



ADMISSIONS POLICY - Children starting 2024- 2025 Academic Year

COVID-19 Statement in relation to mass attendance

On the advice of the Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Southwark the governing body of St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School has agreed the following statement in order to clarify how its faith-based oversubscription criteria will be interpreted whilst churches are closed or attendance at church is not possible due to COVID19.

The suspension of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass was announced on 18th March 2020 by Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. If a parent/carer attended Mass at particular parish (or parishes) prior to 18th March 2020 then they will be considered to have attended Mass in that parish or (parishes) with the same frequency, since that time. This will remain the case until the Sunday obligation is reintroduced by the Bishops.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate 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. This Admissions Policy is intended to preserve the Catholic character of the school.
- 1.2 The school exists primarily to serve the Catholic community. However, the Governing Body welcomes applications, subject to the availability of places, from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.
- 1.3 The Governing Body has responsibility for admissions to this school. Having consulted with the local authority and other admission authorities, the governing body intends to admit a cohort of 60 children, who are between 4 and 5 years old at the time of entry, to Reception in the school year for which they are eligible, without reference to ability.
- 1.4 The Governing Body may also admit older children subject to the availability of places in their age group and provided the criteria herein are met.
- 1.5 Under section 38(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 governing bodies of Catholic schools have a statutory duty to comply with their trust deed and instrument of government. This means that the primary legal duty of such governing bodies is to give priority to Catholic children when determining admission criteria.

2. CATHOLIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

- 2.1 The Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of young people to the same degree as any other school. What makes it distinctive is its concern for the development of the faith of its pupils. A Catholic school believes that true education is the formation of the whole person – spirit, mind and body.
- 2.2 St. Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School is totally committed to this Catholic concept of education. It forms an important part of the community triangle – home, parish and school. Each contributes towards leading young people to understand life, that God loves us and sent His Son to redeem us. Our destiny is to return to God.
- 2.3 The Governors wish particularly to remind parents and guardians that in order to take full advantage of education in a Catholic school it is most important that the preparation and teaching about the faith at school is supported, illustrated and continued practically in the home.

3. ADMISSION OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA (All criteria are at time of application)

3.1 Whenever there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

Category: A1 to A15, then B1, then C1 to C2, then D1 to D3, then E1 to E3 and F1 to F2

Your attention is drawn to the "Definitions" in section 5 where certain words and phrases used throughout this policy are defined.

A. Applications from Catholics:

1. Looked after Baptised Catholic children or looked after children in the care of practising Catholic families and previously looked after Baptised Catholic children, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, or becoming the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order.
2. Baptised Catholic Children, of practising Catholic parent(s) whose religious practise is regular and who have a sibling in St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School when the applicant is due to enter.
3. Baptised Catholic children of practising Catholic parent(s), whose religious practise is regular and are resident in the parish of the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
4. Baptised Catholic children of practising Catholic parent(s), whose religious practise is regular and are resident in a parish other than the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
5. Baptised Catholic children of practising Catholic parent(s), whose religious practise is regular but where the baptism of the parent/s cannot be verified and are resident in the parish of the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
6. Baptised Catholic children of practising Catholic parent(s), whose religious practise is regular but where the baptism of the parent/s cannot be verified and are resident in a parish other than the parish of the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.

In the application of criteria A7-A15, priority within each category will be given to applicants who have a sibling in St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School when the child is due to enter.

7. Baptised Catholic children of Catholic parent(s), whose religious practice is occasional and who are resident in the parish of the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
8. Baptised Catholic children of Catholic parent(s), whose religious practice is occasional and who are resident in a parish other than the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
9. Baptised Catholic children of practising Catholic parent(s), whose religious practise is occasional and where the baptism of the parent/s cannot be verified and are resident in the parish of the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
10. Baptised Catholic children of practising Catholic parent(s), whose religious practise is occasional and where the baptism of the parent/s cannot be verified and are resident in a parish other than the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
11. Baptised Catholic children of Catholic parent(s), whose religious practice is irregular and who are resident in the parish of the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
12. Baptised Catholic children of Catholic parent(s), whose religious practice is irregular and who are resident in a parish other than the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
13. Baptised Catholic children of practising Catholic parent(s), whose religious practise is irregular and where the baptism of the parent/s cannot be verified and who are resident in the parish of the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.



