



Dear Stakeholder

In accordance with the Department for Education's School Admissions Code, we are currently consulting with parents, the Local Authority and other interested parties regarding proposed changes to Bennett Memorial Diocesan School Admission Arrangements for entry to the school from September 2026.

The proposed changes are:

- Changing A1 and A2 into separate criteria and re lettering A-F
- Increase the number of staff places from 8 to 15
- Change in the frequency of church attendance in categories C and D from at least 3 times a month to at least 2 times a month
- In Categories C and D adding the tie break of attending a Tenax school, after siblings and before distance
- Adjusting the cap in category C to 180
- Adding a cap to the number of places offered in category D of 60 places
- Changing the title of category E from 'Children from non-Christian faith backgrounds' to 'Children from faith backgrounds other than Christian'
- Removing categories F, G and H and replacing them with the following:

Category F Children from families with church attendance of less than twice a month or no church attendance.
If applications which meet these criteria exceed the number that can be offered, priority will be given in the following order:

- *applicants with a sibling at Bennett in September of the year of admission*
- *applicants currently in receipt of Free School Meals in Year 6 (evidence must be supplied at the time of application)*
- *applicants attending a Tenax Schools Trust Church of England primary school in Year 6*
- *distance from the school*

Full details of our proposed 2023 Admissions Policy can be found attached or on the school website <https://www.bennettmemorial.co.uk> Paper copies are available from the school upon request.

The formal consultation will be open between Wednesday 18 December 2024 to Wednesday 29 January 2025.

If you would like to comment on the proposed amendments then please do so either by email to the Clerk to the Admissions Committee admissions@bennett.kent.sch.uk or by post to Clerk of the Admissions committee, Bennett Memorial School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9SH.

All comments received by the end of Wednesday 29 January will be taken into consideration before finalising the admission arrangements for September 2026.

Kind regards

Dr Karen Brookes
Headteacher

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School
Oversubscription Criteria for admission 2026

The published admissions number (PAN) is 300. In the event of oversubscription Governors will offer places to applicants who meet the following oversubscription criteria. Places are then offered to categories A1 and then A2 first. All other applicants will then be ranked in order using the oversubscription criteria B-E below. If there are places unfilled after the allocation of places to those who meet the oversubscription criteria, and after the allocation of reserved places, other places will be offered in order of distance of the child's normal address from the school address.

Before the application of oversubscription criteria children with an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan which names the school will be admitted. As a result of this, the published admissions number will be reduced accordingly.

- A. **Looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the Local Authority (LA)) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.**¹
- B. **Children of Staff at Bennett Memorial School employed by the Tenax Schools Trust**² (up to 15 places)
- C. **Children from Church of England Christian families.** This is a child who has one or both parents worshipping regularly (by which is meant at least two times per month on average) in a Church of England church³ and who have done so for at least two years⁴ up to the time of application. If applications which meet these criteria exceed the number that can be offered priority will be given in the following order:
- i. applicants with a sibling at Bennett in September of the year of admission
 - ii. applicants attending a Tenax Primary School
 - iii. distance from the school

The number admitted under category B will not exceed 180. Category B applications not admitted because of this cap will be re-ranked in category F.

- D. **Children from non-Church of England Christian families.** This is a child who has one or both parents worshipping regularly (by which is meant at least two times per month on average) in any non-Church of England Christian church⁵ and who have done so for at least two years⁴ up to the time of application. If applications which meet these criteria exceed the number that can be offered priority will be given in the following order:
- i. applicants with a sibling at Bennett in September of the year of admission
 - ii. applicants attending a Tenax Primary School
 - iii. distance from the school

The number admitted under category B will not exceed 60. Category C applications not admitted because of this cap will be re-ranked in category E.

- E. **Children from faith backgrounds other than Christian.** A maximum of 20 places are available for children from non-Christian faith backgrounds who wish their child to benefit from a Church of England education. To be considered for one of these reserved places, they will require a reference from their local religious leader stating that they are observant members of their faith, and that they worship publicly with their faith community according to the norms and customs of that faith, on at least a monthly basis, and that they have sustained this pattern of commitment for at least two years⁴ up to the time of application. If applications which meet these criteria exceed the 20 places that can be offered, applicants with a sibling at Bennett in September of the year of admission will have priority, and then within each group applicants will be ranked by distance from the school. Category D applications not admitted because of this cap will be re-ranked in category E.

- F. **Children from families with church attendance of less than two times per month or no church attendance.** If applications which meet these criteria exceed the number that can be offered, priority will be given in the following order:
- applicants with a sibling at Bennett in September of the year of admission
 - applicants currently in receipt of Free School Meals in Year 6- evidence to be provided e.g. a letter from the headteacher
 - applicants attending a Tenax Schools Trust Church of England primary school in Year 6, at the time of the application
 - distance from the school

Notes

¹ *looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted are defined as children under the age of 18 years for whom the LA provides accommodation by agreement with their parents/carers (Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) or who ceased to be so because they became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order under Part IV of the Act.*

Please attach documentary evidence

² *Up to 15 places will be offered to the children of staff at Bennett Memorial School employed by the Trust where:*

- a) *the member of staff has been employed full or part time for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, or*
- b) *the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.*

If applications which meet these criteria exceed the number that can be offered, applicants with a sibling at Bennett in September of the year of admission will be ranked before those without a sibling, and then within each group applicants will be ranked by distance from the school.

