

YORK DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION (DBE)



ADMISSIONS GUIDANCE FOR CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES FOR SEPTEMBER 2026-7 ADMISSIONS

Approved: March 2024

The DBE fulfils its responsibilities to give guidance in relation to admissions in line with its vision for schools: to create flourishing Church school communities committed to providing education of the highest quality that is deeply Christian and seeks to serve the common good for their own locality.

KEY POINTS TO NOTE:

- **The purpose of this Guidance is to provide advice and guidance to Admission Authorities of Church of England schools in the Diocese of York.** It will principally (although not exclusively) be relevant to Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided schools and Foundation schools, and Boards of Directors of Academy Trusts/Local Governing Committees of Church of England academies (particularly in respect of Academies that were formerly Voluntary Aided or Foundation schools). The focus of the guidance is Church school specific areas, although comment is provided more generally in certain areas.
- **This Guidance does not replicate the requirements as set out in the Admissions Code or the Admissions Appeals Code, or include full details of all relevant legislation and regulation.** All Admission Authorities should make sure that they are familiar with the responsibilities upon them and that their admissions arrangements comply with the mandatory requirements referred to in the Codes and related requirements. Advice should be sought of the Local Authority/Trust governance lead/external advisers as appropriate.

In line with the Admissions Code, Admission Authorities of all Church of England schools will need both to take into account the DBE's Guidance and to consult with the DBE when reviewing or revising admissions arrangements. (This includes consultation prior to any public consultation). ***Timely engagement with the Diocesan education team is essential and schools should be aware of the timetable for review and consultation contained overleaf.*** Schools should also contact the Diocese in the event that a change of age range/change to the published admission number (PAN) is proposed to ensure all necessary guidance and consents are obtained.

- **Schools will need to consider how their admissions policy influences the balance between being distinctive and inclusive.** Each school will need to reflect on the extent to which its policy demonstrably reflects its Christian vision, including by being welcoming to all and inclusive of children with different needs, of different faiths and from diverse backgrounds.
- **Church schools are permitted, but not required, to use faith-based oversubscription criteria.** Schools will be aware that the use of faith-based oversubscription criteria ("foundation places") is one of the more sensitive issues relating to admissions. Those schools seeking to include such criteria need consider their use carefully. If schools are using faith-based oversubscription criteria, it is important to monitor their use over time. If they are not being used in practice, they should be removed or revised. Annual consideration should be given as to whether the school should be retaining/amending faith-based oversubscription criteria in its policy.

TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW AND CONSULTATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2026-7 ADMISSIONS

In order to ensure that you obtain the necessary advice and guidance from the DBE, within the necessary timescales to enable compliance with the Admissions Code, please make sure that you follow the timetable set out below. We have also included some additional key dates to assist schools, but please refer to the School Admissions Code for a full timetable and details.

Please note that we have a number of schools who will all be considering their Admissions Arrangements at the same time, so please do make every effort to provide us with information at the earliest opportunity.

	Timescales	Action
1.	Summer Term 2024	Admission Authority to commence review of Admissions Arrangements, considering the DBE's Admissions Guidance.
2.	Summer Term 2024	Admission Authority to carry out initial consultation with DBE on any proposed changes to previous year's policy. (Admission Authority to highlight specific changes when sending in draft policy to Diocese.) Admission Authority to consider any Diocesan advice and determine the draft policy to be sent out for consultation.
3.	1 August 2024	Admission Authority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform the local authority of whether the school intends to be part of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme for the following 1 September to 31 August (or whether the admissions authority will be managing its own in-year admissions). - Provide all information to the local authority that it is required to publish on its website in relation to how in-year applications are to be managed.
4.	8 August 2024	Admission Authority to provide admissions arrangements information to the local authority to enable them to compile their composite prospectus.
5.	31 August 2024	Admission Authority to publish information on its website (and the school's website, if different) about how in-year applications can be made and how they will be dealt with for the period 1 September 2024 until 31 August 2025.
6.	6 weeks between 1 October 2024-31 January 2025	DBE to be included as consultee in Admission Authority's formal consultation, if such a consultation is required. (When sending to the Diocese, Admission Authority should flag what specific changes are proposed to (a) the previous year's policy and (b) to the version the Diocese commented on under the initial consultation.) NB. Admission Authorities must publicly consult on admission arrangements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If changes (other than excepted changes¹) are proposed; and b. At least once every 7 years.
7.	Before 28 February 2025	Admission Authority to consider any Diocesan objections/comments received as part of public consultation on proposed arrangements prior to determination. Arrangements must be determined by 28 February 2025. NB. Admission Authority must determine admission arrangements annually even if no changes are proposed and no consultation has been required.
8.	28 February 2025	Admission Authority to publish their appeals timetable on their website (and the school's website, if different).
9.	As soon as possible after they are finalised and before 15 March 2025	Admission Authority to provide copy of determined arrangements to the DBE at the same time as sharing these with the local authority. (Please highlight specific changes made since version of policy consulted upon at step 6.) Admission Authority also required to notify all admission authorities and governing bodies for community and voluntary schools within the relevant area.
10.	15 March 2025	Admission Authority to publish admission arrangements on their website (and the school's website, if different) along with previously determined admission arrangements that remain relevant.
11.	8 August 2025	Admissions Authority must provide the full arrangements to the local authority for inclusion in the local admissions prospectus (i.e. following the end of the period for objection to the School's Adjudicator, which could have led to further changes being made.)

