

St Mary's RC Primary School

Admissions Policy

2015/2016

St Mary's Roman Catholic School is a voluntary aided school in the Archdiocese 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.

As a Catholic School, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeates every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education is fully supported by all families in the school.

The Governors welcome all applicants but as a Catholic school we exist primarily to serve the Catholic community and priority is given to baptised Catholic children who have one or both parents who are committed practising members of the Catholic Church. If insufficient applications are received in respect of baptised Catholic children, the Governing Body will admit practising Christians from other denominations and then, subject to the availability of places, from those of other faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

The Governing Body has responsibility for admissions to the school and, having consulted with the local authority and other admissions authorities, intends to admit 45 pupils, without reference to ability or aptitude, to the Reception class. Children will be admitted in the September following their fourth birthday.

The Governors admit up to 52 children into the part time nursery. There is a separate Admissions Policy and Procedure for the Nursery. *A place in the Nursery does not guarantee a place in a Reception Class in the main school.*

Where the number of applications for admissions exceeds 45, the Governing Body will apply the following admissions criteria, in the order of priority set out below, to decide which children to admit.

See page 3 for notes clarifying the admissions criteria.

1. Baptised Catholic 'looked after' children or 'looked after' children in the care of Catholic families and previously 'looked after' Catholic children who have been adopted or have become subject of a residence or guardianship order.
2. Baptised Catholic children of parents who are committed practising members of the Catholic faith and who live within the parish boundaries of St Mary's Church, Clapham, St Vincent De Paul, Altenburg Gardens, Clapham Junction and St Francis De Sales, Larkhall Lane, Stockwell. (The parish boundary map can be found at the school.)
3. Baptised Catholic children of parents who are committed practising members of the Catholic faith who do not meet the criteria for 1 and 2 above and will have a sibling in the school who will be attending the school at the intended time of admission.

4. Baptised Catholic children of parents who are committed practising members of the Catholic faith who live in other Catholic parishes.
5. Other 'looked after' children and other previously 'looked after' children who have been adopted or have become subject of a residence or guardianship order.
6. Baptised children of parents who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church will be required.
7. Children of families who are members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England and who support the aims and practices of the school. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) provided by a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
8. Children of other faiths whose parents support the religious ethos of the school. Evidence of membership of the faith should be provided by a priest, minister or religious leader of a designated place of worship will be required.
9. Any other children.

The following will be applied, in the order of priority set out below, when applications within any of the categories exceed the places available and it is necessary to decide between applications.

- i. Children with a sibling who will be attending the school at the intended time of admission, with those living nearer the school receiving the highest priority. Evidence of the relationship may be required.
- ii. For categories 2, 3, and 4 above, the strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of the parents' Mass attendance on Sundays will increase the priority of an application within each category. Those attending Mass on a weekly basis will be given higher priority. Applications will only be considered where this evidence is provided in a reference from the parish priest at the church where the family regularly worship.
- iii. The Governing Body may increase the priority of an application within a category where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which clearly renders this school as especially suitable for the child in question.
- iv. Nearness of the child's home to the school, with those living nearer the school receiving the higher priority. Evidence of residence is required. Where the last remaining place is to be allocated and two or more children are deemed to live at the same distance from the school the place will be decided by the drawing of lots.

NOTES (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

- a. 'Looked after' children has the same meaning as in Section 22 of the Children's Act 1989, and means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them (e.g. children with foster parents). Applications made under this criterion must be accompanied by details of circumstances and professionally supported evidence (e.g. from an appropriate social worker).
- b. In the context of schools admissions, Catholic children are defined as children who are baptised or received into the Catholic Church, children baptised or received into the eastern Churches in Union with Rome and children of members of the Ordinariate.
- c. Reference to other Christian denominations refers to other denominations that are full members of Churches Together in England.
- d. By 'committed practising members of the Catholic Church' we mean at least one parent/carer and the child/ children attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Within criteria 2, 3, and 4 above places will be allocated firstly to those who attend Mass weekly, secondly to those who attend Mass once or twice a month or twice a month and thirdly to those who attend Mass less than monthly. Priority will be further increased by the length of time of Catholic practice. The Governors will ensure that Catechumens and those where it is not possible to prove previous practice elsewhere (e.g. refugees) are not disadvantaged by this element of the criteria.
- e. A sibling is defined as children living at the same address as brother or sister, including natural brothers and sisters (full or half brothers and sisters), adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. It would not include other relatives e.g. cousins. Evidence of the relationship may be required.
- f. 'Nearer the school' will be measured as the distance from the child's home address to the school (as measured by the safest, shortest walking route from the applicant's home address to the school's main pupil gate) using the Local Authority Mapping system. Proof of address of the parent/carer and child is required. Applications are considered from the child's home address only.
- g. The child's 'home address' refers to the permanent home address at which the child lives for the majority of their time and with the parent who is in receipt of child benefit. Evidence may be required.
- h. To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the Governing Body will require formal written evidence at the time of application from an appropriate professional such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

Admission Procedure

To apply for a place at this school, you should complete the **Common Application Form** available from the local authority where you live. This form **must** be returned to the local authority where you live by the specified closing date. Alternately you may apply 'on-line' using the web-site of the local authority where you live.

In addition a **Supplementary Information Form** is available from the school, which includes the **Priest's Declaration Form**. This form is not mandatory; however, if one is not received the governors will not be able to apply their admission criteria and the application will be considered under the 'any other children' category. This form must be returned to the school by the specified closing date.

Note: The specified closing date for these two forms is determined by the deadline for the local authority form and is included on both forms. You are advised to make a copy of these forms for your records. You will be advised of the outcome of your application by the common offer date specified by the local authority. If your application forms are not received by the closing date for applications it will be considered as a late application.

If you are unsuccessful you may ask the school for clarification based on the admissions criteria. You also have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Late Applications

The Governors Admission Committee will consider all the applications and Supplementary Information Forms that were received by the closing date for applications before any late applications. If places are available the governors will use the admissions criteria listed above to rank the applications. 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. Applicants on the waiting list will be ranked using the admissions criteria.

This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

Waiting Lists

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may make a request, in writing, to the school asking for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be operated using the admissions criteria listed above. The child's name will remain on the waiting list from the date the request to join the waiting list was received until the beginning of the September of the following academic year. If a place becomes available the governors will use the admissions criteria to offer a place to a child on the waiting list. Placing your 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.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age

The governors will provide for the admission of children in the September following their fourth birthday. The governors may consider a parent's 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. The governors may also consider a parent's request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

In-year (casual) admissions

Applications for a place at the school in-year must be made using the Common Application Form of the Local Authority where your child resides. This form must be returned to the same Local Authority. The school's Supplementary Information 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 admissions criteria to rank the

in-year application and, if a place is available, all applications, including the in year application and those on the waiting list, will be considered for this place. The offer of a place at the school will be made by the local authority on behalf of the governors. 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.

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 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) or 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.