

DSTC Year 7 September 2026 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, followed by 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 amended accordingly.

DSTC has already increased its published admission number from 145 to 150 in September 2017 to support growing demand for places. However, we are mindful of fulfilling our health and safety obligations and we do not have the capacity to safely have more than 150 students in a year group.

At present we have an excellent record of student achievement. We have serious concerns that by accepting additional students, the quality of education offered would deteriorate over time, 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) corridors are 1.8m wide which leads to congestion during lesson changeover. Our published PAN of 150 students per year means we can manage this movement safely. We do not want to exacerbate the current situation for students or staff, and potentially place existing students at risk of harm. We have altered our fire evacuation routes to accommodate the number of students using the corridors at one time. Admitting more students would magnify this situation and would pose a health and safety risk.

Secondly, the main school building has sufficient toilet provision for the students that it already accommodates with 32 cubicles for the 880 students currently on roll. This falls short of the recommended 1 cubicle per 20 students (**Advice on Standards for School Premises, March 2015**). Any additional student puts extra pressure on this utility.

The teaching accommodation in our Science laboratories is designed for a maximum of 30 workstations which safely accommodates classes of 30 students. The same risks would occur in our PE/Dance lessons where class sizes of 30 allow for the safe oversight of practical lessons. Increased numbers of students above our published PAN would increase health and safety risk.

Our cafeteria is designed to accommodate 144 students. We have changed our lunchtime arrangements to provide two sittings to accommodate our current number of students. Some students have to eat their meals outside or in the assembly hall because there is no room for them in the cafeteria. Accepting more students would significantly impact the quality of student experience during lunchtimes.

In addition, our technology classrooms are designed for 24 students to ensure the appropriate health and safety rules are in place. We have safely increased our numbers to 25 in each class but cannot go above this number as more students would increase safety risks.

Our Information and Technology classrooms are designed for a maximum of 30 computers. It is not financially viable to install more workstations, switches and ports. It would be challenging to ensure equality of resources if the numbers in the class were greater than 30.

As we have become more popular and increased our PAN throughout all year groups we have had to make adjustments in the building to accommodate this. For example, 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 and disruption to the learning environment whilst changes are made.

Pastoral care could be compromised if we exceeded our PAN. We pride ourselves on the relationships Form Tutors, Teachers and Pastoral Leaders have with students and parents. With a PAN of 150, we have five forms per year group each with 30 students who are allocated a Form Tutor to oversee pastoral care and academic progress. 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 key pastoral and teaching staff would be further compromised. Again, form groups are taught in classrooms designed for 30 students and most classrooms do not have the physical capacity to exceed this number.

Additional students put additional pressure on all staff including non-teaching staff, for example, administrative staff, the safeguarding team, the attendance officer and the SEND team.

Additional information:

Please provide details of the School Capacity: **150 per year**

Number of pupils on role in each year group:

- Yr 7 - 150
- Yr 8 - 150
- Yr 9 - 150
- Yr 10 - 150
- Yr11 - 150
- Post 16 - 150

Number of teaching groups for the year 7: 5

How the school organises its classes: as above (1 higher and four mixed ability groups)

Room sizes being taught in as above (1 higher and four mixed ability groups)

Please be advised that each parent who lodges an appeal will have a personalised defence statement forwarded to them as part of their case papers.