14. Baptised Catholic children of practising Catholic parent(s), whose religious practise is irregular and where the baptism of the parent/s cannot be verified and who are resident in a parish other than the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.
15. Baptised Catholic children of Catholic parent(s) whose religious practice cannot be verified for at least six months prior to application

For categories A1 to A15 above, the strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of the family's Mass attendance on Sundays over a period of 3 years, as specified in the priest's reference form, will increase the priority of an application within each category.

B. Applications from other Looked After children

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children not covered by A1, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, or becoming the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order.

C. Applications from children enrolled in the catechumenate

1. Children enrolled in the catechumenate, resident in the parish of the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation. Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate and regular practice will be required.
2. Children enrolled in the catechumenate, resident in a parish other than the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation. Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate and regular practice will be required.

D. Applications from members of an Eastern Orthodox Church:

1. Children of parents who are members of an Eastern Orthodox Church and whose religious practice is regular (i.e. weekly).
2. Children of parents who are members of an Eastern Orthodox Church and whose religious practise is occasional (i.e. at least once a month).
3. Children of parents who are members of an Eastern Orthodox Church and whose religious practice is irregular (i.e. less than once a month)

Religious practice must be verified in writing by an appropriate minister or faith leader.

E. Applications from any other Christian denominations which are in full membership of Churches Together in England:

1. Children of parents who are members of such a Christian denomination and whose religious practice is regular (i.e. weekly)..
2. Children of parents who are members of such a Christian denomination and whose religious practice is occasional (i.e. at least once a month)
3. Children of parents who are members of such a Christian denomination and whose religious practice is irregular (i.e. less than once a month)

Religious practice must be verified in writing by an appropriate minister or faith leader

F. Other applications

1. Children from families who are members of other faiths whose application is supported by an appropriate minister or faith leader
2. Any other application.

Children of UK service personnel and crown servants:

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas- the child's home address will be accepted as a Unit or quartering address when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria, where a parent requests this and where this request is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date.

3.2 Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the categories listed above would lead to oversubscription, the following provisions will be applied:

3.2.1 The Governing Body may increase the priority of an application within a category where evidence is provided at the time of application of a **compassionate need** of the child, which the Governing Body considers to be exceptional, and which can be most appropriately met by this school. (Please see "Definitions").

3.3 Whenever the situation arises where there are more applicants who satisfy the admissions criteria to the same degree than unallocated places, then the distance of the family's home from the **school's main entrance**, Becket Close, will be taken into consideration. The distance will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the designated entrance(s) of the school using a computerised measuring system (GIS) and geographical reference points as provided by the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). Those living closer to the school will receive higher priority. If a child lives in a shared property such as flats, the geographical references will determine the start point within the property boundaries to be used for distance calculation purposes.

Tiebreaker

Where the family home is a flat or applicants are equidistant then random allocation will apply, which will be independently verified.

3.4 Children of multiple births

The Admissions Code allows admissions authorities, where it is deemed appropriate, to exceed the statutory limit on infant class sizes of 30 if this is to admit all children of a multiple birth.

3.5 In Year Admissions

Children, including siblings, whose parents apply for places other than at the Reception intake stage will be placed on the waiting list for the relevant school year, in an order to be determined by the criteria and guidelines stated, as any vacancy occurs. Information can be provided to parents about the order of priority of applications being held at a particular time but no guarantee can be given that higher priority applications will not be received by the time a place becomes available. In applying for a place parents should follow the procedure set out above and complete both the CAF (Croydon Application Form) and SIF (School Information Form).

3.6.1 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.

3.6.2 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.

3.7 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 to the school and must set out the reasons on which the appeal is made. 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.

3.8 Waiting Lists

If the school is oversubscribed, children who have not been offered a place at the school will be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above. If an application is on the waiting list, parents must inform the school of any change in circumstances relevant to the application. 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. Information can be provided to parents about the order of priority of applications being held at a particular time but no guarantee can be given that higher priority applications will not be received by the time a place becomes available.

3.9 Pupils with a Statement of Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan

The admission of pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. This procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of Educational Health Care Plans by the pupil's home Local Education Authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. After the admission of children with an Educational Health Care Plan before the normal admissions round, where the school has been consulted with regard to being named in the Educational Health Care Plan, the number of places available to other applicants will be reduced accordingly.

4. VERIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

- 4.1 At least one Catholic Parent is required to submit a copy of their Baptismal Certificate. The Baptismal Certificate or other evidence of reception into the Catholic Church should accompany the supplementary information form.

Note: The Education Commission's Guidance on School Admissions states- *allowance must be made for those to whom a priest is clear that the family may not be able to produce the required evidence e.g. looked after children, refugees and other migrants.*

4.2 Catholic Parents are required to submit a written reference from a priest or appropriate religious leader who is in a position to confirm the applicant's family fulfil the conditions of their religious practise as defined in the policy.

