

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Admissions Policy and Procedure 2024/25

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is in the Diocese of Southwark. The school is conducted by its Governing Body and seeks at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ. The school exists primarily to serve the Catholic community and Catholic children always have priority of admission. However, the Governing Body also welcomes applications from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

Having consulted with the Local Authority, the Diocese and other admission authorities, the Governors intend to admit into the Reception year, in September 2024, up to 60 pupils without reference to ability or aptitude.

Where the number of applications exceeds 60 places (total number of children who can be accepted in YR), the Governors will offer places using the following criteria in the order stated:-

First priority will go to children with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school. Remaining places will be given in the following priority order:

- 1) Looked after Catholic children or looked after children in the care of Catholic families, looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order and Catholic children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.**
- 2) Baptised Catholic children whose parents/carers are practising members of the Catholic Church.**
- 3) Children who are baptised Catholics but whose parents/carers are non-practising members of the Catholic Church.**
- 4) Looked after children, looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order and children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.**
- 5) Children of members of the Eastern Orthodox churches**
- 6) Children who are members of other Christian denominations, which are members of Churches Together in England.**
- 7) Children of other faiths.**
- 8) Any other children**

The following order of priorities will be applied when it is necessary to decide between applications within any of the above categories.

- i) For categories 2 and 3, the evidence of strength of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the frequency of Mass attendance, with weekly attendance being given the highest priority.**
- ii) Children with a sibling who will be attending St Mary's Catholic Primary School at the time of their admission.**
- iii) Social and/or medical needs which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question (strong and relevant evidence must be provided by an appropriate professional authority-qualified medical practitioner, welfare officer, social worker or priest).**

- iv) Distance from home to school (the distance measured in a straight line from the centre of the home address to the centre of the school). Where the last remaining place is to be allocated and two or more children are deemed to live the same distance away from the school, the place will be decided by the drawing of lots.

'Practising member of the Catholic Church' is defined by frequency of Mass attendance as shown on the Supplementary Information Form, signed by the priest. Thus, applications will be ranked weekly, fortnightly, monthly and occasionally (with weekly attendance being given the highest priority and occasionally the lowest).

Sibling is a natural brother or sister, including half siblings, step siblings, fostered and adopted and not other relatives such as cousins. This does not include siblings attending the school's nursery provision.

Looked after children are those in the care of a public authority and are in public care. Applications made under this criterion must be accompanied by details of circumstance and professionally supported evidence (eg from an appropriate social worker).

'Home' is where the child resides as their only or principal residence. If the child resides equally between both parents, the principal home address will be considered as being the address at which the child is registered whilst attending early years provision, with a GP and, if applicable, the address of the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit or child Tax Credits for the child. For children who reside with a relative or carer other than a parent, a court order will be required.

Admissions Procedure

In addition to the Common Application Form (CAF) supplied by the home Local Authority, the Supplementary Information Form (available from the school and from the Local Authority), should be completed and returned to the school not later than the closing date published by the Local Authority. This should be done even if the CAF is completed online. If the Supplementary Form is not completed, the Governing Body may not be able to apply their admission criteria correctly and the application may have to be ranked in a lower category.

The national closing date for applications is 15th January 2024 and offers of places will be sent to parents by the Local Authority on 16th April 2024.

Appeals:

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with section 85 (3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and must set out the reasons on which the appeal is made. Appeals should be made to the Admissions Appeal Clerk at the school address. Parents/Carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

Infant classes are restricted by the legislation to 30 children. Parents should be aware that an appeal against refusal of a place in an Infant class may only succeed if it can be demonstrated that:-

- a) the admission of additional children would not breach the Infant class size limit; or

- b) the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or had not been correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or
- c) the panel decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

Fair Access Protocol:

The school participates in the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol to allocate places to vulnerable and other children in accordance with the School Admission Code. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the planned admission number for the relevant year group.

Pupils with an Educational, Health Care Plan (EHCP):

The admission of pupils with an EHC Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements and EHC plans by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with an EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

Twins/Multiple births:

The school can offer over number if the next child is a twin/multiple birth. If the child ranked 61st for example, is a twin or one of a multiple birth the school can offer over the permitted Infant class size number.

Waiting Lists:

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place. It is possible that when a child is directed under the Local Authority's Fair Access protocol they will take precedence over those children already on the list. The Waiting List remains open for 7 years.

Admission of children below compulsory school age:

The Governors will provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year; parents may also request that their child attends part time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Admission of children outside their normal age group:

Parents who are seeking a place for their child outside of their normal age group, eg the child has experienced problems such as ill health or the parents of a summer born child preferring not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group-to Reception rather than Y1.

Governors will make decisions on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parents' views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. They will also consider the views of the school's Headteacher. When informing a parent of the decision which year group the child should be admitted to, the Governors will set out clearly the reasons for this decision. Where the Governors agree to a request from parents for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school the Local Authority will process the application as part of the main admissions round (unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible) and on the basis of the determined admission arrangements, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.