



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Request for a variation for admissions in September 2021

Name of school	St Thomas' Leesfield C of E Primary School
Type of school (i.e. foundation, voluntary aided, community or voluntary controlled) ¹	Voluntary Aided
Address of school	St Thomas' Leesfield C of E Primary School Thomas Street, Lees, Oldham OL4 5AT
Telephone number of school	0161 770 5710
Name of headteacher	Mrs Paula Glynn
Email address of headteacher	p.glynn@leesfield.oldham.sch.uk
Name of chair of governors	Mrs Rebecca Ashton
Email address of chair of governors	r.ashton@st-hughs.oldham.sch.uk
Name of local authority	Oldham
Name and address of authorised officer in local authority	Jennifer Melia Admissions and Appeals Officer Oldham Council Level 8 Civic Centre West Street Oldham OL1 1XJ

¹ Applications to vary admission arrangements of academies directed to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Telephone number

0161 770 0000

Email address

Jennifer.Melia@oldham.gov.uk

For schools with a religious character, what is the name and address of the authorised officer in the religious authority?

Deborah Smith, Director of Education
Diocese of Manchester
Church House, 90 Deansgate

Telephone number

0161 828 1429

Email address

deborahsmith@manchester.anglican.org

Signature

Date

R Ashton

14/7/2020

To be signed by the responsible person for the admission authority. For community and voluntary controlled schools, this will normally² be an authorised officer of the local authority. For voluntary aided and foundation schools this will be the chair of governors.
(type name if sending electronically)

Please note that information provided on this form will be copied to the other parties listed above.

Please complete the appropriate parts of this form. If possible, please send the form and all necessary attachments by email to osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk

Or post to: The Office of the Schools Adjudicator
Bishopsgate House
Feethams
Darlington
DL1 5QE

² In the unusual case that the local authority has delegated responsibility for admissions to the governing board, making it the admission authority, then this will be the chair of governors.

Initial information required

1. Current Admission Arrangements

Before an adjudicator can consider a variation, he or she needs to see evidence that the admission arrangements for the relevant year have been determined, that is formally agreed, by the admission authority. If the arrangements have not been determined, the adjudicator has no jurisdiction to consider the proposed variation.

Please provide:

- a. a copy of the **complete admission arrangements** for the relevant year including any supplementary information form or other relevant documentation and a link to where they can be found on the admission authority's website; and
- b. a copy of the **minutes of the meeting** where the arrangements for the relevant year were **determined by the admission authority**.

2. The requested variation

The documentation requested above will establish that the adjudicator has jurisdiction. When that is received then the adjudicator will be able to consider the proposed variation.

- a. What major change of circumstance has occurred since the arrangements were determined making it necessary to request a variation? The adjudicator will consider if the variation is a necessary and appropriate response to the change in circumstances.

During the COVID19 pandemic, churches and other religious buildings have been closed by law for public worship and for other uses. Since the school's oversubscription criteria include church attendance, (at a specified frequency and period of time) parents and their children are unable to meet this criterion under the terms of our current admissions arrangements.

- b. What problems have arisen, or are foreseen, as a result of this change in circumstances?

Parents and their children will not be able to clearly identify how they may meet that criterion and how church attendance will be determined. The school will have difficulty in advising prospective pupils and their families; in dealing fairly and lawfully with admissions decisions and potential appeals, and diocesan education staff and clergy will also face uncertainty on these matters, for instance when completing the approved Supplementary Information Form (SIF).

It is also the case that not all churches and other worship centres will be open for public worship at the same time, and that public health requirements may lead to temporary closures and other restrictions should infection levels rise again.

c. What variation is being proposed and for which year of admission?

For admissions to Reception in September 2021, to the current oversubscription criteria relating to church attendance insert:
'In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for worship'.

(Please also see enclosed proposed amended criteria etc)

d. How will the proposed variation address the problems arising from the change of circumstances?

It provides the necessary and carefully drawn clarification that will enable parents and others concerned with admissions matters to clearly identify how church attendance is determined for admissions where this oversubscription criterion is relevant. It also provides for the potential for church closures being required during the pandemic if there is a need for local, regional or national reimposition of control measures.

3. Notification of appropriate bodies

It is necessary to provide evidence that the following bodies have been notified of the proposed variation as required by paragraph 3.6 of the School Admissions Code:

- all other admission authorities and all governing boards for community and voluntary controlled schools within the relevant area³ (except that primary schools need not notify secondary schools). This is expected to include schools within a reasonable distance whether or not in the same local authority area;
- whichever of the governing board or the local authority is not the admission authority; and
- in the case of schools with a religious character, the religious authority.

A notification is not a consultation. The adjudicator would expect the admission authority to have provided enough information in the notification to the above bodies for an understanding of the change in circumstances and the proposed variation.

In addition, before a local authority refers a request for a variation to the admission arrangements of a community or voluntary controlled school to the

³ The relevant area is defined in the Code as “*The area for a school (determined by its local authority and then reviewed every two years) within which the admission authority for that school must consult all other prescribed schools on its admission arrangements.*”

adjudicator, it must consult the governing board of the school.

The variation cannot be considered if notification and consultation (of the governing board in the case of proposed variations to the arrangements of community or voluntary controlled schools) have not occurred.

Please provide:

- a. evidence that the governing board of the community or voluntary controlled school has been consulted (if appropriate);
- b. evidence that the above notification requirements have been met; and
- c. provide any comments received from the above bodies about the proposed variation (if no responses were received please say so).