

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School



Admissions Policy

Written/Revision Date: 7 March 2024

Reviewed by: John Conway, Acting Headteacher

Next Review: 6 March 2025

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Approved:
Chair of Governors

Date: 7 March 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Roman Catholic community, placing God at the centre of our lives. Christian values permeate every aspect of the school day. As a small friendly school, we aim to produce the warmth and intimacy of the family. We recognise each individual as special and loved by God, caring for one another and fostering love, trust and respect. When mistakes are made we recognise them as opportunities for learning and consequent reconciliation.

We aim to help all children fulfil their potential. We have high expectations of the children; we want them to do their best socially, personally, academically and spiritually.

We recognise each child's full entitlement to education. We value children's uniqueness and endeavour to nurture their potential. We strive to promote in them a sense of personal worth and self-confidence, as well as an awareness of their responsibilities to self and others.

POLICY STATEMENT

St Mary Magdalen's 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. The governors will require proof of baptism and evidence of practice from the relevant parish priest or equivalent. The governors also welcome applications from parents of children of other denominations, faiths and no faith who support the religious ethos of the school. All children who are in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school will be admitted.

Responsibility for admissions to the school rests with the governors. Following consultation with the Local Authority and the diocese and other admission authorities the governors intend to admit thirty pupils into the Reception Class in September 2023 and to do so without reference to ability or aptitude.

From 18 March 2020 through to 5 June 2022 the Bishops of England and Wales suspended the obligation to attend Mass in England and Wales. As of 5 June 2022, Pentecost, the Bishops reinstated the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Parents applying for a place at St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School under a faith based criteria will need to complete a Supplementary Information Form. Evidence of practice will be measured by frequency of attendance at Mass as validated by either a priest or minister, as was the case prior to 18 March 2020. These arrangements apply to the admissions round for 2023 and subsequent rounds.

PRINCIPLES

In the event of the number of applications not exceeding thirty, the governors will admit all applicants. Where the number of applications exceeds thirty 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, looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become subject to a child arrangements order and 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 have a sibling in the school at the time of admission, where one or both parents/carers are practising members of the Catholic faith, attending Mass weekly.
3. Baptised Catholic children where one or both parents/carers are practising members of the Catholic faith, attending Mass weekly.

4. Baptised Catholic children who have a sibling in the school at the time of admission, where one or both parents/carers attend Mass once or twice a month.
5. Baptised Catholic children where one or both parents/carers attend Mass once or twice a month.
6. Other baptised Catholic children with a sibling in the school at the time of admission.
7. Other baptised Catholic children.
8. Looked after children, looked after children who have been adopted or who have become subject to a child arrangements order and 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.
9. Any other child with a sibling in the school at the time of admission.
10. Children who are members of other Christian denominations. Evidence of membership of the church should be provided.
11. Any other applicant.

In the case of oversubscription in any of the categories 2-11 above, places will be awarded in the following order of priority:-

1. Children with special medical needs or social grounds that make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. A letter from a doctor or other appropriately qualified professional, stating the reason why the school is necessary for the child, must accompany the application.
2. Children living closest to the school by road and publicly maintained footpath, as measured by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Geographical Information System. The point used in the school for measuring distance is the main entrance on Worple Street.

Joint Care Arrangements

If your child lives equally between two properties we will use one address to determine the outcome of an application: the principal parental address.

In the absence of a formalised legal care arrangement, we will usually determine the principal parental address to be the address where a parent who holds parental responsibility permanently lives along with the child. In cases of shared care (both parents hold parental responsibility and care is split or shared), we will determine the principal parental address to be that of the parent who undertakes the majority of care during the school week. In cases where shared care is exactly equal, we consider all available evidence that you provide to support your application to determine the principal parental address.

3. 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

“Attending Mass weekly” means that at least one parent/carer and the children attend Mass habitually on Sundays as a central part of their lives. Missing Mass more than once a month would not be deemed “attending Mass weekly”.

A declaration of the level of the family’s Mass attendance on Sundays over a period of three years must be provided by the parent/carer and be endorsed by a priest at the church(es) where the family normally worship.

