

Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School

Admissions Policy and Procedures 2020-21



Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School is a Voluntary Aided, Mathematics and Computing College, all ability, Catholic School for Girls, in the Diocese of Southwark. It is in the Trusteeship of the Religious Congregation of Our Lady of Fidelity. 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 with the Local Authority and other admission authorities, the Governors intend to admit into Year 7, in September 2020, up to 120 pupils.

Admissions Criteria

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan which names the school are admitted before the oversubscription criteria are applied.

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 or looked after children in the care of Catholic families and previously looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order, immediately after being looked after.
2. Baptised Catholic children. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
3. Children enrolled in the catechumenate. Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate will be required.
4. Other looked after children and previously looked after children who have been adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order, immediately after being looked after.
5. Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
6. Children of families who are committed members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) provided by a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
7. Children who are members of other faiths. Evidence of membership of the faith provided by a priest, minister or religious leader of a designated place of worship will be 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.

1. For Category 2 above - The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of the child'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 child normally worships. Applicants will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary Form. Firstly those who attend Mass weekly, then fortnightly, occasionally (at least once a month) and then irregularly (less than once a month).
2. The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of one parent'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 parent normally worships. Applicants will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary Form. Firstly those who attend Mass weekly, then fortnightly, occasionally (at least once a month) and then irregularly (less than once a month).
3. A sister on the school roll at the time of admission. Evidence of the relationship may be required.
4. Social, pastoral 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 when submitting your application (eg qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, social worker or priest).
5. For Categories 7, 8 - The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of the child's attendance at weekly services. This evidence must be provided by the parents/carers and be endorsed by a minister at the place of worship where the child normally attends. Applicants will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary Form. Firstly those who attend religious services weekly, then fortnightly, occasionally (at least once a month) and then irregularly (less than once a month).
6. For Categories 7, 8 - The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of one parent's attendance at weekly services. This evidence must be provided by the parents/carers and be endorsed by a minister at the place of worship where the parent normally attends. Applicants will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary Form. Firstly those who attend religious services weekly, then fortnightly, occasionally (at least once a month) and then irregularly (less than once a month).
7. 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 will be required.

Note:

(a) Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and 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. (*see note 1*)

(b) A "sister" means children who live as brother and sister including natural brothers and sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or stepsisters and foster brothers or foster 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 her time and with the parent who is in receipt of child benefit.

(d) Looked after children are those in the care of a public authority and are in public care. Applications made under this criterion must be accompanied by details of circumstance and professionally supported evidence (eg from an appropriate social worker).

Admissions procedure

To apply for a place at Virgo Fidelis Senior School please complete two (2) separate forms:

1. The Application Form from the Local Authority, to be returned to the Authority
2. The Supplementary Information Form, available from the school office and website, to be returned to the School not later than 18th October 2019. Completion of a Supplementary 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. 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 Local Authority on the common offer date as notified.

Appeals

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

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 school will hold its waiting list for one term in the academic year of admission, during this time the pupil must remain on the roll of another school. 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. When a place becomes available, all current applications for a place in the year group will be considered in accordance with the criteria of the Admissions Policy.

The school will not, therefore, maintain an ordered waiting list. 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.

Tie breaker

In the event that the number of applications exceeds the places available within any of the above categories, drawing of lots will be used to decide between applications.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is exceptionally admitted outside their normal age group. Decisions on whether to offer a place outside of a child's chronological year group will be made by the governors. This will include taking account the parents' views; views of the

Headteacher; 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. Applicants must state clearly why they feel admission to a different year group is in the child's best interest and provide what evidence they have to support this. Decisions are made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interest of the child.

SEN or EHC

Children with Special Educational Needs or Education, Health or Care needs sit outside the normal admissions process. However, if admitted 'during a normal admission round to a relevant age group, they must be taken into account when determining and applying a school's admission number. Accordingly, children with statements or plans already admitted to a school must be counted towards the admission number when considering whether there is still a place available for another child without a statement'.

Fair access Panel

The school participates in the local authority's Fair Access Protocol to allocate places to vulnerable and other children in accordance with the School Admission Code 2014. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the planned admission number for the relevant year group.

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 (LA) where the child resides. This form must be returned to the LA. The school's supplementary 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 same criteria to rank the application as that listed above. The offer of a place at the school will be made by the LA 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.

A separate admission policy is in place for Sixth Form admission

Note on Admission Policies and Procedures

Note 1

Churches in union with Rome

Personal Ordinariate. Baptised children of parents who are members of the Ordinariate established under The Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* of November 4th 2009 are to be given equal preference to that offered to children baptised in a Catholic church. It is important to note that these children may have been baptised in the Church of England.

Oriental Rite (or Eastern Catholic) Churches in union with Rome

Alexandrian

Coptic Catholic Church

Ethiopian Catholic Church ('Gheez rite') (Includes Eritrean Catholic Church)

Antiochean (West Syrian)

Syrian Catholic Church

(Syro-)Maronite Catholic Church

Syro-Malankar Catholic Church

Armenian

Armenian Catholic Church

Chaldean (East Syrian)

Chaldean Catholic Church

Syro-Malabar Catholic Church

Constantinopolitan (Byzantine)

Albanian (Byzantine) Catholic Church

Belarussian Catholic Church

Bulgarian (Byzantine) Catholic Church

Georgian Catholic Church

Greek (Hellenic) Catholic Church

Greek-Melakite Catholic Church

Hungarian (Byzantine) Catholic Church

Italo-Albanian (Byzantine) Catholic Church

Church of the Byzantines of the Diocese of Krizevci (Krizevci Catholic Church)

Macedonian Catholic Church

Romanian (Greek) Catholic Church

Russian Catholic Church

Ruthenian (Byzantine) Catholic Church

Slovak (Greek) Catholic Church

Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Church

There are an equivalent number of Eastern Orthodox Churches with similar names that are not in union with the See of Rome. The general rule is Eastern Rite Churches in union with the See of Rome will have the word Catholic in their titles. Churches with the word Orthodox in their titles are not in union with the See of Rome and children from these Churches should be considered after Catholic children. Please refer any queries to the Commission.

Members of Churches Together in England

Antiochan Orthodox Church

Baptist Union of Great Britain

Cherubim and Seraphim Council of Churches

Church of England

Church of God of Prophecy

Church of Scotland (in England)

Congregational Federation

Coptic Orthodox Church

Council of African and Caribbean Churches UK

Council of Oriental Orthodox Christian Churches

Icthus Christian Fellowship

Independent Methodist Church

International Ministerial council of Great Britain

Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches

Lutheran Council of Great Britain
Mar Thoma Church
Methodist Church
Moravian Church
New Testament Assembly
New Testament Church of God
Oecumenical Patriarchate
Redeemed Christian Church of God
Religious Society of Friends
Roman Catholic Church
Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate and Occumenical Patriarchate)
Salvation Army
Seventh Day Adventist Church (**NOT** a full member – only an observer)
Transatlantic Pacific Alliance of Churches
United Reformed Church
Wesleyan Holiness Church