

Admissions Policy

St Mary's Catholic High School



Approved by:	Full Governing Board	Date:
Last reviewed on:	December 2024	
Next review due by:	Autumn 2026	

A Catholic Secondary School

Admissions Policy and Procedures 2026 – 2027

St Mary's Catholic High School is a voluntary aided school 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. 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 or of no faith who support the religious ethos of the school.

Having consulted with the Local Authority, the Archdiocese and other admission authorities, the governors intend to admit, in September 2026 up to 120 pupils, the published admission number 120, without reference to ability or aptitude.

Where the number of applications exceeds 120 the Governors will offer places using the following criteria in the order stated: -

1. Looked after Catholic children and all previously looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order. Catholic children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.
2. Baptised Catholic children, in possession of a Certificate of Practice. (See Note A)
3. Baptised Catholic children. A baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church must be provided.
4. Looked after children and all previously looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order. Children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.
5. Children enrolled in the catechumenate. Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate will be required.
6. Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
7. Children who are members of other faiths, Churches and denominations. Evidence of Baptism/dedication or evidence of membership required.
8. 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.

- i. A brother or sister on the school roll at the time of admission. Evidence of the relationship may be required. The governors will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's published admissions number.
- ii. Social, pastoral and medical needs which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong and relevant evidence must be provided, at the time of application, by an appropriate professional authority (eg qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, social worker or priest).

- iii. Proximity to the school from the child's home address, the distance measured in a straight line from the School entrance by the local authority using a geographical computerised information system. Evidence of residence may be 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:

- a. Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.
- b. A "brother or sister" means 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.
- c. Home refers to the permanent home address at which the child lives for the majority of his/her time and with the parent who is in receipt of child benefit.
- d. 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.
- e. 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 an 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. This will include children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.

Admissions procedure

In addition to the Common Application Form (CAF) required by the local authority, the Supplementary Information Form (available from the school and from the local authority), should be completed and sent to the Admissions Officer at the school not later than the national closing date for secondary schools (31 October 2025). 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.

Offers of places will be sent to parents by the child's home local authority on the common offer date 1 March 2026.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

The admission of pupils with an EHC Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of 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 an EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside their normal age group, for example if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. Any such request should be made in writing to The Admissions Officer at the same time as the admission application is made. The governing body will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher, including the headteacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the governing body will take into account the views of the parents and of medical and/or education professionals, as appropriate.

Appeals

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with section 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. 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.

Waiting Lists

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. 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 waiting list.

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 Admissions Code 2021. Admitting

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

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.

These admissions procedures, although primarily relevant to children for whom a place is sought at the normal age of transfer to secondary education (Year 7), will also apply to succeeding years, and be subject to the availability of places.



ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE

Details of child (for identification only)

Full name of child: _____

Address of child: _____

Postcode: _____

Date of Birth: _____

I am [the child's parish priest] [the priest in charge of the Church where the family practises]
[delete as applicable]

I hereby certify that this child and his/her family are known to me and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the child is from a practising Catholic family.

Priest's name _____ Position _____

Parish (or ethnic chaplaincy) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Priest's signature _____

Parish stamp or seal

Date: _____