

St. John's Catholic Primary School



Admissions Policy and Procedures 2023-2024

'TO LOVE AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER'

St. John's Catholic Primary School is a Voluntary Aided School in the Diocese of Southwark. It is in the trusteeship of the Diocese of Southwark. The School is conducted by its governing body as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its Trust Deed and Instrument of Government, 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 welcomes all applications, particularly from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

Having consulted with the Local Authority and other admission authorities, the Governors intend to admit into the Reception Class, in September 2023, up to (30) pupils without reference to ability or aptitude. A place in the Nursery Class at St John's does not guarantee a place in the Reception Class. A separate application must be made for entry to the primary school.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

The admissions of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or with an EHC Plan are dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to 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 a statement or EHC Plan naming the School will be admitted without reference to the above Criteria.

Where the number of applications exceeds (30), the Governors will offer places using the following Criteria in the order stated:-

1. Looked After Catholic Children or Looked After Children in the care of Catholic families and previously looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order, including IAPLAC (internationally adopted previously looked after children).*
2. Baptised Catholic children. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
Catholics include members of the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome
3. Children enrolled in the Catechumenate. Evidence of enrolment in the Catechumenate will be required.
4. Other Looked After Children or previously looked after children or previously Looked After Children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order. including IAPLAC (internationally adopted previously looked after children)*
5. Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism will be required.

6. Children of families who are committed members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) provided by a Priest or Minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
7. Children of other faiths. Evidence of religious commitment provided by a Priest, Minister or religious leader of a designated place of worship will be required.
8. Any other children.

* Please see Appendix 1

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

- a) For Category 2 above - The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of the child and family's Mass attendance on Sundays over a period of 1 year. This evidence must be provided by the parents/carers and be endorsed by a priest at the church(es) where the family normally worship. Mass attendance for the child can be with one or both parents. Applications will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary Form; firstly those who attend Mass weekly, then once or twice a month and then less often. This evidence must be provided by the parents/carers and be endorsed by a Priest at the Church(es) where the family normally worship. This information is taken from the completed Supplementary Form and will be ranked accordingly.

	Baptism	Sunday Mass Attendance
a	Baptised	Weekly
b	Baptised	Occasional (once or twice a month)
c	Baptised	Irregular (less than once a month)

- b) A sibling on the school roll at the time of admission. The 'term' sibling is to include relationship through blood, marriage or adoption, not necessarily residing at the same address nor having the same surname. Evidence of the relationship may be required.
- c) Social and 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 (eg qualified Medical Practitioner, Education Welfare Officer, Social Worker or Priest, or Education Professional.) It must be dated within the last three months.

In all listed Criteria(numbered 1 to 8 above), priority will be given to those living in closer proximity to the School, the distance measured in a straight line from the child's main home address to the School entrance. Evidence of residence may be required. Where the last remaining place is to be allocated distance will be used as a tie breaker to differentiate between two applications, if two or more children are deemed to live the same distance from the school the place will be decided by the drawing of lots.

Admissions procedure

In addition to the Common Application Form (CAF) which must be completed before the national closing date for primary schools (15th January 2023), the Supplementary Application Form available from the School, should be completed and sent to the School Office not later than the closing date published by the Local Authority. The completion of a Supplementary Form is not mandatory. However, if the Supplementary Application Form is not completed, the governing body of the school will only be able to consider the application after all applicants who have completed a Supplementary Application Form. You are advised to make two copies of the forms. You should retain one copy and pass the second copy to the School or your Priest, as indicated. Offers of places will be available to parents from Southwark's e-Admissions website on the common offer date 16th April 2023.

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 Appeals 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 or impartially applied;
- 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.

Deferred Entry

The governors will provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the school 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. Parents cannot defer entry beyond the beginning of the term that follows their child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted.

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 Year 1.

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 parent's 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 Head Teacher. When informing a parent of the decision of which year group the child should be admitted to, the governors will set out clearly the reasons for their decision. Where the governors agree to a parent's request 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 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 not in their preferred age group.

In Year Admissions

Applications for a place at the school in-year must be made using the common application form of the Local Authority (LA) where the child resides. This form must be returned directly to us. The school's Supplementary Application Form should also be completed to enable the Governors to rank the application in the event of there being more than one application for a place. The Governors will use the same criteria to rank the application as that listed above. In the event of the Governors deciding that a place cannot be offered, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

'Applications for places outside the normal round of admissions(in year admissions) will be allocated in accordance with the school's published admission criteria and processed as per Southwark's agreed protocol.'

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 2014. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the planned admission number for the relevant year group.

Waiting List

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, which will be maintained until 31st August 2023 and 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.

Late Applications – Reception Intake Only

In accordance with Southwark's primary co-ordinated admissions scheme, all late applications will not be considered for a place until after the initial offer of places on offer day. Additionally, all late applications must be made using Southwark's paper primary application form.

Applications made after this period will be considered by the Governors' Admissions Committee, in the event of there being any available places using the above criteria. If all places have been filled, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

Non-Faith Applicants

We do not require families applying to the school on a non-faith basis to complete the Supplementary Information Form as the information gathered would have no direct bearing on decisions made about their application. Families of non-faith applicants who do not submit a Supplementary Information Form will be considered under criteria 8 and therefore not prioritised for under the faith criterion.

This admissions procedure, although primarily relevant to children for whom a place is sought at the normal age of entry to primary education (Year R), applies also to succeeding years, subject to availability of places.

- a. The expression "parent" refers to the parent/s or guardian/s of the child.*
- b. The governors will take home address as that evidenced at the closing date for application.*
- c. Siblings, means children who live at the same address as brother and sister, including natural brothers or sisters, half brothers and sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. It would not include other relatives e.g. cousins.*
- d. The school will require documentation of a candidate's birth certificate, baptism certificate and proof of residence after a place has been offered.*
- e. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the centre of the pupil's main home to the main entrance of the school with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority. For shared properties, e.g. flats, the centre will be taken from the centre of the building. g. 'Home' is defined as the address where the child normally resides as their only or principal residence. Addresses involved in childminding (professional or relatives) are excluded.*
- f. Any pastoral, medical and/or social need should be clearly stated at the time of application and suitable evidence must be supplied by professional such as social worker, medical practitioner, education professional.*
- g. A Looked After Child is defined as "A child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority". Looked after children also includes previously looked after children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order) immediately following having been looked after. See DFE Admissions Code para. 1.7*
- h. Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.*
- i. Sunday Mass is deemed to include the Saturday evening vigil mass.*
- j. Reference to other Christian denominations refers to denominations that are full members of Churches Together in England.*
- k. An offer of a place may be withdrawn if fraud is detected in the application.*

Appendix 1

A looked after child has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 that is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (e.g. children with foster parents) at the time of making application. A previously looked after child is a child who was looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence orders in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Any references to previously looked after children in the School Admissions Code 2014 means such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders) immediately having been looked after.