

Saint Helen Catholic Primary School
Admissions Policy and Procedures 2017-18

St Helen's 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 welcomes all applications, particularly from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

Having consulted as required by the School Admissions Code, the Governors intend to admit into the Reception class, in September 2017, 60 pupils without reference to ability or aptitude.

Where the number of applications exceeds 60, 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.
2. Baptised Catholic children from practicing Catholic families who live in the parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, Brixton.
3. Baptised Catholic children from practicing Catholic families who live in the parish of St Francis, Stockwell or St Philip & St James, Herne Hill.
4. Baptised Catholic children from practicing Catholic families who live in other parishes.
5. Other Catholic children and children enrolled in the catechumenate.
6. 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.
7. Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism provided by a priest will be required.
8. Children of families who are members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
9. Children of other faiths. Evidence membership of the faith provided by a priest, minister or religious leader of a designated place of worship will be required.
10. Any other children.

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:-

1. A brother or sister on the school roll at the time of admission. Evidence of the relationship may be required.
2. For Categories 2, 3, & 4 above - The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of the family's Mass attendance on Sundays. This evidence must be provided by the parents/carers and be endorsed by a priest at the church(es) where the family normally worship.

Priority will be given using the frequency of Mass attendance asked for on the Supplementary Form. Applications will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary Form firstly to those who attend Mass at least fortnightly, then those who attend at least monthly.

3. 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).
4. Distance from home to school (safe walking distance) from front gate of the home to the main gate of the school using the measurement supplied by the local authority derived from their computerised mapping system. Priority will be given to those who live nearest to the school. Evidence of residence may be required. Final tie-break - where the last remaining place is to be allocated and two or more children are deemed to live at the same safe walking distance from the school, the place will be decided by the drawing of lots.

Notes:

Catholics include members of 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 full members of Churches Together in England. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of baptism in a Catholic church or a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.

Siblings are children who live as brother and sister, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. It would not include other relatives eg cousins.

Families are defined as being the child's natural or adoptive parents or officially designated carers. It would not include grandparents or other relatives unless they are officially designated carers.

Home refers to the permanent home address is that at which the child lives for the majority of his/her time and with the parent who is in receipt of child benefit.

Admissions procedure

In addition to the Common Application Form (CAF) supplied by the Local Authority, the Supplementary Information Form available from the school and the Local Authority, should be completed and sent 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 Information 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 Information 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.

A copy of your child's baptism certificate and evidence of his or her home address must be supplied to the school when you send or take the Supplementary Information Form to the school.

Offers of places will be sent to parents on the common offer date as notified by the Local Authority.

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.

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 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 a statement or EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

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 choosing not to send that 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 head teacher. 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.

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 for one year, 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.

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.

Late Applications

Any late applications 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.

Year Groups other than Reception

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