“Looked after children or previously looked after children”. To qualify for the highest priority, currently looked after and previously looked after children are defined as:

- children who are in the care of a local authority, or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, at the time an application for a school is made;
- children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (under the Adoption Act 1976 or Adoption and Children Act 2002), or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

Required evidence for a looked after child:

If your child is currently in the care of a local authority, you must enclose a copy of a section 20 Children Act 1989 agreement (signed by parent(s) and the local authority), interim care order or final care order. If you are sending a copy of a section 20 agreement or interim care order then this must also be supported by a letter from the social worker confirming that it is still current.

Required evidence for a previously looked after child:

You must provide documentary evidence to show that the child was in care immediately prior to the adoption, child arrangements order, or special guardianship order, along with a copy of the relevant order (see below).

- an adoption order made under the Adoption Act 1976 or Adoption and Children Act 2002;
- a child arrangements 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 (as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014); or
- 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.

For children adopted from overseas we require a photocopy of the relevant order of proof that the child was in state care outside of England and left that care as a result of being adopted. The order should be translated into English as necessary.

“Catholic” includes members of a church in full communion with the See of Rome. Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.

“Other Christian denominations” refers to denominations that are full members of Churches Together in England.

“Sibling” means full, half, step, fostered and adopted siblings living in the same household. Evidence of the relationship may be required.

The governors review the Admissions Policy annually.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

To apply for a place at this school you must complete and return the following forms:-

1. Apply online to your Local Authority by 15 January 2023.
2. The Supplementary Information and Priest's Declaration Form is available from the school or can be downloaded from the school website. This should be completed so that it can be returned to the school by 15 January 2023.

Completion of the Supplementary Information Form is not mandatory. However, if one is not received, the governors will not be able to apply their admissions criteria and the application will be considered under the "any other applicants" category.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by email, which will be sent out by your Local Authority on 17 April 2023 on behalf of the school. If you have made a paper application you will be informed by letter.

If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher), you may ask the school for the reasons related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent panel.

APPEALS

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeals 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 Appeals Clerk at the school address. Parents/carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

Infant classes are restricted by legislation to thirty 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 and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied with admissions law; or
- c) the admission arrangements had not been correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had been correctly and impartially applied; or
- d) 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.

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.

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL AGE GROUP

Parents seeking admission to an age group below their child's actual age should submit their request with their application by the closing date for the year when children of the same chronological age start school. Parents may provide professionally supported evidence to explain why their child should be considered to start school a year later than other children of their age. Each request and supporting evidence will be carefully considered and the educational, social and developmental reasons will be taken into account to arrive at a decision. Applying by the age appropriate deadline will mean that, in the event your request is refused, your child will still be considered for a place in their chronological age group.

If the request is approved, you will be advised to reapply in the following year and provide a copy of the decision as part of your application. Please note the decision to agree to a year's delay for your child does not guarantee that a place will be available as this depends on the number of applications for entry in that year and it is not possible to reserve a place.

FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

St. Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School is committed to taking its fair share of children who are hard to place in accordance with the locally agreed Fair Access Protocol. Pupils admitted under the protocol will take priority over any children on the waiting list and this may include, on occasion, admitting above the planned admission number.

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 criteria listed above. Placing a child's name on a waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against a decision not to offer a place. The waiting list will be updated by the governors as places become available and new families apply. Applicants will remain on the waiting list for the academic year they have applied for and may move up or down the list in accordance with the admissions criteria.

Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, will take precedence on the waiting list.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

All applications outside of the normal admissions round must be made via the Local Authority. In-year applications must be made using Richmond's In-Year Application Form available from Richmond School Admissions on 020 8547 5569 or by emailing richmond.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk to request a copy or downloading a copy from the Richmond website at www.richmond.gov.uk. Copies are also available from the school office. In addition to this form the Supplementary Information and Priest's Declaration Form also needs to be completed and returned to the school office. This form is available from the school or can be downloaded from the school website. Applicants will remain on the waiting list for the academic year they have applied for and will be removed at the end of the year.

PUPILS WITH EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

The admission of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of EHCPs by the pupil's home Local Authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice.

LATE APPLICATIONS

In the event of there being any available places, any late applications will be considered by the governors' Admissions Committee using the criteria above. 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 a decision not to offer a place.