

The Cranmer Education Trust, which is the Admissions Authority for The Blue Coat School, would like to thank all those who have taken their time to contribute their thoughts to the consultation process that ended on 8 January 2021. We are humbled by the care and attention taken by the various parties to articulate their views and the overwhelming support that you continue to show.

We are unable to offer personal correspondence to all who contributed their thoughts and questions, however, we have shared the points raised below so that they are available for all to see, as well as the actions taken where pertinent.

Have procedural matters been fully adhered to?

1. The Admissions Code 2014 requires that the consultation takes place for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January and that attention to the consultation is drawn to a statutory list of interested parties.
2. For Blue Coat this process commenced on Friday 20 November 2020 and ended at 3.30pm on Friday 8 January 2021. The Trust can confirm that statutory guidance and due process has been followed.

The 5 year timescale

1. Now that we are in a position to offer 483 secondary places per year across 2 schools we have decided to review and update aspects of Blue Coat's admissions policy. The school is a 180-year-old Church of England foundation which serves children from across the North West region. In recognition of that foundation we will continue to prioritise committed members of the Church of England.
2. We have also taken into account the impact of Covid19. Christians evidence their faith commitment by attendance at public worship. This has been difficult (and sometimes impossible) during the pandemic and therefore there is a long period of uncertainty during which the Church of England advised that no data pertaining to attendance should be collected. Our policy is therefore being adjusted to reflect this reality, and to take into account attendance over a slightly longer period of time. We appreciate that there may be anxiety about change, and we assure families that there has been full debate and due consideration given. Given that all families will have received the same notice, the change is considered fair.
3. Records of attendance in the Church of England are kept over a five year period because another local CE secondary already uses this timescale in its attendance criteria. Committed members of the Church of England are known to their Church, the minister, and churchwardens. We advise and trust Ministers of Religion to discuss attendance records with families so that a satisfactory position can be achieved for the purposes of the Supplementary Information Form.

Baptism (or equivalent)

1. The number of points to be allocated for baptism (or service of dedication or other equivalent) has been thoroughly debated and revisited as part of the consultation. We are satisfied that the number allocated is balanced and fair. As with all aspects of the policy it will be kept under review.

Introducing reserved places for other Christian denominations in addition to those for members of other Major World Faiths.

1. All comments received on this have welcomed the change. The numbers of places awarded to each category is kept under review.
2. Recording attendance in other Christian denominations: applications under the current policy indicate that the overwhelming majority of churches locally do keep records, and schools within Manchester Diocese which already include Christians of other denominations within their criteria, have confirmed that

providing a record of attendance is not, for the great majority, an issue. We will do our best as an Admissions Authority to advise churches and their regional leadership of this change and will ask for their support. Committed families are known to their priest/minister/superintendent, and to church officers. The Admissions Authority believes it is important to make attendance at public worship a criterion of commitment for the allocation of places for Christian children as this is a central tenet of Christianity for everyone, irrespective of age or gender.

Why are we not introducing criteria that recognises online attendance?

1. The National Society of the Church of England (which drew up the advice for Dioceses and Diocesan Boards of Education on church attendance recording for the purposes of school admissions in August 2020), did not recognise online worship. We can see that, since then, society is changing and adapting in response to a serious virus which could become endemic. As an Anglican Trust as much as an Admissions Authority, we believe that online worship is now central to the future of parishes, as part of a mixed economy of physically present worship for some people who do not have the means to join online worship, and online communities for those who cannot attend because of distancing requirements and limits, clinical vulnerability and the potential issues of asymptomatic children transmitting the virus to others. We are making representations ourselves through all means at our disposal.
2. Manchester Diocese contacted clergy in November to ask that systems be put in place to collect data on attendance for school admissions from 2nd December. However, we understand that that is in abeyance following the December and subsequent January national lockdown.

FOR CLARITY: we will not be collecting data on church attendance during the autumn or spring terms 2020-21 and will review the situation again at Easter 2021.

The upper limit of 39 attendances per year

1. We are satisfied that following full debate and consideration of all opinions, the criteria for attendance up to a maximum of 39 attendances per year, over 5 years, is the right level. We believe that this will give families the flexibility to evidence their commitment and enable a fair allocation. We will continue to keep the policy under review.

Why is church attendance irrelevant to enquiries about admission to the Sixth Form?

1. The Blue Coat Sixth Form is multi-faith, multi-ethnic and multi-talented, all within the ethos of an Anglican school. It is an academic sixth form offering predominantly A levels. Admission into the sixth form is based on academic criteria, which are the same for internal and external candidates, to ensure that students are on the right course for them, and they will be happy in what they are doing. All young people joining the sixth form must commit to respect the Christian ethos of the school. All attend worship and assemblies, and all take part in the programme of applied ethics which is part of the sixth form curriculum.

The use of plain English technical points raised about our Supplementary Information Form

1. Thank you to those who suggested clarifications and minor amendments to ensure that our forms are clear and unambiguous. Most of the suggestions have been adopted. We have also amended the definition of Christian Churches in line with the Ecumenical Relations Measure 2018 recently issued by the Diocesan Director of Education, and specifically included Partner Church members of Affinity, following DBE advice.

A full copy of the final admissions policy and supplementary form which incorporate the proposed new arrangements can be found on our website:

<https://www.blue-coat.org/admissions/consultation-2022-admissions-entry/>

The Published Admissions Number and Policy will now be confirmed with the Local Authority by 15 March 2021.