5 **DEFINITIONS**

5.1 **Catholic:** means a baptised person who is a member of any Catholic Church that is in full communion with the 'See of Rome'.

5.2 **Practising Catholic:** means weekly attendance at a Catholic Mass each Sunday and Holy Day (or on the eve of such days). A practising Catholic family is where at least one Catholic parent is attending mass for at least six months prior to the application. If you have attended your current church for less than 12 months at the time of application, please also provide a reference from your previous parish priest. Parents and children who attend regularly (i.e. weekly) will have priority over occasional (i.e. at least once a month) and irregular (i.e. less than once a month).

5.3 **Other Eastern Orthodox Churches:** includes the Eastern Churches that are not in communion with the 'See of Rome'. Membership of an Eastern Orthodox Church can normally be shown by a certificate of baptism or a certificate of reception from the authorities of that Church.

5.4 **Parent(s):** in addition to its usual meaning, parent(s) shall also mean (1) the person with parental responsibility as defined in the Children's Act 1989 and (2) the legal guardian of the child.

5.5 A **sibling** is defined as a full brother or sister or step/half brother or sister living at the same address, a child who is living as part of the family unit by reason of a Court Order or a child who has been placed with foster carers as a result of being 'looked after' by the authority.

5.6 **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 (Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. Previously looked after children includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (section 46 adoption orders).

Required Evidence for a 'previously looked after' child

- a special guardianship order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s), under section 14A of the Children Act 1989
- a child arrangement/residence order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989 or
- an adoption order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 or Section 12 of the 1976 Adoption Act*.

5.7 **Compassionate needs:** means the special social, pastoral or medical needs of the child and not the social or domestic convenience of the family. To satisfy this criterion full details including appropriate verification documents, such as evidence from a doctor or social worker, must be provided **at the time of application**, explaining why admission to this particular school is necessary to meet the child's needs. Retrospective claims are not acceptable.

5.8 **The Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation, Bingham Road, Addiscombe, Croydon:** the parish has defined boundaries laid down by the Archdiocese of Southwark. A map is available at the school and on the school website.

5.9 **Family home:** means the principle registered place of residence of the parent(s) and child, and not that of a relative or child minder.

5.10 **Closing Date:** means the date published each year by which applications must be received by the school. Any applications received after the closing date will be deemed as late.



- 5.11 **Incomplete Applications:** Any application with missing or incorrect information will be placed in the category that is appropriate to the information provided at the time of application.
- 5.12 **Late Applications:** Late applications and additional information received, relating to incomplete applications, will be considered and evaluated in accordance with the Admissions Oversubscription Criteria and placed at the bottom of the appropriate assigned category up to the point where the governing body meets and agrees the final ranking of all applications received.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND TIMETABLE

- 6.1 To apply for a place at this school, you should complete and return two separate forms.
1. The online Common Application Form is available from Croydon Admissions,
 2. The Supplementary Information Form is available from the school, and should be completed and returned to the school office.
- 6.2 Both the Supplementary Information Form and the Common Application Form should be completed if you wish your son/daughter to be considered for a place. Completion of a supplementary form is not mandatory; however, if one is not received the governors will not be able to apply the admissions criteria and the application will be considered under the 'any other application' category.
- 6.3 Supplementary Information Forms for Reception class are made available from the September preceding the school year in which the child is due to start school. Parents who inquire before this date will have their details registered. The school will send them a form at the time these become available for distribution.
- 6.4 Early in the autumn term, a notice will be posted at Our Lady's Catholic Church, in the parish newsletter and at the school, reminding parents whose children are due to enter the reception class in the following school year, to make immediate application to the school, if they have not already done so.
- 6.5 It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to ensure all forms are completed fully and all relevant documents are submitted with the forms by the application deadline**
- 6.6 You will be advised of the outcome of your Reception class application by a common offer date specified by the local authority. The LA send first preference outcomes electronically via the e-admissions site.
- 6.7 Unsuccessful candidates will be given reasons related to the oversubscription criteria in this policy and advised of their right of appeal. Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with sections 88 and 94 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. A form to lodge an appeal may be obtained from, and is returnable to, the School Office addressed to the Clerk to the Governors.
- 6.8 The Admissions Policy is subject to regular review by the Governors as per the statutory regulations concerning changes to admissions policies. This version takes account of the Education Act 2002 and the current School Admissions Code.