¹ For example, no consultation is required under a. if the proposed change relates to an increase to a school's PAN/has been made to comply with any mandatory requirement of the Code or School Admissions Regulations.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

(a) Purpose of the Guidance

1. The purpose of this Guidance is to provide advice and guidance to Admission Authorities of Church of England schools in the Diocese of York. It will principally be relevant to Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided schools and Foundation schools, and Boards of Directors of Academy Trusts/Local Governing Committees (particularly in respect of Academies that were formerly Voluntary Aided or Foundation schools). The focus of the guidance is Church school specific areas, although guidance is provided more generally in certain areas.

(b) Admissions Authority

2. The Governing Body of a Voluntary Aided school/Foundation school is the relevant Admission Authority. As such, it is their responsibility to ensure that their admissions arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code (current version dated September 2021),² the Schools Admissions Appeals Code (current version dated October 2022)³ and all related legislative and regulatory requirements. For an Academy, the Academy Trust is the Admission Authority and therefore takes on this responsibility.⁴
3. In Voluntary Controlled schools, the Local Authority is the Admission Authority and is responsible for ensuring that the school's admissions arrangements comply with the relevant Codes and all related legislative and regulatory requirements.

(c) Voluntary Controlled schools/Academies that were formerly Voluntary Controlled

4. In practice admissions arrangements in Church of England Voluntary Controlled schools generally follow the pattern of admissions in other maintained schools as determined by the relevant Local Authority. For example, **in general faith based admissions criteria will not be included in admissions policies for Voluntary Controlled Schools as a matter of practice. The DBE recommends continuing this practice.**
5. **Similarly, it is not anticipated that Academies that were formerly Voluntary Controlled schools will use their freedom to determine their own admission arrangements as an opportunity to introduce faith based admissions criteria.**
6. Whilst the guidance below in relation to faith based oversubscription criteria will not therefore be relevant to all schools/Academies, we would encourage all Admissions Authorities of Church of England schools/Academies to consider both the admissions arrangements set for schools for which the local authority is the admissions authority and the wider messages in this Guidance when determining admissions arrangements.

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1108077/School_Admission_Appeals_Code_2022.pdf

⁴ Academies are required by their Funding Agreement to comply with the Codes and the law relating to admissions (although the Secretary of State has the power to vary requirements where there is demonstrable need).

SECTION 2: CHURCH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

(a) The role of the DBE

7. In line with the Admissions Code, Admission Authorities will need both to take into account the DBE's Guidance and to consult with the DBE when reviewing or revising admissions arrangements. For Governing Bodies/Academy Trusts that are own Admissions Authorities, this should be expressly discussed at the relevant Governing Body/Board/Admissions Committee meeting and be appropriately minuted.

Admission Authorities of Church of England schools must:

- **have regard to any guidance from the DBE when constructing faith-based admission arrangements (para 1.38 Admissions Code).**
- **consult with the DBE when deciding how membership or practice of the faith is to be demonstrated (para 1.38 Admissions Code).**
- **consult with the DBE about proposed admission arrangements before any public consultation (para 1.38 Admissions Code) and as part of the required public consultation (para 1.47(f) Admissions Code).**

8. **Please see above for the timetable for review and consultation (which will be amended annually). Timely engagement with the Diocesan Education team is essential.**
9. Admission Authorities should also notify the DBE as soon as possible if they are aware that an objection has been made to the Schools Adjudicator in respect of their admissions arrangements.

