick yes if compliant)</li> </ul>	1.15	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your admission policy clearly define what is meant by the term 'sibling' or 'brother/sister'? Please note whichever term you choose to use must be the only term that is consistently used throughout the policy. If using 'brother/sister' you need to be aware of equalities legislation.</li> </ul>	1.11-1.12	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our admission policy clearly defines how we measure distance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the point measured from</li> <li>- the point measured to</li> <li>- the unit of measurement</li> <li>- whether the measurement is straight line or walking distance</li> <li>- how distances to flats are measured</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	1.13	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your admission policy state clearly how you will manage situations where a family has shared responsibility for childcare? How will you define where the child 'lives'? <b>Have you considered and acted on the advice on child benefit provided by the School Adjudicator? i.e. child benefit can not be the sole piece of information used for decision making on a child's home address</b></li> </ul>	1.13	

	Relevant section of School Admissions Code (2021)	Yes/no
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our policy includes weblinks to external websites. We have checked the link is still valid and working</li> </ul>	n/a	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your admission policy refers to a catchment area, is this reasonable and clearly defined? Is a copy of your catchment area available to parents and published on your school's website? Is it clear how a parent can get a copy if they do not have internet access?</li> </ul>	1.14	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your admission policy uses medical/social needs as a criterion, is this clearly defined and is it clear what supporting evidence is required to fulfil this criterion, when this should be submitted and how it should be submitted? Decision makers should be making consistent decisions on such cases.</li> </ul>	1.16	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are any random allocation arrangements (including tie breakers) set out clearly and transparently (prioritising LAC, previously LAC and Children adopted from outside of England)? Random allocation must be supervised by someone independent of the school and a fresh round of random allocation must be made every time a place is offered from the waiting list.</li> </ul>	1.34-1.35	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your admission policy clearly state how waiting lists will be held including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that the waiting list will be held until at least 31 December (you must not say 'end of the autumn term'. It must specify the date.)</li> <li>that the list is ranked by admission criterion not by date of receipt of application</li> <li>that the list will be re-ranked every time a new application is received, meaning that applicants can move both up and down the waiting list</li> <li>that LAC, previously LAC and Children adopted from outside of England, and IYFA pupils take precedence for admission over pupils on the waiting list</li> <li>if you use termly waiting list for in year admissions, have you clearly stated how the different waiting lists work.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2.15	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Primary schools, does your policy state that governors must adhere to infant class size legislation requirements and therefore no class of 5, 6 and 7 years olds (Reception, year 1 and year 2) can contain more than 30 pupils with one teacher? And that this number cannot be exceeded except in limited permitted exceptions as listed in the School Admission Code (2021) section 2.16?</li> </ul>	2.16	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For primary schools: Our policy states a parent's entitlement to deferred entry on a part time basis, full deferral until compulsory school age or to request full deferral until year one for a summer born child. The process for making a request to defer for summer born children is clearly explained.</li> </ul>	2.17-2.20	

	Relevant section of School Admissions Code (2021)	Yes/no
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our policy states how we deal with requests for a placement out of age, either at point of entry into the school or requests made during the school year.</li> </ul>	2.18-2.20	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our policy states that parents have the right of appeal and will have at least 20 days from the date of the offer in which to submit an appeal.</li> </ul>	2.32, also see School Admissions Appeals Code (2022)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our policy states how in-year applications should be made and that some applications meeting certain criteria may be referred to the in-year fair access process.</li> </ul>	2.23-2.31, 3.14-3.22	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A copy of our admission policy is easy to find on our school website</li> </ul>	1.50	
<b>Faith based schools only</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it clear how faith-based criteria can be reasonably satisfied?</li> </ul>	1.37	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is clear when and how additional information such as baptism certificates and supplementary forms should be submitted? Is there a date given when they should be returned to you, will you write out to ask for them, do all applicants need to supply them etc?</li> </ul>	1.37, 2.4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you given regard to the guidance supplied by your religious authority?</li> </ul>	1.38	

If you have answered yes to all of the above then it is unlikely that any changes are needed to your policy. However, if you have answered no to some statements, your governing body/academy trust will need to consider how your policy needs to be amended so that it is compliant, fair and transparent.

Where changes are made you **must** consult on the policy using the timescales set out below. **Even if you are not making changes to your policy**, you should check when your last consultation was. If this was any earlier than the 2020 intake policy, then you **must** consult on your policy this year.

### Consultation (section 1.45- 1.53 School Admissions Code (2021))

Consultation **must**:<sup>1</sup>

- Take place at least once every seven years
- Take place for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January
- Ask for comments from (as a minimum):
  - Parents of 2-18 year olds
  - Persons the governing body/trust deems to have an interest in the school's admission policy
  - Other admission authorities in the area (primary schools need not consult with secondary schools)

<sup>1</sup> Please note that Church of England schools must consult on changes to their policy with the CE Diocese BEFORE launching a public consultation.

- The local authority
- Neighbouring local authorities
- In the case of a faith school, the religious authority
- Be published on the school's website giving a name to whom comments can be made, and what comments are sought on, and by what date
- Be determined (finalised) by 28 February
- Be published on the school's website by 15 March with information on how objections to the policy can be made – to the Schools Adjudicator by no later than the 15 May
- Be sent to the LA by 15 March ([admissions@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@bolton.gov.uk))

#### Governing body meetings:

- Summer term – consider and review the admission policy for your school. This will be for the intake in the September in two calendar years (i.e. summer 2025 will consider policy for September 2027 intake). If no changes are proposed, the policy can be determined at this meeting and no further action would be needed until the next review in the summer term of the following year.
- Autumn term – launch any necessary consultation on your admission policy
- Spring term - By end of February, meet to determine your final admission policy, having considered any consultation feedback. Send a final copy to the LA by 15 March.

#### Further information

If you require any further information on reviewing your admission policy or consultation, or want help with wording for any of the elements you may be missing from your policy, please contact Helen Dowman, Head of Pupil and Student Services, 01204 332 092 or [Helen.dowman@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.dowman@bolton.gov.uk)

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