Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST)

THE DOWNLEY SCHOOL

"Learning, Growing and Succeeding Together"

Admissions Policy 2028/2029

ODBST Level 1 Statutory Policy:	This is an ODBST Level 1 Statutory Policy.
Other related policies and procedures:	Guidance: The education of children out of their chronological year group.
Committee responsible:	Finance, Resources, Audit, Pay & Personnel.
Approved by:	The ODBST Trust Board.
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Admission Arrangements 2028/2029

The Downley School (TDS) is part of the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST), who are the admissions authority for the school. The Board of Trustees works in partnership with the Local Governing Council of the school over the consultation and operation of the school's admissions policy.

The ODBST have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities.

In reviewing this policy the ODBST has had regard to the Equality Act 2010. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged.

The Trust is consulting on TDS's admission policy in 2026-2027.

There are 60 places (the published admission number or PAN) available; this number relates to the 'relevant age group' i.e. the age group at which pupils are normally admitted to the school, which is Reception.

Admission arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2028

Pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1 September – 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose child was born between 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2024 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2028.

Parents of a child born between 1 September 2023 and 31 March 2024 may defer entry until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term beginning in January or April after his or her fifth birthday). The school will hold the deferred place for the child (provided it is taken up during the school year 2028/2029).

For children born between 1 April 2024 and 31 August 2024 (summer-born children), parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school, but not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year.

Until the child reaches compulsory school age, they may attend part-time until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for the Reception Year in September 2028 must complete the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than 15 January 2028. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered after all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be given to parents on 16 April 2028.

Procedures for applying to any school in Buckinghamshire are explained on Buckinghamshire Council's website: https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-index/school-admissions/.

Over-Subscription Criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming **TDS** will always be offered places. This is not an oversubscription criterion — the school must admit such a child even if there is no place otherwise available.

If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted. (See Note 2)
2. Families who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that their child attends TDS rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family. (See Note 3)
3. Children with a normal home address (see Note 4) in the catchment/designated area [set out in the map at Appendix A] and with a sibling (see Note 5) on the roll of the school at the time of application, or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
4. Children with a normal home address in the catchment/designated area.

5. ***Children of Staff, where the member of teaching staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application is made and/or is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.***
6. Children with a normal home address outside the catchment/designated area and with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application, or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
7. Other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by and in accordance with Buckinghamshire Council's Geographical Information System to provide the straight-line distance (see Note 6) between the home and the school, with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in the criteria above should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.

All Other Admissions

In-year admissions, or admissions at the beginning of school years other than the relevant age group, may be made at any time; admission will depend on whether or not there are places available. Applications must be made directly to the school on a form available from the school.

If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria above), a place will be offered.

Admission outside normal age group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group must be made in writing, with full details, to the admission authority via the school by 30 September 2027 for admission in September 2028. These requests will be considered by the governing board on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking account of the parent's views; the child's academic, social and emotional development; medical history and, where relevant, the views of a medical professional; whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group had they not been born prematurely. The admission authority will also take into account the views of the head teacher.

A parent may also choose not to apply for a place in the September following the child's fourth birthday and request a place out of the normal age group for the following September. The request for a place must still be made to the relevant LA on the common application form, and the request to be admitted outside the normal age group must be made separately to the admission authority.

If admission out of normal age group to Reception is approved, parents must nevertheless make an application at the appropriate time for a place in Reception the following year; whether such a place can be offered will be determined having applied the oversubscription criteria.

THERE IS NO RIGHT OF APPEAL WHERE A CHILD IS OFFERED A PLACE AT THE SCHOOL BUT NOT IN THEIR PARENT'S/CARER'S PREFERRED AGE GROUP.

Waiting Lists

The school maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place. For those applying through the normal admissions round, the Waiting List will be maintained from shortly following initial allocation in the year preceding the start of the academic year in September until at least 31 December following the start of the academic year, in their Reception year.

The list will be re-ranked in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria each time a name is added to or removed from the list.

Multiple births

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., the school will admit both/all the children in the case of multiple births, even if this means exceeding the agreed admission number.

Fair Access

The school participates in Buckinghamshire Council's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group, and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

Appeals

Any parent not offered a place for their child at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. Details of appeals arrangements are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. In the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission, the school will not consider any further application for a child in the same school year (1 September – 31 August) unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment/designated area to inside it.

When the school informs a parent of a decision to refuse their child a place, it must include: the reason admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal; and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents must set out their grounds for appeal in writing, and the school must not limit the grounds on which appeals can be made.

Further information

Parents who wish their children to attend the school are most welcome to visit. Arrangements can be made by contacting the school office on 01494 527033 or office@dnl.odbst.org Open morning dates are also published on our website www.downley.bucks.sch.uk For reception entry, attendance at an open morning event are recommended as these consist of a tour and presentation from the headteacher.

Notes to the Admissions Policy

The following are detailed notes referring to the definitions used in this school's policy.

Note 1

'Parent' is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

- any person who has 'parental responsibility' (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or
- any person who has care of the child or young person.

Note 2

A 'looked-after child' is one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its functions. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted, subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A 'child arrangements order' is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A 'special guardianship order' is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A).

Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). A 'looked-after child' includes any child who appears to have been in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Note 3

Applications under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs) must be supported by written evidence from an independent professional person which clearly demonstrates why the school is the only school suitable, and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of the circumstances of the case.

