

Sacred Heart
Catholic Primary School



Learning in Love

Admissions Policy 2024 – 2025 For Reception to Year 6

Mission Statement

Guided by truth, respect and compassion; we share in building upon every individual's foundation, nurturing a love of learning in preparation for tomorrow's society, with Jesus at the heart of all we do.

Governing Body with Responsibility	Safeguarding, Community, Admissions & Ethos
Agreed by Governors on	22/11/2022
Chair's Signature	<i>Jonathan Roberts</i>
Staff Member Responsible for Review	Lorraine Dolan-Walsh
Date for Review	Autumn 2023

Our school provides a broad and creative education with high expectations, in a safe and welcoming environment. We believe that every child matters and is a unique gift from God. The care of each child lies at the heart of the shared mission of home, school and parish.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school in the Diocese of Southwark. It is in the trusteeship of the Diocese. 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 also welcomes applications from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

A substantial amount of funding for the upkeep of the school is donated by regular Sacred Heart churchgoers through their regular weekly contributions at Mass.

The Catholic community supports the school because they value a distinctive Catholic education for their children. Parents elect to apply for this school in order to ensure that the Catholic values and way of life are passed on to their children at home, in the parish and at school.

Governors have full regard for these factors in the framework of this policy.

Governors will consider the allocation of places in the school:

1. As part of the intake process for the Reception classes. This constitutes the 'Normal' entry to Main School in collaboration with the Local Authority. 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 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. If a child attends part-time then the change to full-time attendance should be at the start of a term or half-term, unless agreed otherwise with the school. The school asks that parents/carers who wish to defer a place or to choose to start part-time discuss this with the Headteacher in advance.
2. As individual cases where existing pupils move away and create spaces for others on the waiting lists or where pupils move into the area and make a late application to any year group appropriate to this school.

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.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age

The Governors will provide for the admission of children below compulsory school age as laid out in the Admissions Policy 2024-2025 for Nursery.

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 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 take into account 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 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 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.

APPLICATION FOR PLACES IN THE RECEPTION CLASS AT SCHOOL

Before Governors can consider the allocation of places the application process has to be complete. There are five points to remember in order to make it complete.

1. Two forms should be completed.
 - i. The Application Form for the Local Authority; which is available from the Local Authority or online at <https://www.eadmissions.org.uk/eAdmissions/app>
 - ii. The School's Supplementary Information Form which is available from the school office.
2. The Supplementary Form is to be returned to the school by 15th January 2024 and the Local Authority application form to the Local Authority by 15th January 2024. The Local Authority application may be made on line.
3. The child's baptismal certificate must be produced and will be copied for the school records when the Supplementary Information Form is returned to the school. If the child gains a place at the school, a copy of the birth certificate must be provided prior to the child starting school
4. Parents are requested to complete the section on the Supplementary Information Form regarding the religious commitment of the family and have the supplementary form signed by their priest or religious leader.
5. Completion of the Supplementary Information Form is not mandatory; however, if the Supplementary Information Form is not completed, the governing body of the school will not be able to consider the application fully against the school's faith criteria.

DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS TO REACH THE SCHOOL

Parents must have completed their four elements of registration listed in the section above, as follows:

1. FOR THE RECEPTION INTAKE – Normal point of admission: 15th January 2024.
2. IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS – Outside normal point of admission: Applicants should contact Merton Admissions by visiting www.merton.gov.uk/admissions to enquire about potential vacancies and the application process.

OVERALL FACTORS TO BE OBSERVED BY GOVERNORS IN THE ALLOCATION OF PLACES

1. The Governing Body has responsibility for admissions and intend to admit 60 pupils to Reception classes in the academic year 2024/25.
2. The maximum number of pupils in Reception will be 60.
3. In order to maintain the distinctive Catholic Ethos, children from practising Catholic families will be given priority.
4. The admission of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs is dealt with by a completely separate procedure as set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. This procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements by the pupil's home Local Authority.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Where the number of applications exceeds 60 the Governors will consider all complete applications i.e. those who have completed the School Supplementary Forms and a Local Authority Application Form (for Reception and Years 1-6) and who have presented Baptism certificates for inspection along with the signed, priest reference form, in the following order:

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.
2. Baptised Catholic children from regular practising Catholic families.
3. Baptised Catholic children from occasional practising Catholic families.
4. Baptised Catholic children not so far accounted for or children enrolled in the catechumenate.
5. Other looked after children and other previously looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.
6. Children who are members of other Christian churches. Evidence of baptism, and membership of the church should be provided by a priest or minister.
7. Children of other faiths. Evidence of membership of the faith should be provided by the faith leader.
8. Other children.

NOTES ON CRITERIA

By 'regular practising Catholic family', we mean at least one parent and the child/ren attend mass on Sundays as a central part of their lives.

By 'occasional practice', we mean at least one parent and the child/ren attend mass on some Sundays, but less than the regular criteria above.

Catholics include children who have been baptised or received into the Church, members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.

Reference to other Christian Denominations refers to denominations that are part of Churches Together in England.

Looked after children or previously looked after children. (A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). A previously

looked after child is a child who was adopted, or subject to a residence order, or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after).’

Oversubscription Criteria

Where the number of applications exceeds 60, Governors will decide on the allocation within each group of the main criteria by applying the following rules in the following order:

1. Those with a brother or sister (sibling) on the school roll who will remain on the school roll at the entry date, highest numbers of siblings first. A qualifying sibling is a brother or sister (including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. It would not include other relatives e.g. cousins) who are part of the same family unit living at the same address.
2. Those whose families live in the Parish of Sacred Heart, Wimbledon.
3. Medical or social grounds which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong and relevant evidence must be provided by an appropriate authority (e.g. medical practitioner, education welfare officer or social worker).
4. Those who live in surrounding Catholic parishes.
5. If a further tie breaker becomes necessary, the distance of the child’s home from school will be taken into account. Distance is measured in a straight line using the distance provided by the LA. Where it is necessary to decide between 2 or more children that live the same distance from the school the ranking will be determined by drawing lots.

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 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. Names are removed from the waiting list at the end of the academic year.

Appeals

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with sections 85(3) of the School Standards 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 per class. 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;
- 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;
- c) the Panel decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstance of the case.