

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ADMISSION POLICY
For the Academic Year 2014/2015

OUR MISSION

Our school provides a broad and creative education with high expectations, in a safe and welcoming environment. We believe that every child matters and is a unique gift from God. The care of each child lies at the heart of the shared mission of home, school and parish.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sacred Heart 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 also welcomes applications from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school

A substantial amount of funding for the upkeep of the school is donated by regular Sacred Heart churchgoers through their regular weekly contributions at Mass.

The Catholic community support the school because they value a distinctive Catholic Education for their children. Parents elect to apply for this school in order to ensure that the Catholic values and way of life are passed on to their children at home, in the parish and at school.

Governors have full regard for these factors in the framework of this policy.

Governors will consider the allocation of places in the school either:

1. As part of the intake process for Nursery.
N.B. This is a separate concern. A place in the nursery does not guarantee a place in the main school. Where the child is attending the school nursery, a separate application must be made for entry into Reception Class. Places are allocated according to the admissions criteria shown below.
2. As part of the intake process for the Reception classes .
This constitutes the 'Normal' entry to Main School in collaboration with the Local Authority. The School admits children to the reception class in September of the school year in which a child attains the age of 5 years (the school year runs from 1 September to the 31 August). Parents/carers may opt to defer entry to the reception class until the beginning of the term after their child is five years old, but cannot defer entry beyond the end of the school year (the place will be lost if it is deferred beyond the end of the school year). Parents/carers may also request that their child attend part-time until their child reaches compulsory school age. If a child attends part-time then the change to full-time attendance should be at the start of a term or half-term, unless agreed otherwise with the school. The school asks that parents/carers who wish to defer a place or to choose to start part-time discuss this with the Headteacher in advance.
3. As individual cases where existing pupils move away and create spaces for others on the waiting lists or where pupils move into the area and make a late application to any year group appropriate to this school.

APPLICATION FOR NURSERY PLACES AT THE SCHOOL

Before Governors can consider the allocation of places the application process has to be complete.

There are four points to remember in order to make it complete. For the purposes of this document 'Parent/s' refers to those who are parents or have parental responsibility.

1. An application form (copies of which are held at the school office) should be completed. This form will provide the school with the details which will be used for allocating places. PARENTS MUST NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OF ANY CHANGES IN DETAILS e.g. Address or telephone number. Governors will not be held responsible for a child who fails to gain a place at the school because the parents had not notified changed address or telephone number, and therefore rendered themselves uncontactable during the admissions selection process.
2. The child's Baptismal Certificates must be produced at the time of submitting an application form, and will be copied for the school records. If the child gains a place at the school, a copy of the birth certificate must be provided prior to the child starting school.
3. Parent/s must complete the section on the application form regarding the religious commitment of the family and have the form signed by their priest or religious leader.
A copy of the Priests reference form is attached in Appendix 1.
4. Parent/s must have completed parts 1, 2 and 3 above before the designated deadlines.
(See below)

APPLICATION FOR PLACES IN THE RECEPTION CLASS AT SCHOOL

Before Governors can consider the allocation of places the application process has to be complete.

There are four points to remember in order to make it complete.

1. Two application forms should be completed. These are the Local Authority Form and the School's Supplementary Forms which are available from the school office and the Local Authority. These forms will provide the School Governors and the LA with the details which will be used for allocating places.
2. The supplementary form is to be returned to the school and the LEA application form to the Local Authority by the date published. The Local Authority application may be made on line.
3. The child's baptismal certificate must be produced and will be copied for the school records when the supplementary form is returned to the school. If the child gains a place at the school, a copy of the birth certificate must be provided prior to the child starting school
4. Parent/s are requested to complete the section on the application and supplementary forms regarding the religious commitment of the family and have the supplementary form signed by their priest or religious leader. Completion of the supplementary form is not mandatory, however, if the Supplementary Information Form is not completed, the governing body of the school will only be able to consider the application after all the applicants who have completed a Supplementary Information Form.

DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS TO REACH THE SCHOOL

Parent/s must have completed their four elements of registration listed in the section above, as follows:

1. FOR THE NURSERY INTAKE: 31st January prior to the academic year in which their child will become 4 years of age. N.B. Remember that A PLACE IN THE NURSERY DOES NOT GUARANTEE A PLACE IN THE MAIN SCHOOL.
2. FOR THE RECEPTION INTAKE - Normal point of admission: The deadline will be as notified by the Local Authority.

3. IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS – Outside normal point of admission: Applicants should contact Merton Admissions by visiting www.merton.gov.uk/admissions to enquire about potential vacancies and the application process.

OVERALL FACTORS TO BE OBSERVED BY GOVERNORS IN THE ALLOCATION OF PLACES

- The Governing Body have responsibility for admissions and intend to admit 60 pupils to Reception classes in the academic year 2014/15.
- The maximum number of pupils in Reception and Years 1 to 6 will be 60.
- The maximum number of pupils in the Nursery will be 52 per academic year group divided into two equal ½ day classes. Pupils will be eligible to be considered to enter Nursery the September following their 3rd birthday.
- In order to maintain the distinctive Catholic Ethos, children from practising Catholic families will be given priority.
- The admission of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs is dealt with by a completely separate procedure as set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. This procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements by the pupil's home Local Authority.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Where the number of applications exceeds 60 the Governors will consider all complete applications i.e. those who have completed the School Supplementary Forms and a Local Authority Application Form (for Reception and Years 1-6) and who have presented Baptism certificates for inspection along with the signed, priest reference form, in the following order:

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 regular practising Catholic families.
3. Baptised Catholic children from occasional practising Catholic families.
4. Baptised Catholic children not so far accounted for or children enrolled in the catechumenate.
5. 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.
6. Children who are members of other Christian churches. Evidence of baptism, and membership of the church should be provided by a priest or minister.
7. Children of other faiths. Evidence of membership of the faith should be provided by the faith leader.
8. Other children.

NOTES ON CRITERIA

By 'regular practising Catholic family', we mean at least one parent and the child/ren attend mass on Sundays as a central part of their lives. Missing mass more than once a month would not be deemed as regular practice.

By 'occasional practice', we mean at least one parent and the child/ren attend mass on some Sundays, but less than the regular criteria above. Attendance only at Christmas and/or Easter would not be deemed occasional under this criteria.

Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome Latin and Eastern Rite Catholics that are in Communion with the See of Rome. Reference to other Christian Denominations refers to denominations that are part of Churches Together in England.

Looked after children or previously 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 (see definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). A previously looked after child is a child who was adopted, or subject to a residence order, or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after).'

Oversubscription Criteria

Where the number of applications exceeds 60, Governors will decide on the allocation within each group of the main criteria by applying the following rules in the following order:

1. Those whose families live in the Parish of Sacred Heart, Wimbledon.
2. Those with a brother or sister (sibling) on the school roll who will remain on the school roll at the entry date, highest numbers of siblings first. A qualifying sibling is a brother or 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) who are part of the same family unit living at the same address.
3. Medical or social grounds which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong and relevant evidence must be provided by an appropriate authority (e.g. Medical practitioner, education welfare officer or social worker).
4. Those who live in surrounding Catholic parishes
5. If a further tie breaker becomes necessary, the distance of the child's home from school will be taken into account. Distance from home to school is measured as a straight line from the front gate of the home to the main gate of the school using the measurement supplied by the local authority. Where it is necessary to decide between 2 or more children that live the same distance from the school the ranking will be determined by drawing lots.

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 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. Names are removed from the waiting list at the end of the academic year.

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 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.

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;
- c) or the panel decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstance of the case.