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| Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth | |

8 October 2020

**To heads, chairs and clerks to governors of diocesan schools**

Dear Colleague

The diocesan guidance on admissions arrangements for the school year 2022-2023 is now available on the CASO website at <http://www.casoportsmouth.org.uk/admissions/>. A copy of the guidance is also attached to this email. The guidance is being sent to chairs of governors, clerks and headteachers. The governing body and the admissions committee **must** comply with the requirements of the Admissions Code and meet any deadlines contained in the guidance.

The guidance remains largely unchanged from the guidance issued in September 2019, however, it is important to note that a consultation on aspects of the Admissions Code linked to in-year admissions and Fair Access Protocols is currently taking place. When we are informed of the outcomes of the consultation and any resulting changes to the Code we will inform you straight away.

**With regard to the current pandemic situation, within our model policies and supplementary forms, we have included a statement to be used by those schools who intend to use Catholic attendance at Sunday Mass as one of their oversubscription criteria. (Please see page 25, paragraphs 6.2.6 and 6.2.7)**

We appreciate the document is a lengthy one but feel strongly that as a minimum the chair, chair of admissions, headteacher and clerk take the time to read it carefully. We have highlighted particular paragraphs where in the past there has perhaps been an unawareness of diocesan expectations.

If your school is one that uses evidence of Catholic practice as an oversubscription criteria we would **strongly recommend** you review whether this is still needed within your policy. We are aware of a significant number of our schools that include this criterion even though each year they always admit a number of non-Catholics. This can cause an unnecessary impact on the workload of our priests and school and parish admin staff but is also against the spirit of the Admissions Code which asks for schools to use as few oversubscription criteria as possible.

**Please also look carefully at the flowchart on page 11 and the checklist and timetable on page 15** as well as all the other guidance.

When changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements (including any supplementary information form) that will apply for admission applications. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period. Please refer to the guidance for details.

At the request of a number of governing bodies we have drawn up a number of model admission policies and supplementary information forms.

* Primary School Admission Policy and SIF – no proof of Catholic practice required
* Primary School Admission Policy and SIF – proof of Catholic practice required
* Secondary School Admission Policy and SIF – no proof of Catholic practice required
* Secondary School Admission Policy and SIF – proof of Catholic practice required

These are based on the latest models produced by the Catholic Education Service. If a governing body is considering changing their admission policy or if they need to consult due to the fact that it is 7 years since they last did so, then we would **strongly recommend** drafting your revised policy using one of the suggested models. If there are particular circumstances around your admissions that will need to be incorporated, please ensure you liaise with our office before circulating it for consultation.

**I look forward to receiving a copy of your proposed admissions policy and your supplementary information form when this has been drafted by your governing body.**

Please do not hesitate to make contact if you have any queries regarding the drawing up of your policy.

Yours sincerely



Robert Dare

Schools Support and Standards Officer