³ *Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) of which the Church of England is a member will be considered as Church of England churches for this purpose.*

⁴ *If during this time the family has relocated, or changed the church at which they worship, supporting evidence from the previous church must be provided. In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church or, in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship 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 in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship or alternative premises have been available for public worship*

⁵ *A Christian Church is defined by membership of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland or the Evangelical Alliance*

Distance Tie break

When deciding between applicants who have equal entitlement under any of the above criteria, priority will be given to those in order of distance from their home to the school measured by a straight line, the nearest being accepted first. We use the distance between the child's permanent home address (defined in KCC's annual admissions prospectus) and the school, measured in a straight line using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) address point. Distances are measured from a point defined as within the child's home to a point defined as within the school as specified by NLPG. The same address point on the school site is used for everybody. When we apply the distance criterion for the school, these straight-line measurements are used to determine how close each applicant's address is to the school. Where applications are made from properties or abodes that are not registered to the NLPG, including new build properties, KCC may be required to use planning sites or other relevant co-ordinates. In exceptional circumstances where alternative co-ordinates are not available, measurements will be determined by a Senior Admissions Officer and confirmed by Head of Service.

Normal Address

The child's normal address is considered to be the residential property that is the child's only or main residence and not an address at which your child might sometimes stay or sleep due to your own domestic arrangements. The address must be the pupil's home address on the day you completed your application form.

Parents

Wherever the term 'parents' or 'parent' is used in these criteria, it refers equally to carers or guardians. No distinction is made between children who have one or two parents.

Siblings

Siblings throughout this document are defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers and sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.

Waiting list

A waiting list is held for each year group. The waiting list is ranked according to the oversubscription criteria. Applications will be removed from the waiting list on 31st January each year unless contact has been received from the parents in the last 6 months. The waiting list will be re-ranked, in line with the published oversubscription criteria, every time a child is added.

Appeal

Any applicant not offered a place on 1st March will have the right of appeal. Appeals will be heard in accordance with the Appeals Code by an independent panel. All information on how to appeal for a place at Bennett will be sent to parents by the LA at the same time as the offer of a place at another school.

Withdrawal of places

After a place has been offered the school reserves the right to withdraw the place in the following circumstances:

1. When a parent has failed to respond to an offer within a reasonable time; or
2. When a parent has failed to notify the school of important changes to the application; or
3. When the admission authority offered the place on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application from a parent.

Admission arrangements for children to be taught outside their expected year group

Requests for admission outside the child's expected year group must be made to the Headteacher as far as possible before the autumn closing date for normal applications. There is no requirement to provide evidence, but evidence provided may support a decision. Any evidence must be specific to the child in question. Parents should complete a normal application in addition, in case their request is declined. If the request for admission outside expected year is agreed, a paper Common Application Form must be submitted to the LA with copies of the written agreement from the school.

Fair Access Protocol

Bennett Memorial School works in accordance with the in-year Fair Access Protocols held by the Local Authority. Should a vulnerable child within the protocols require a place at the school, they will take precedence over any child on the waiting list.

Admissions Policy for the Sixth Form

For entry in September 2026

Section 1 – General Principles

Bennett is a Christian School in the tradition of the Church of England and in the sixth form, as elsewhere, learning and development are underpinned by Christian belief and values. Bennett offers a range of academic and vocational qualifications for sixth form students as described in the prospectus. Some of these require minimum grades at GCSE. Our policy is to ensure that students accepted into the sixth form are placed on appropriate courses where they are likely to succeed. For this reason, we ask all applicants to attend a guidance interview with appropriate staff to discuss the most suitable courses of study.

We accept applications from students wishing to transfer from another school into the Bennett Sixth Form. The same course entry criteria apply to these students as to Bennett students wishing to follow the same courses. The planned admissions number for external students is 10. However, in most years we admit more than this because there is space on the courses and because applicants meet our criteria.

Section 2 – Definitions and details

Admission number in year 12

Internal candidates transfer to Y12 provided they have met the entry criteria. There is no upper limit to the number of internal students transferring to Y12.

The numbers of external applications we receive vary from year to year. We exceed our minimum number if preferred courses of study are not oversubscribed and the external applicant has met the relevant entry requirements. For example, in 2023 we admitted 13 external applicants, in 2024, 26. The deadline for external applications is the beginning of term in January.

Academic requirements

The Average Points Score is established over 10 GCSEs

To begin A level courses, you must have at least an average point score of 4.0, including at least 3 GCSEs at grade 5. For some courses a higher threshold is required.

If you wish to study biology*, chemistry*, physics or psychology you will need to have achieved an average of at least 5.5 at GCSE and at least a 6 in at least 2 sciences at GCSE, including those to be studied at A level. Where combined sciences have been studied at GCSE at least 2 grade 7s (i.e.7,7) are required. *Further details are present in the choosing courses section of the website.

