Diocese of Norwich
St Benet's
Multi Academy Trust

Diss & Scole Primary Academy Partnership

(Diss Infant Academy and Nursery, Diss CE Junior Academy and Scole CE Primary Academy)

Early Years Charging and Admissions Policy (Norfolk)

This Charging and Admissions Policy is issued to all families as part of the registration process. It is also available on the website and from the school office on request.

Our setting has made a Flourish Pledge, which means we are working together with the local authority to make Flourish the shared ambition of everyone working to improve the lives of children and young people in Norfolk.

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Person Responsible:	**Head of Governance**

Our Christian Ethos and Values

Our academies are open to all and accepting of all regardless of faith. Our passion and ambition are to see children and young people in all our academies achieve excellent educational outcomes alongside developing and growing into their potential as individuals made in the image of God.

Our culture is one of high aspiration for all. This is rooted in our Christian values as demonstrated in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We have a desire to see our academies acknowledged as places of aspiration, high quality learning, achievement and hope making a significant contribution to the communities they serve.

All policies within St Benet's Multi Academy Trust (hereafter referred to as "the Trust"), whether relating to an individual academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our Christian ethos and values.

Overall accountabilities and roles

The Trust has overall accountability for all its academies and staff. Through a Scheme of Delegation it sets out the responsibilities of the Trust, its Executive Officers, the Local Governance Committee and the Headteacher. The Headteacher of each academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Trust.

All employees of the Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

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1. **Charging**

Government funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare only. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, consumables, additional hours, or additional services.

1.1Fees

The following fees apply when families claim a funded entitlement as part of childcare arrangement

- Additional hours
- Additional hours including those not funded by the local authority will be charged at the current hourly rate.

The current hourly rates are £5.28 per hour.

1.2Additional services

Charges for additional services such as trips will be agreed in advance with families.

There are no charges for meals or snacks.

1.3 Reasonable adjustments for payment

If you are unable to pay these charges, please speak with the school office to discuss the alternative options available.

The alternative options include –

- Waiving or reducing costs
- Families to supply a packed lunch and snacks
- Families to supply toiletries and personal care products

1.4 Other charges –

- Deposit – No fee is charged to secure a place at the setting.
  A deposit of £0.00 will be charged to secure a place at this setting. For funded only children, the fee will be returned in full within 6 weeks following the first day of attendance for early education. Where families have agreed a contract for more hours than the early education entitlement, the deposit will be returned when the contract is terminated, and any outstanding fees have been paid in full.
  The deposit will not be returned where a place is no longer required.

- Retainer Fee – This fee will secure your child's place where an extended absence is needed. An amount equivalent to the loss of funding from the Local Authority.

- Registration Fee – This fee is voluntary where families do not pay any for any additional hours.
- A registration fee of £0.00 is charged once a childcare place has been offered. This is voluntary for those families whose child(ren) only access a funding entitlement.
  All families will be issued an invoice monthly in advance unless the balance equals zero. The payment term is within 10 days.

- Late Payments – This fee will be charged when invoices are not paid within the payment terms and an outstanding balance remains on the account. A fee will apply to any late payments not paid within 10 working days of bank base rate + 3%.

- Late Collection – This fee will be charged when children are not collected on time at the end of their session. A charge of £5.28 per hour or part thereof is chargeable if a parent/carer is late collecting their child.

All fees will be charged unless specific arrangements have been agreed and whilst a childcare contract remains in place. Families wishing to terminate their childcare contract must provide 4 weeks' notice in writing to the school office. Any funding entitlement claimed beyond the notice period is transferrable to your new childcare provider via the local authority where the funding criteria is met. Where a child leaves the setting before the end of the agreed notice period, we will seek authorisation from the local authority to claim any funding applicable to your entitlement up to the end of the notice period, together with any additional fees which formed part of your childcare arrangement as detailed in your agreement with the setting.

Our fees are reviewed annually in April for the following September. Families will be given at least 6 weeks' notice in writing to inform them of any change and given the opportunity to discuss their options with the Headteacher.

Where a time lapse has occurred between the point of enquiry and their child's start date, families should check that the information shared about funding and fees remains current so that any applicable charges can be checked / finalised before the childcare arrangement (contract) is formalised.

