



## Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust

### NCEA Duke's School Admission Policy 2025/26



#### Policy Preface

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is a Christian learning environment at the heart of its communities. We promote care and respect, and expect high standards in all aspects of our Trust life.

As a Church of England Academy Trust, we aim to build communities clearly based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution, protect the weak and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy Trust.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

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<b>Current Date Approved</b>	
<b>Approved By</b>	Duke's Local Governing Body
<b>Date of next review</b>	February 2025
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Principal
<b>Statutory Requirement</b>	Yes
<b>Linked to:</b>	School Admissions Code

Document History		
Version	Date of review	Summary of key changes
1	February 2019	New policy created following demerger of single academy trust
2	February 2020	Dates amended only
3	February 2021	Updated for consultation as part of the consultation process to de-amalgamate NCEA Bishop's Primary School (current feeder primary school) into five separate schools, all of which would become designated feeder primary schools
4	February 2022	Five designated feeder primary schools formally named following demerger. Responsibility de

<b>5</b>	January 2023	Dates amended only
<b>6</b>	Nov 2023	Addition of Ellington Primary School as designated feeder primary school. Adjustment of admissions criteria involving Updating of context section

## 1. Context

NCEA Duke's School has six designated feeder primary schools: NCEA Bishop's Primary School ), NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School, NCEA James Knott C of E Primary School NCEA William Leech C of E Primary School and Ellington Primary School.

## 2. Admissions Authority

The Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is the Admissions Authority and follows the Northumberland County Council admissions procedures for admission to the NCEA Duke's School. The Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust complies with the School Admissions Code issued by the Department for Education in December 2014. Responsibility for approving the admissions policy is delegated to Duke's Local Governing Body.

Arrangements for applications for places at NCEA Duke's School will be made in accordance with Northumberland County Council's (NCC) co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the Common Application Form (CAF) provided and administered by NCC.

## 3. Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

The Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust intends to admit up to **190 pupils to Year 7** at NCEA Duke's School in **September 2025**. **For Post 16**, the Trust intends to admit **up to 125 students to Year 12 in September 2025**.

In any specific year the Duke's Local Governing Body, with approval from the CEO on behalf of the Trust Board may set a higher admission number than the agreed admission number for an applicable year group. Before setting an admission number higher than its agreed admission number, governors will consult all relevant parties.

NCEA Duke's School is not obliged to admit children into a year group other than that of the child's chronological age. However, parents may submit a request in writing for their child to be admitted outside of his or her normal age range together with supporting reasons for doing so. This should be discussed with the Principal as soon as possible.

## 4. Admissions Criteria

If in any year group the NCEA Duke's School is not oversubscribed then the School will offer children who apply to that year group a place.

**Children who have either a statement of educational needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) plan that specifically names NCEA Duke's School will be admitted to the School.**

In determining admissions, priority would be given to those applications where the parental application form is received by the published deadline date. Once a place at the NCEA Duke's School has been offered and accepted, the School requires sight of the child's birth certificate or passport to verify the identity of the child. Where a birth certificate may not be available for children arriving from overseas, the Border Agency may be contacted to verify the child's details.

## **5. Equal Preference System**

NCEA Duke's School operates an equal preference system which means that all first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the following criteria:

### **a. A "Looked after Child".**

Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because, immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order (See note 1 ) including children previously in state care outside of England who have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted (See note 2).

b. Pupils attending the designated feeder primary schools: NCEA Bishop's Primary School , NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School, NCEA James Knott C of E Primary School NCEA William Leech C of E Primary School and Ellington Primary School.

c. Children who have a sibling link and are residing at the same address (brother or sister including adoptive siblings, half siblings, step siblings, and long term fostered children) attending NCEA Duke's School at the time of application. [N.B. This criterion includes older siblings who will be in the sixth form at the time of admission] (See note 3).

d. **Children whose normal home address is in the catchment areas** of NCEA Duke's School feeder primary schools and who can provide firm evidence that this will be the case on the appropriate admission date (See note 4).

e. **Children on whose behalf evidence of exceptional medical need that make it essential their child attends the school is presented.** Evidence must be supported in a written statement by a professionally involved third party, for example, a doctor. The supporting evidence should be submitted at the time of application and should set out the particular reasons why NCEA Duke's School provision is the most suitable provision and the difficulties that would be caused by the child attending an alternative provision.

f. **Children living outside the catchment** area of the NCEA Duke's School feeder primary schools.

## **6. Oversubscription Criteria for Admissions to NCEA Duke's School**

Where the number of applications for admission to NCEA Duke's School is greater than the published admission number (PAN) for that year group, applications will be considered against the criteria applied in the order in which they are set out above.

For children who live at two addresses the criteria apply to the address where the child spends the majority of their time. Where there are more applications than places available, children from multiple births will be given priority within criteria a, b, c and d above and treated together as a single group.

Within each of the above criteria, in the event that there is still an oversubscription after the criteria above have been applied and a tiebreaker is required, then the child living closest to NCEA Duke's School will be admitted. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the front door of the child's home to the front gate/main entrance of the School. (See Note 2).

## **7. Sixth Form Admissions**

The following admissions policy and over-subscription criteria apply to external candidates only and are provided as information for students currently attending NCEA Duke's School. Places will be allocated to students of NCEA Duke's School first.

