

St Mary's Catholic Infant School

Admission Policy – 2027/2028

St Mary's Catholic Infant School is part of a small multi-academy trust 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.

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 and from those who have no faith but who support the religious ethos of the school.

The Governing Body has responsibility for all admissions to the school. Having consulted with the local authority and other admission authorities, they have declared their intention to admit 60 children to the Reception classes formed for intake in September 2027.

Places are offered without reference to ability or aptitude. Children will be admitted at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. Please also refer to the section regarding the Admission of children below compulsory school age.

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

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 who attend Mass. A baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church and evidence of Mass attendance must be provided.
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 whose families are committed members of the 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 will be required.
8. All 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. Children of members of staff where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- ii. Children with a sibling at the school at the intended time of admission.
- iii. 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 (e.g., qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, social worker or priest).
- iv. Proximity to the school of the child's home address, distance will be measured in a straight line from the school entrance by the local authority using a geographical computerised system. Proof of address will 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 (these notes form part of the above criteria)

- a. A looked after child has the same meaning as in section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 that is a child who is either in the care of a local authority or 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.
- d. A sibling is defined as 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 (e.g., cousins).
- e. A child's home address refers to the permanent address at which the child lives for the majority of his/her time and with the parent who is in receipt of child benefit.

Admission Procedure

To apply for a place at this school, you should complete and return two separate forms.

1. The Common Application Form must be completed on the E-Admissions website - www.eadmissions.org.uk. This form must be submitted by the published closing date.
2. The school's Admissions Administration Document is not mandatory and are only required for those who wish to be considered for a place under our religious criteria. Applications made without these forms will be considered under category 8 - 'All other children.'

3. The closing date for the Admissions Administration Document and any Evidence Information (see list on the Admissions Administration Document), is noon on the same date as that published by the Local Authority. You are advised to make a copy of your documents for your records. Documents received after the closing date will not be accepted nor taken into account for your application.

4. You will be advised of the outcome of your application via email and via the E-Admissions website on the National Offer Day. You will also receive a letter from the governing body of the school where your child has successfully gained a place for the upcoming September.

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 Clerk to the Governing Body at the school 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 the School Admission Appeals Code 2022. 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, which will be maintained until, 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.

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 cannot be provided to parents about the order of priority of applications being held at a particular time as 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 the school's Supplementary Information Form, should they wish their child(ren) to be considered for a place under our religious criteria.