If you wish to study English language you will need to have achieved at least an average of 4.0 at GCSE and at least grade 5 in English language GCSE.

If you wish to study English literature, you will need to have achieved at least an average of 5.5 and at least grade 5 in English literature GCSE.

If you wish to study French, German or Latin you will be expected to have achieved at least a grade 5 in that language at GCSE and an average of at least 6.0 at GCSE overall.

If you wish to study mathematics, further mathematics you will need to have achieved at least an average of 5.5 at GCSE and at least a grade 7 in mathematics GCSE.

If you wish to study computer science, you will need to have achieved at least an average of 5.5 at GCSE and at least a grade 6 in computer science/computing GCSE.

If you wish to study music or physical education, you will need to have achieved at least an average of 5.5 at GCSE and be able to demonstrate a track record of performance.

If you wish to study product design, you will need to have achieved at least an average of 4.0 at GCSE and at least 3 grade 5s, and at least a grade 5 in product design or a related GCSE.

If you wish to study fine art, photography or textiles you will need to have achieved an average of 4.0 at GCSE and at least 3 grade 5s, and at least a grade 5 in the corresponding GCSE.

If you wish to study media studies, geography or history, you will need at least an average of 4.0 at GCSE and at least 3 grade 5s. If you have studied geography or history at GCSE, you will need at least a grade 4 in that subject to be able to study it at A level.

If you wish to study the L3 Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care you will need to have achieved at least an average of 4.0 at GCSE.

If you wish to study the L3 Digital media or Sport and Physical Activity Diploma courses you will need to have achieved at least an average of 3.5 at GCSE and at least a grade 5 in the A level subject you wish to study alongside the diploma.

If you wish to study the Extended Project Qualification, you will need to have achieved at least an average of 4.5 at GCSE and at least a grade 5 in English Language GCSE.

If you wish to study L3 core mathematics, you will need to have achieved at least an average of 4.5 at GCSE and at least a grade 5 in mathematics GCSE.

If you wish to study physics A level, you must also study mathematics.

If you wish to study further mathematics, you must also study A level mathematics.

If you wish to study biology, chemistry or physics at A level this must be studied with at least one other science from: biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, mathematics, further mathematics.

Subjects where it is not essential to have a GCSE in the same subject are psychology, L3 Digital media, Sport and Physical Activity Diploma or Health and Social Care, history, physical education, theatre studies, philosophy, photography (must have either art or photography), media studies and the extended project diploma.

Applications from students without UK Qualifications: students applying from abroad without GCSE qualifications will be required to sit examination papers, set by the school in English, mathematics and other relevant subjects,

according to their course choices, so we can determine that they are working at an equivalent standard to students who have taken GCSEs.

Meeting the requirements of any course is no guarantee that the applicant will automatically be offered a place on his or her preferred courses for reasons of scheduling and group size.

We will require external applicants to provide copies of results slips before taking up places.

Entry into year 13 for external applicants will depend on the courses required availability of space in that group and the compatibility of different specifications. We require convincing evidence that the applicant will go on to complete the course successfully.

Attendance

A minimum attendance of 95% must be maintained throughout the course to continue in the Sixth Form.

Oversubscription Criteria for External Applications

- Children in public care ¹
- Distance from the school

Right to appeal

If an application is refused, there is a statutory right of appeal to the Independent School Appeals Panel. Further details of how to appeal will be provided with the letter explaining why the application has been refused. Appeals may be lodged either by the parent or the student.

Waiting list

No waiting list is held for external applications to the sixth form. Applicants meeting the criteria who are not offered places because there is no space are advised to reapply later in the same year. If places are then available their applications may be successful.

Ethos statement for sixth form application form

Bennett is a Church of England school. The school's aim is to provide a high-quality academic education underpinned by strong Christian values, supported across the curriculum, including through Christian worship. In the sixth form all students are expected to support this ethos. A core studies programme is provided for all students which incorporates a range of areas, including religious and ethics education, and all students are expected to take part in the core programme as directed. A range of extracurricular opportunities are offered, and these are considered a vital part of learning and development in the sixth form. A professional standard of personal presentation and conduct is considered essential for membership of the Bennett sixth form, as described in the prospectus. In signing this statement, parents and students are acknowledging support for this ethos and indicating a clear preference for it in their sixth form education.

Distance

Distance for the purposes of these criteria is measured between the child's normal address and the school in a straight-line using Ordnance Survey address point data. Distances are measured from a central point within the child's home to a similarly defined point within the school specified by Ordnance Survey. The school uses measurements provided by Kent LA and further information on this is available from booklets provided by Kent. In the unlikely event that there are two or more applications of equal eligibility for the last available place at the school a random selection will be applied.

¹ Children in public care are defined as children under the age of 18 for whom the Local Authority provides accommodation by agreement with their parents or carers (Section 22 of the children Act 1989) or who ceased to be so because they were adopted o