(b) Areas for reflection

10. Church of England schools stand at the centre of the mission and ministry of the Church. They should be both distinctive and inclusive and enable every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God.
11. Church of England schools will need to consider their admissions policies in the context of:
- The Church of England Vision for Education, which stresses the need for Church schools to be deeply Christian whilst serving the Common Good; and
 - Their own Christian vision and mission.
12. They will need to consider their dual function of meeting the needs of the local community as well as catering for Christian families. Service to the local community is in line with the original purpose of almost all schools in the Diocese, being to serve all in their parish, in particular the poor. Indeed this is what many trust deeds state – and the funds to build the schools were left for this purpose. Schools should be mindful of the moral obligation upon them give opportunity to all and to pay special regard to the needs of the disadvantaged.
13. This will affect both which oversubscription criteria they include in their policy and also how they rank oversubscription criteria within their policy. While the exact balance will depend on local circumstances and the history of the school, the overarching principle should be one of generosity to those in need.

14. In this context, schools should reflect on the following questions when considering their admissions policies:
- *What are the key messages we communicate through our admissions policy about our school's vision for education? Does the school's admissions policy demonstrably reflect its Christian vision?*
 - *What does it mean to offer a rich experience of Christianity and an encounter with Jesus Christ which enhances a child's life within our community?*
 - *How does our admissions policy influence the balance between being distinctive and inclusive? Does our admissions policy ensure that the school population both reflects its local community and promotes its Christian character?*
 - *Does our admissions policy help to create a hospitable community that seeks to embody an ethos of living well together? Does our admissions policy contribute to social cohesion?*
 - *Does our admissions policy give opportunity to all and support inclusion and diversity? Does it reflect a special attention to the disadvantaged and excluded? Are we being welcoming to pupils with particular needs? Are we being inclusive of different faiths and of pupils from diverse backgrounds? What does our admissions policy contribute to social mobility?*
 - *Does our approach to admissions reflect a positive interaction with our local church community?*

SECTION 3: ADMISSIONS POLICIES ADVICE IN PARTICULAR AREAS

(a) STATEMENT ABOUT DESIGNATION AND ETHOS

15. **It is good practice for admission policies to contain a clear statement about the school's designation and ethos.** An example might be:

"[Name of school] is a Church of England school in the Diocese of York. It has been serving the young people of [area][and beyond] for over [number] years [, formerly as a maintained school and more recently as an academy. The school is part of the [name of Academy Trust]. The school aims to serve its community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice for children aged [xx] to [xx] [(and beyond through its post 16 offering)]. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all its children.

As a Church of England school, we welcome applications from Christian families and those of other faiths and none. We ask that all parents/carers applying for a place at the school respect the school's ethos and its importance to the whole community."

16. Admission Authorities should not go beyond the kind of statement made above, for example the DBE cautions against Admissions Authorities referencing an expectation that families participate fully in the life of the school as a Church school. Note, for example, that there is an express right of withdrawal from worship that a statement such as this would appear to be at odds with this right.

(b) OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA - GENERAL

17. All policies must have oversubscription criteria. These are the criteria to be applied when there are more applicants than places available. If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants must be offered a place.
18. The oversubscription criteria will apply after the admission of children whose statement of special educational needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan names the school.
19. It is important to ensure that admissions arrangements are fair, clear and objective, and that parents/carers can easily understand them. Oversubscription criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair and comply with all relevant regulations. Arrangements must not discriminate unfairly, either directly or indirectly, against a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational need. There must be an effective, clear and fair tie-breaker to decide between two applicants that cannot otherwise be separated.
20. **In considering changes to admissions arrangements, Admissions Authorities are encouraged to consider the impact such changes could have on neighbouring schools.**

(c) OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA - FOUNDATION PLACES

21. **Church schools are permitted, but not required, to use faith-based oversubscription criteria and allocate places by reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.** Such oversubscription criteria are often referred to as "foundation places." In general, foundation places are those offered to children who are, or whose parent(s)/carer(s) are, regular worshippers of the faith. A number of schools have historically also included priority in their admissions

policies for those of other faiths, although please note that there are difficulties with this (see below) and as such it is recommended that schools review their policies where priority for other faiths is currently included.

22. Some Admission Authorities choose not to include faith-based admissions criteria at all. Where they do, the number of foundation places differs between schools, as do the specifics of what is required to qualify for a foundation place. This variety of practice is generally the result of local decisions taken incrementally over time and in the context of other local Church and Community school provision.
23. **Schools will be aware that this is one of the more sensitive issues relating to admissions and one which is potentially open to challenge and misuse. Those schools seeking to include such criteria need consider their use carefully.**
24. Admission Authorities are not permitted to “reserve” places where they are not full. For example, if a school’s admissions policy specifies a set number of foundation places but there are insufficient successful applications for such places, it would not be open for the Admission Authority to keep these places open for those who may seek to join in year.