The minimum entry requirements for internal and external applicants will be:

1. For all Advanced Level (Level 3 type) courses the entry requirement will be a minimum of four GCSE grades 9-1.
2. For Level 2 courses the entry requirement will be an average of grade 3 at GCSE.

No applications for admission to the Sixth Form will be accepted after the 30<sup>th</sup> September in the year of entry. Applications received after this date will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

## **8. Over-subscription criteria for admissions to 6th Form**

Priority will be given in the following order:

- a. Students who are 'looked after' or were previously 'looked after' under the provision of the Children Act 1989 and School Admission Code February 2012.
- b. Students for whom places on appropriate course are available.
- c. Students whose normal home address is in the catchment area of NCEA Duke's School and who can provide firm evidence that this will be the case on the appropriate admission date.
- d. Students on whose behalf evidence of exceptional medical need that make it essential they attend the school is presented. Evidence must be supported in a written statement by a professionally

involved third party, for example, a doctor. The supporting evidence should be submitted at the time of application and should set out the particular reasons why NCEA Duke's School provision is the most suitable provision and the difficulties that would be caused by the student attending an alternative provision.

Where the number of applications for admission to NCEA Duke's School Sixth Form is greater than the published admission number (PAN) for that year group, applications will be considered against the criteria applied in the order in which they are set out above.

For children who live at two addresses the criteria apply to the address where the child spends the majority of their time. Where there are more applications than places available, children from multiple births will be given priority within criteria a, b, c and d above and treated together as a single group.

Within each of the above criteria, in the event that there is still an oversubscription after the criteria above have been applied and a tiebreaker is required, then the child living closest to NCEA Duke's School will be admitted. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the front door of the child's home to the front gate/main entrance of the School (See Note 2).

## **9. Multiple Births**

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both twins (and all the children in the case of other multiple births) even if this meant exceeding the agreed admission number for Reception or the number of places in other year groups in the relevant admission year.

## **10. Waiting Lists**

Unsuccessful applications for a place at the NCEA Duke's School will, if requested, be placed on our waiting list. This list is ranked according to the same criteria as those used for Admissions to the relevant age group. When a child is added to the list, the list will be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria detailed above. Parents should notify the NCEA Duke's School that they wish to be held on this list and will be contacted directly a place is available.

### **Waiting lists specifically for Year 6 to Year 7 Transfer**

If you have been refused a place at the NCEA Duke's School, you will have the opportunity to place your child's name on a waiting list if you have ranked the school as a higher preference than the one you have been offered. Waiting lists are established after parents/carers have been notified of the school their child has been allocated in March 2025. (You should contact NCEA Duke's School to request that your child's name is placed on the waiting list as this is not an automatic procedure). Children are placed on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria regardless of when their application was received and within each criterion their place is ordered by the shortest distance measured as a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the main academy entrance, using Northumberland County Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to NCEA Duke's School receiving higher priority. The School will request proof of residency for parents/carers who wish their child's name to be placed on the waiting list. If pupil numbers fall below the published admission number the place will be offered to the child at the

top of the waiting list. A child who is on the waiting list will move down the list if another late application is received that falls within a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria. Waiting lists will be held for one term in the academic year i.e. September 2025 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025; no lists will be kept after this date.

Children who are the subject of a 'direction to admit' by a local authority or who are allocated to the NCEA Duke's School in full accordance with the agreed Local Authority In-Year Fair Access Protocol take precedence over those on the waiting list.

### **11. Appeals**

Parents may appeal against the decision not to offer a place and must do so in writing to the NCEA Duke's School within 14 days of being notified that they have not been offered a place. An independent appeal panel will hear the appeal. A copy of the appeals procedure is available from the NCEA Duke's School or through the School website.

### **12. Appeal where application is made outside of normal age range**

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the Principal in advance of applying for a place. The governors may ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered then there is no right of appeal.

### **13. Procedures**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Admission procedures:

Admission Procedure for Secondary Admissions

Admission Procedure for 6th Form

### **Notes**

**Note 1:** "Looked after child" is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

An adoption order is an order made under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Under the provisions of Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amend section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders.

'Special guardianship order' is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians (Section 14A of the Children Act 1989).

We give a "Looked after Child" priority in our oversubscription criteria. This means that when a place becomes available in the school year it can be offered to these children to ensure that they are quickly

placed in an appropriate school. This is necessary as it is recognised that such children are a disadvantaged group who, because of frequent changes of school following their care placements, may have lower than average levels of attainment. It is also a statutory requirement that Admission Authorities give top priority to a “Looked after Child” in their oversubscription criteria.

**Note 2:** Children previously in state care outside of England means children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings. In the case of children adopted from state care overseas, the admissions authority will require evidence that a child is eligible by asking the child’s parents or carers for appropriate evidence of their previously looked-after status.

**Note 3:** By sibling we mean a 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. **The Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust will not consider any “reverse sibling links” i.e. a younger child gaining entry to the school will not mean an automatic place for an older sibling.**

**Note 4:** By normal home address, we mean the child’s home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. 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.

To avoid doubt, 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, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- Any legal documentation confirming residence
- The pattern of the residence
- The period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- Confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- Where the child is registered with his/her GP
- Any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV

licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the School to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the School may seek further evidence.

The School works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the School on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are not sufficient reason for listing another address.

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.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, before considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept 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. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.



## Appendix 1: Catchment maps for NCEA Duke's School designated feeder primary schools