The funded entitlements will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of them will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether families opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables.

The entitlement place is offered free. Parents will not be charged a "top-up" fee to recoup the difference between the amount received from the Local Authority and the current hourly rate.

The invoice will be itemised to provide clear and transparent information concerning the charges as agreed in the childcare contract. It will allow parents/carers to see that the entitlement is received completely free of charge and understand additional fees that have been applied.

2. Admissions

2.1 Eligibility
As part of the registration process, parents/carers will be required to provide documentation to evidence their child's date of birth. This is to confirm they have reached the eligible age for the funded entitlement. A copy will not be retained but may be requested again later by the Local Authority for audit or fraud investigation purposes.

Families accepting a 2-year-old funded place will be able to claim the entitlement until their child(ren) is/are eligible for either the 3- and 4-year-old funding universal entitlement or working parent entitlement.

2.2 Standard terms of Early Education
Early Education is offered within the national parameters –

- no session to be longer than 10 hours
- no minimum session length (subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register)
- not before 6.00am or after 8.00pm
- a maximum of two sites in a single day

2.3 Offer
Early Education is offered to families 38 weeks of the year.

We will work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the hours/sessions that can be taken as funded provision are convenient for parents' working hours.

Funded hours can be claimed –

- Mon – max hours = 3 [09:00 – 12:00]
- Tues – max hours = 3 [09:00 – 12:00]
- Wed – max hours = 3 [09:00 – 12:00]
- Thur – max hours = 3 [09:00 – 12:00]
- Fri – max hours = 3 [09:00 – 12:00]

If you are unable to pay our charges, please speak with the school office to discuss the alternative options available (see 1.3).

Funding cannot be claimed during our lunch period.

2.4 SEND Provision
We are required to have arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. This means we will -

- follow the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework to provide an inclusive environment for all children and their families, together with the requirements to comply with the Equalities Act and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice

- monitor and review children's progress and development in partnership with families. Where a child appears to be behind expected levels of development or where a child's progress

gives cause for concern a graduated approach will be adopted with 4 stages of action: Assess, Plan, Do & Review

- provide information to families on how their child's development is being supported and in agreement, consent will be sought to apply for additional funding and request support from outside agencies where necessary

- utilise the SEN inclusion fund and Disability Access Fund to deliver effective support

- publish our contribution to the 'SEN Local Offer' in Norfolk. This is available on the Norfolk Community Directory and on our school website to ensure information is available to parents so they can make choices about the right childcare provision for their child with SEN

We aim to identify all children that may attract any additional funding such as EYPP, DAF, SEND Inclusion Fund and any locally available funding streams with a view to submit a claim/application to support and improve their outcomes. This will be in partnership with families and consent will be sought prior to submitting a claim/application.

2.5 Oversubscription
Where more applications are received than there are places available the Trust's usual admissions oversubscription criteria will be applied in the following order of priority –

A child who has an Education Health and Care Plan naming the school or academy is required to be admitted.

1. Looked after children (children in care) and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order

2. Siblings of children already at the school living in the catchment area [for the definition of sibling and catchment area refer to items 2 and 3 in the *definitions* section of the Appendix 1]

3. Residence within the catchment area of the school [for explanation of resident refer to item 2 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix 1. For explanation of catchment area refer to item 3 in the *definitions* section of Appendix 1].

4. Siblings of children already at the school living out of catchment [for definition of sibling and catchment area refer to items 2 and 3 in *definitions* section of Appendix 1].

5. Children living out of the catchment area who have a faith and / or whose parents are committed Church members and wish them to receive an education in a school with a Church of England foundation [for explanation of committed Church member refer to item 3 in *clarifications* section of Appendix 1]. They should support this application by completing the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) in Appendix 2. Within this criterion the following hierarchy will be applied:
    I. Anglican
    II. Other Christian denomination

III. Other organised religions

For further information and advice on this criterion refer to items 5 and 6 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix 1.

6. Children of staff where:
    I. a member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made and/or
    II. the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage

7. Children who are due to transfer and live outside the area served by the school who attend a school within DNEAT at the opening date of the admissions round.