Please see section (e) below for detailed advice on foundation places.

(d) OTHER OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

25. Comments on some of the other (non-faith based) oversubscription criteria schools may seek to use are set out below.⁵

Area	Guidance on oversubscription criteria
<p>i. Looked After Children</p>	<p>The general rule is that highest priority must be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children (as defined in the Code). Such children often have low levels of attainment, often related, in part, to frequent changes of school because of changes in care placements.</p> <p>Schools that do not include faith-based oversubscription criteria must include such children as the first priority.</p> <p>Where an Admission Authority is including foundation places within their policy, they must choose whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To give first priority to all looked after children and previously looked after children <i>whether or not of the faith</i>; or ii. To give first priority to all looked after children and previously looked after children <i>of the faith</i>, followed by other children of the faith – and subsequently to prioritise looked after and previously looked after children <i>not of the faith</i>, followed by other children not of the faith. <p>The DBE recommends that <u>all</u> children in public care should be given top priority, regardless of faith commitment.</p>
<p>ii. Special Social or Medical Needs</p> <p><i>(NB This criterion is not the same as children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school – children with EHCPs which name the school are to be allocated places prior to any oversubscription criteria being applied.)</i></p>	<p>The Code provides that Admission Authorities may decide to use social and medical need as an oversubscription criterion. If doing so, an Admission Authority must set out in their arrangements how they will define this, what the test will be (e.g. most suitable school) and clear details about what supporting evidence will be required (e.g. a letter from a doctor or specialist health professional, social worker or other care professional).</p> <p>Admission Authorities are especially encouraged to include priority on this basis where this reflects the local authority’s approach for schools where the authority is admissions authority. Schools are further encouraged to give at least as high a priority to children with such needs as mainstream schools for which the local authority is the admission authority. Before adopting such a criterion, admission authorities should ensure that they are equipped to apply the criteria being proposed. Admission Authorities may wish to consider what their local authority approach is in this context and may seek to dovetail with this where appropriate.</p>
<p>iii. Siblings at the school</p>	<p>Primary schools frequently endeavour to admit all siblings⁶ where they remain in the same primary school. Some schools also give priority to siblings of pupils attending another state school with which they have close links e.g. schools on the same site.</p> <p>The DBE would encourage Admission Authorities to consider the burden on parents/carers where they are required to get primary aged children to two different schools for the same time in the morning and meet their children after school. Whilst this is less of an issue in secondary schools, Admission Authorities should also consider the benefits of keeping siblings together in this context.</p> <p>Admission authorities may give priority to siblings in both foundation and open criteria.</p>

⁵ Note this table reflects specific areas on which the DBE has chosen to express a view for the purposes of this Guidance only. This list is not exhaustive.

⁶ If including siblings as an oversubscription criterion, it is important to make clear what is meant by siblings, checking the guidance in the Code and having considered what approach is being taken by local authorities.

<p>iv. Catchment/priority areas</p>	<p>The DBE's view is that all schools should have children living in the local community as a high priority and that the impact of catchment areas on widening the socio-economic mix of applicants to promote community cohesion should be fully considered. This should be taken into account by Admission Authorities when considering including a specified catchment area and in considering the use of distance in tie-breaker situations within oversubscription categories.⁷</p> <p>Some schools will use the ecclesiastical parish as the relevant priority area.⁸ In setting any catchment area, Admission Authorities should be mindful of the catchment areas for other schools and whether their own catchment overlaps with others. The school should look to work in close partnership with the Local Authority in this regard.</p>
<p>v. Children of staff</p>	<p>Admission Authorities are permitted to prioritise children of staff within their admissions criteria in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years; and/or • where the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage. <p>The DBE does not recommend that priority is given where a member of staff has two or more years' service. However, the DBE recognises that there may be instances where schools may want to include priority for children of staff where there has been a demonstrable skills shortage, although in considering whether to include such a criterion Admission Authorities should be mindful of the difficulty of determining "demonstrable skills shortage" in this context.</p>

⁷ When using distance as a criterion, Admission Authorities must clearly set out how distance from home to school will be measured, making clear how the "home" address will be determined and the point in the school from which all distances are measured. This should include provision for cases where parents/carers have shared responsibility for a child and the child lives for part of the week with each parent/carer. Consideration should be given to the approach taken by local authorities in this regard, and how a school's policy functions within the local authorities co-ordinated admissions arrangements.