Note 4

The home address is where the child normally lives. This will be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child, unless it is shown that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of them. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, the relevant address used will be that at which the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split, or any doubt about residence, the home address will be assumed to be the address at which the child is registered with a GP.

Evidence of the normal home address may be requested in the form of a recent bill, for example the most recent Council Tax bill, a utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, a mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned.

If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or intentionally misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment/designated area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school can withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

If parents are moving house, evidence of the move will be requested when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months, will be required.

If parents move house after the application has been made but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

An address of a second home, with the main home being elsewhere, will not be accepted. If there are two or more homes, or a family is returning from elsewhere, evidence will be required of the main home. An allocation based on an address considered only temporary, or a second home, will not be made.

An address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer, unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement, will not be accepted.

There are special arrangements for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas. If the application is accompanied by an official letter declaring the relocation date, and a place is available, it will be offered even though there is not yet an intended address, or the family is not yet living in the area.

Note 5

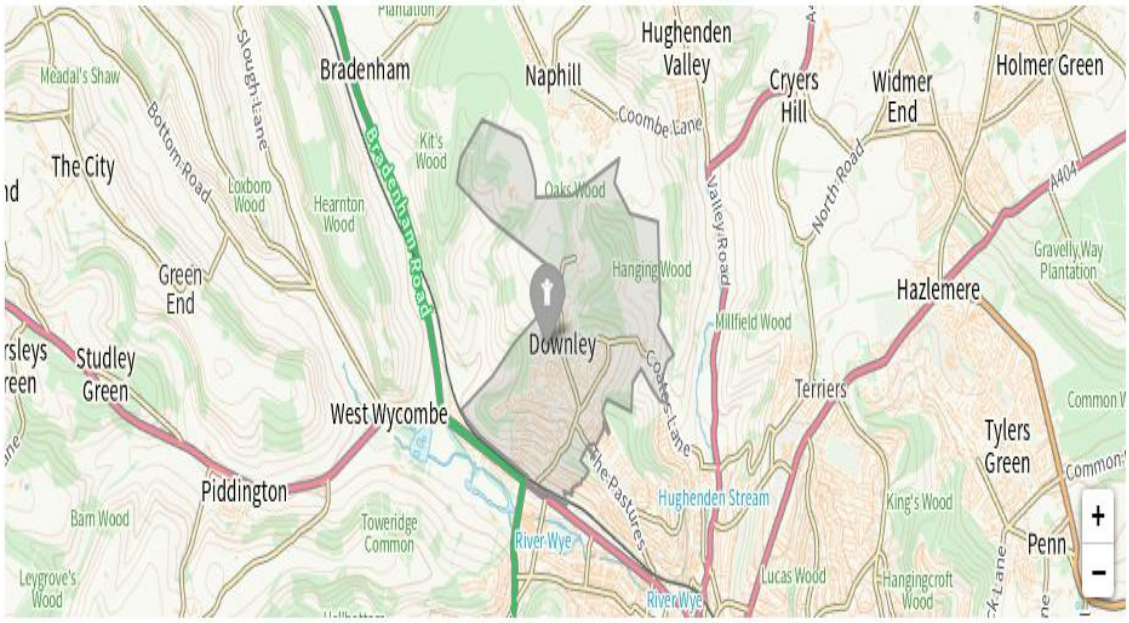
'Sibling' means a natural brother or sister, half-brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step-brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer's partner, where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 6

The straight-line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured by and in accordance with Buckinghamshire Council's Geographical Information System. This is the distance from the child's normal home address to the nearest open school gate available for pupils to use, using the Ordnance Survey ADDRESS-POINT for the home address. This is different from the shortest walking route, which is used for transport purposes.

Appendix A

Catchment / designated area for The Downley School



Model In-Year Application Form

1. Child's Details

First name .....

Middle name(s) .....

Legal surname .....

Sex: Male / Female

Date of birth ___/___/_____

Normal home address (the address and postcode at which the child normally lives). Please enclose address evidence.

.....

.....

Postcode .....

If moving home, please provide the new home address (the address at which the child will be living). Please enclose address evidence.

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.....

Postcode .....

Name and address of current or most recent school

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.....

Postcode ..... Telephone number .....

2. Your Details

Name of parent/carer living at home address above

Title ..... First name ..... Surname .....

Relationship to child .....

Email address .....

Daytime telephone number ..... Mobile telephone number .....

3. Further Information

Date admission required ___/___/_____

Does the child have any brothers or sisters attending the school? Yes/No — if 'Yes', please give the name of the youngest sibling attending the school .....

Does the child have an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan? Yes/No — if 'Yes', which Local Authority maintains this Plan? .....

Is the child 'looked after' by a Local Authority, or was s/he previously 'looked after'? Yes/No — if 'Yes', please provide details.

4. Declaration

I certify that I have parental responsibility for the child named in Section 1 above and that this application has the agreement of any other parent/carer with parental responsibility for the child.

I have read the school's admission policy.

I confirm that the information I have provided is to the best of my knowledge correct and up to date. I understand that if I give any false or deliberately misleading information on this form and/or any supporting papers, or withhold any relevant information, this may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of a place at the school for my child.

I authorise the school to contact my child's previous school.

Signature of parent/carer .....

Date: ___/___/_____

Supplementary Information Form attached: Yes/No (delete as appropriate)