8. Resident out of the catchment area of the school [for explanation of resident and catchment area refer to items 2 and 3 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix 1]

In the event of the having to use a "tie-break" to distinguish between two or more applications of equal strength, the child living the **shortest distance** from home to school in a straight line as the crow flies route should have priority [for explanation of shortest distance refer to item 4 in the *clarifications* section of Appendix 1].

If the Academy or Trust's decision is not to grant a place for your child, you have the right to appeal against its decision. You will be sent information on how to appeal.

All unsuccessful applicants are placed on a waiting list that is maintained in the rank order of the oversubscription criteria (taking into account the distance tie-break if appropriate). This does mean that the position of applicants on the list could change during the lifetime of the waiting list. If, at any time, the number of pupils to be admitted falls below the PAN then the available place(s) will be offered to the applicant(s) at the top of the waiting list. This waiting list ceases to be valid on 31 December 2025.

2.6 Appeals process

If the decision is not to grant a place for your child, you have the right to appeal against this decision. The appeal process will only consider whether this policy has been followed. The appeal will be considered by the Trust.

Unsuccessful applicants and appellants who are still unable to secure a place at this academy may only submit a fresh application if there has been a significant change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school, for example a house move.

If there is no significant change in circumstances, you can make another application for the following academic year, but this will not normally be considered more than one term ahead of the date when you want your child to start at the school.

2.7 Transition
To ensure a smooth transition for the child, we will work closely with families to discuss and agree how a child's overall care will work in practice where an entitlement is split across different providers, and where possible when families transfer their funding claim to a new setting.

2.7 Data Protection
We will work in partnership with parents, carers, childcare providers, the local authority, and other organisations to improve provision and outcomes for children in our setting. Where required we will seek parent / carer consent to collect, share and use your information in accordance with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations.

3. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust annually.

4. Complaints

Our Complaints Policy is issued to all families as part of the registration process. It is also available on the school and Trust websites.
Where parents/carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving the free entitlement in the correct way (as set out in this funding agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities), a complaint can be submitted in accordance with the published policy.

Appendix 1 Definitions and Clarifications

Definitions:

1. Parent is defined as all people with parental responsibility for the child, including legal guardians.

2. Sibling: Where the child has a sibling in the school or a sibling has already been offered a place at the school, and where the sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission but not in the sixth form.

   The term 'sibling' includes: natural, half, step, and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent/carer; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion.

3. Catchment area: All The Trust's academies prioritise children living in the local area and within the Admissions Policy this is described as the school catchment area. Detailed information regarding catchment areas is available at www.whereIlive.norfolk.gov.uk or www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Clarifications:

1. The applicant for admission must be the parent or legal guardian of the child for whom admission is sought.

2. "Ordinarily resident" we define as the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or a grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school; we consider this to be a fraudulent application. Where a child lives at two or more addresses, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week, excluding weekends and school holidays. Separate evidence in writing from each parent must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.

   In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

   If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice in order to resolve the matter.

We will consider Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children moving into an area as 'Resident' in that area when they apply for a school place.

3. "Committed Church member" is defined as one who has attended worship at least once a month on average for at least 1 year prior to the date of the application.

4. We will measure distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight-line distances are calculated electronically using data readily available online. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.

   In the unlikely event of two or more applicants living the same distance and competing for a single place, lots will be drawn by someone independent of the school to determine the successful applicant.

5. Other recognised Churches are those in full membership of Churches Together in England (or in full membership of a federation of Churches that is in full membership of Churches Together in England.) or the Evangelical Alliance. Further details can be obtained from the following websites:

   http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/42314/Home.aspx
   http://www.eauk.org/

6. Applicants who wish to be considered as committed adherents of other organised religions will be required to show an equivalent level of commitment to that described for Christian applicants and provide a letter signed by their local faith Leader.

7. Multiple births – if the final place at the Academy is offered to a twin/triplet etc. and the remaining sibling(s) would ordinarily be refused a place, we will offer places to the remaining sibling(s). It is not our policy to separate twins/triplets etc. even when their admission would breach infant class size legislation.

8. "Shared Responsibility". In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address (see clarification note 2 above). This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.