⁸ A map showing the boundaries must be provided.

(e) FOUNDATION PLACES

i. Introduction

26. Please refer to section 2(b) of this guidance (Areas for reflection) for context and some key questions Admissions Authorities should ask themselves when considering foundation places.
27. **If schools are using faith-based oversubscription criteria, it is important to monitor their use over time. If they are not being used as a matter of practice, they should be removed or revised.**

ii. Defining Christian commitment

28. Admission Authorities wishing to include foundation places must decide not only the number/proportion of foundation places they will make available, but also the definition of a foundation place.

As per the Admissions Code:

- Admission Authorities cannot usually prioritise children on the basis of their own or their parents'/carers' past or current hobbies or activities. However, Church of England schools may take account of religious activities as laid out by the DBE.
- Admission Authorities cannot give priority to children based on practical or financial support parents may give to school or any associated organisation, including any religious authority.

29. There is no single definition of Christian commitment for these purposes which will be suitable for all Church schools, especially where families are drawn from a wide range of denominations. **Admission Authorities, together with the local church, need to consider for themselves how commitment should be defined in the light of local circumstances.**
30. Foundation place criteria must be as easy to understand as possible and careful attention must be given to definitions. They **cannot** include work for the Church such as flower arranging or service on the PCC.
31. **The DBE recommends that the only criterion to be taken into account is attendance at worship.** Whilst there may be other faith-based oversubscription criteria that are legally permissible, these should be used with caution. Points systems used to differentiate between families with equal commitment should be avoided: they can discriminate against families unable for a variety of reasons to participate in Church activities and their complexity may lead to challenge.
32. **Admission Authorities seeking to include faith-based criteria will need to ask themselves “what worship will count?”** and make sure that this is clearly articulated within their policy. This is explored further below.

<p>Worship where?</p> <p>Admission Authorities will need to ask where worship must be in order for it to count for the purposes of their policy. It will be important to set out carefully in your policy what will be taken into account and what evidence will be required.</p> <p>The DBE recommends that Admission Authorities specify attendance at either (a) any Church of England Church or (b) any Christian place of worship.</p> <p>If referring to attendance at “any Christian place of worship”, Admission Authorities would need to consider how to define this. The DBE recommends that schools seeking to define “Christian place of worship” for these purposes do so as follows:</p> <p><i>“a church which is Designated under the Ecumenical Relations Measure 2018, nationally by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, or locally by the diocesan bishop,⁹ or which is a member of Churches Together in England,¹⁰ or affiliated to the Evangelical Alliance¹¹ or a Partner Church of Affinity.¹²”</i></p> <p>In defining Christian church, Admission Authorities should be mindful of their local context and may find it helpful to consult with local clergy, the Deanery and local Churches Together Groups. If there are particular Churches in the area which you are considering including within your policy, and they don’t fall under the above groupings, please get in touch with us.</p> <p>The DBE advises <u>against</u> specifying that the required worship must take place at a named Church or at Churches in a given area. This is due to the impact this might have on, for example: those who have moved into the area; those who choose not to or who cannot (e.g. due to shared care arrangements) worship locally; and other local parishes.</p> <p>If, contrary to the guidance given above, Admission Authorities do decide to frame their policies to refer to a named Church or to Churches in a given area, they should consider specifically how they will cater for those moving into the area. In this regard, the DBE recommends that Admission Authorities take into account commitment at a previous place of worship where families have moved into the area, noting that “moving into the area” will require careful definition.</p>	<p>Worship by whom?</p> <p>Admission Authorities may take into account worship of the parent/carer and/or that of the child.</p> <p>The DBE considers that the relevant criterion should give equal weight to attendance of the child and attendance of the parent/carer.</p> <p>The DBE would advise that policies should take account of the parent/carer who attends most frequently rather than giving priority to an applicant because there are two parents/carers attending worship rather than one.</p>
	<p>What Worship?</p> <p>Admission Authorities will also need to ask what worship will count. For example, consideration should be given to a parent/carer’s ability to attend Sunday worship. Some may have commitments that make this more difficult or even impossible e.g. they may have caring responsibilities which require them to be away regularly at weekends or jobs that require them to work on Sundays. The DBE recommends that worship must be at a regular public service but that it should not be restricted to a Sunday service.</p>
	<p>Frequency of Worship?</p> <p>The DBE recommends that the requirement is expressed as “regular and frequent worship” and that an appropriate definition of “regular and frequent” is included. This should be defined in terms of frequency of attendance and length of time over which this is measured.¹³ It is for the Admission Authority to decide where to “draw the line.” In defining “regular and frequent,” Admission Authorities will need to think about the changing patterns of attendance at church on the part of their families.</p> <p>The DBE considers that attendance once or twice a month for two years is an appropriate threshold. Own Admission Authorities are requested to review their policy where the required level of attendance is below this threshold. Where demand for foundation places is high, Admission Authorities might consider giving priority to more frequent attendees. Schools should consider notifying all local clergy in churches from which they expect to receive children of the requirements, with the suggestion that a register might be helpful.</p>

