

DSTC Year 7 September 2022 Defence Statement

Dartford Science and Technology College is currently oversubscribed with a waiting list. When a place becomes available we apply the DSTC admission oversubscription criteria to ensure that the offer is transparent and fair. This means that we offer to any child with an EHCP who names the school, children in Local Authority Care or previously in Local Authority Care, then those with a current family association, followed by health and special access reasons followed by nearness of the child's home to school. As a result of this the published admission number will then be reduced accordingly.

DSTC has already increased its published admission number from 145 to 150 in September 2017 to support growing demand for places, but with an eye on safety and fulfilling obligations to all stakeholders, we simply do not have the capacity to safely house more than 150 in any year group.

At present we have an excellent record of student achievement. We have very grave concerns that in the long-term, by accepting additional students, the quality of education we could offer would deteriorate with higher numbers, leaving local primary schools and the community dissatisfied with the service we provide.

The admission of additional students would prejudice both the provision of a good education and the efficient use of resources in the following ways:

Firstly, the main teaching block (a two storey block, housing 16 classrooms) is already extremely congested at lesson changeover times with the corridors being just 1.8 metres wide. We are thankful that there have not been accidents along the corridors and stairwells in this building due to the number of girls moving in both directions at lesson changeover. We do not want to exacerbate the current situation for students or staff and potentially have a serious event on our hands. We have already had to alter our fire evacuation route in this block to accommodate the high numbers of students moving through. Admitting more students would magnify this situation and would pose a health and safety risk.

Secondly the main school building lacks sufficient toilet provision for the students that it already accommodates with just 32 cubicles for the 860 students currently on roll. This falls short of the recommended 1 cubicle per 20 students (**Advice on Standards for school premises, March 2005**) with any additional student this puts extra pressure on this utility.



Covid-19 health and safety/transmission reduction measures would also put pressure on our student to toilet (and sink) ration when closing every other toilet to maintain social distancing.

The teaching accommodation in our Science laboratories is designed for a maximum of 30 workstations, we have 5 classes in each year for years 7, 8 and 9 therefore 150 students. Providing for more students would be a substantial Health and Safety risk in these areas and a likely source of teacher stress. The same risks occur in our PE lessons where the safe oversight of students participating is reduced the more students in a class.

Our cafeteria is designed to accommodate just 144 students. We have already changed our lunchtime arrangements to provide two sittings to accommodate the higher numbers of students. There simply isn't enough room for more. Some students already have to eat their meals outside or in the Assembly Hall because there is no room for them in the cafeteria. Queues are extremely long and providing for even more students would significantly impact the quality of experience.

As we have become more popular and increased in PAN throughout all year groups we have had to make adjustments in the building to accommodate this. Most recently converting a PE store cupboard into a changing facility. Further changes to the fabric or layout of the building would cause an unacceptable financial burden on DSTC.

Once again technology classrooms are not big enough to support additional students: At DSTC our Information and Technology rooms are designed for a maximum of 30 students with computers. In some cases even if it were financially viable, it would be physically impossible to install an additional workstation, due to a lack of switches and ports, which would therefore impact the education of our students, as not all students would be able to use a computer in the room. It would be challenging to ensure equality of this if greater than 30 were in a class as staff would have to decide who had to share the resource.

Pastoral care could be compromised if further students were admitted above the PAN at DSTC. We pride ourselves on the relationship that Form Tutors, Teachers and Pastoral Leaders build up with students and parents. With a PAN of 150, we have five forms each with 30 students who are allocated a Form Tutor to oversee pastoral and progress matters. Ideally we would like this to be lower to ensure support, challenge and development of the whole child. With an increased number of students, the ability to spend quality 1:1 or small group discussion with a tutor would be further compromised. Again, form groups are taught in classrooms designed for 30 students. Many classrooms would not be able to fit another student into the physical space.

Administration needs to be taken into account. Extra students put pressure on everyone at DSTC, but also those working tirelessly behind the scenes including administration, safeguarding team, attendance officer and the SEND team.

Additional information such as Threshold Statements, Scheme Statements, Secondary Transfer, Oversubscription Criteria, Head Teacher Review & offer letter to be attached if applicable.