⁹ The list of nationally designated churches can be found at https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/list_of_designated_churches_3_oct_18.pdf.

¹⁰ For up to date information on membership of Churches Together In England, please visit their website at https://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234772/Home/Contacts/Member_Churches_list/Member_Churches_list.aspx.

¹¹ The Evangelical Alliance is the largest body serving evangelical Christians in the UK. Many members of the Evangelical Alliance are individual congregations or churches and therefore too numerous to list here. However they can be “searched for” on the Evangelical Alliance’s website – www.eauk.org.

¹² Affinity is an umbrella organisation to which independent churches belong, similar to an including the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical (FIEC) Churches.

¹³ Admission Authorities should include the nationally agreed wording dealing with periods where places of worship are closed (e.g. pandemic).

iii. Demonstrating commitment

33. Appropriate evidence of commitment (i.e. the required attendance) should be required and this should be stated in the policy. Admission Authorities should require completion of a supplementary information form which includes written confirmation by the minister of religion in order for the application to be considered under faith-based criteria. We recommend a conversation takes place with local ministers of religion to ensure that they understand that they will receive requests for confirmation and to reflect on how this will be verified.

iv. Foundation places – other faiths

34. Some schools may seek to include oversubscription criteria relating to children of other faiths within their policies. If doing so, an Admissions Authority will need to be satisfied that the criteria is objective and fair (including when read alongside Christian faith-based criteria) and provides for the fact that different faiths practice in different ways. Some of the considerations outlined above in relation to Christian foundation places will be relevant to this consideration. **To our knowledge, no satisfactory method of inclusion of faith-based oversubscription criteria for those of other faiths has been identified to date, and we would encourage Church schools to review their policies where priority for other faiths is currently included and proceed with caution in this regard. We would recommend that schools welcome those of other faiths to their school through their other (non-faith based) oversubscription criteria.**

(f) SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORMS

35. Much of the information Admission Authorities will need to apply their oversubscription criteria will be available to them from the Common Application Form (produced by the Local Authority) which all applicants must complete. However, where schools require further information in order to apply their admission criteria, a supplementary information form (often referred to as a SIF) should be completed by parents/carers.
36. This would apply, for example, where an Admission Authority has included foundation places within its policy. Note that the information sought on the SIF must only be that needed to make an admission decision – you cannot, for example, request confirmation that the parents/carers would provide any practical support for the school's ethos. Please see further paragraph 33 above.
37. Schools will need to make sure that parents/carers are aware of the different requirements for the forms, especially regarding where they need to be sent. The Common Application Form will need to be returned to the Local Authority, but SIFs required by the school to apply its own criteria will need to be returned to the school. It should be made clear to parents/carers that, if they are seeking to have the application considered under a criterion that requires completion of a SIF, failure to return a SIF will mean their application is considered under the next most appropriate criterion.

SECTION 4: APPEALS

38. Admission Authorities must make arrangements for parents/carers to appeal against a decision not to admit their child to the school. The appeal is to an independent appeal panel set up by the Admission Authority in accordance with the Admission Appeals Code.
39. Admission authorities must set a timetable for organising and hearing appeals in line with the requirements of the School Admissions Appeals Code 2022. Admission authorities must publish their appeals timetable on their website by 28 February each year.
40. Many Local Authorities will support Voluntary Aided schools, Foundation schools and Academies with such arrangements, however it is essential that Admission Authorities make these arrangements ahead of time and are in a position to implement alternative arrangements where this is not (or ceases to be) on offer.
41. Local authorities must allocate reasonable funds to governing bodies of maintained schools which are admission authorities to meet admission appeals costs, including training for panel members, unless the school and local authority agree that the local authority will carry out the administration on the governing body's behalf. Academies receive funding in accordance with their funding agreements.