

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR SCHOOL PLACES**

**THIS POLICY IS EFFECTIVE FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2017/18. PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THE ATTACHED FORMS.**

St Joseph's is a Catholic Voluntary Aided school intended primarily for the education of Catholic children. Application for admission is made via the child's Home Authority in accordance with the procedures detailed later in this document. If the child's address is in Hertfordshire, the Home Authority is Hertfordshire County Council (H.C.C.). Responsibility for the admission of children for whom application is made rests with the Board of Governors.

We aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. It is important therefore that the Catholic character of the school's education is fully understood and appreciated by all families making an application.

Applications are invited for September 2017 from families whose child attains 4 years of age between 01/09/2016 and 31/08/2017.

The Published Admission Number for admission into the reception class is 45 places.

The school is generally fully subscribed with applications from the first five oversubscription criteria. For the school year 2016/17 a total of 96 applications were received, of which 56 came within the first five criteria. A waiting list for admissions is maintained as detailed below.

Please note that previous attendance at our nursery will not in any way guarantee subsequent admission into the main school.

Where there are more applicants than available places, allocation is made through the operation of the oversubscription criteria.

### **OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

**If there are more applications than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority: -**

1. Catholic looked after children and Catholic children who have been adopted or made subject to Child Arrangements or Special Guardianship Orders **immediately after having been looked after.**

2. Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' (as defined below) who have siblings at the school at the time of admission and are resident in the parish of St Joseph and the English Martyrs, Bishop's Stortford, including Most Holy Redeemer, Sawbridgeworth and Holy Cross, Much Hadham. This incorporates the six Civil Parishes of Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, Little Hadham, Much Hadham, Thorley and High Wych in East Hertfordshire District. Boundary details are available on the school website.

3. Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' (as defined below) who have siblings at the school at the time of admission as defined below and are not resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2.
4. Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' (as defined below) who are resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2.
5. Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' (as defined below) who are not resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2, but for whom St Joseph's is the nearest Catholic school as measured in accordance with the processes established by Hertfordshire County Council for this purpose.
6. Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' (as defined below) who are not resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2.
7. Catholic children who are resident in the Civil Parishes mentioned above but who do not necessarily practise their faith on a regular basis.
8. Other Catholic children.
9. Other looked after children and other children who have been adopted or made subject to Child Arrangements or Special Guardianship Orders **immediately after having been looked after**.
10. Christian children whose application is supported by a letter confirming membership of the faith community.
11. Other children whose application is supported by a letter confirming membership of the faith community.
12. Any other applicants.

#### **TIE BREAK:**

**If a situation is reached whereby equally ranked applications within a category exceed the remaining number of available places, admission will be determined by the drawing of lots in the presence of an independent witness.**

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

The Board of Governors will give top priority within the relevant criterion category to an application where compelling written evidence, from a priest or appropriate professional person, is provided of exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other needs of the child. The evidence must indicate why the school is the only one that can meet the particular need.

Having a sibling at the school does not guarantee a school place being offered.

Parents of children attending St Joseph's nursery must make a fresh application for reception.

Attendance at St Joseph's nursery does not guarantee a place in the main school under this Policy.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND DEFINITIONS:**

- a) For the purpose of this policy, '**Catholic**' means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome and includes Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally be evidenced for a child by a Certificate of Baptism in a Catholic Church or a certificate of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
- b) '**Certificate of Catholic Practice**' means a certificate given by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family practises) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- c) For the purpose of this policy, '**Christian**' means a member of one of the Churches affiliated to 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.'
- d) The admission of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. If your child has an EHC plan you must contact your local authority SEN officer. Children with this school named in their EHC Plan will be admitted to the school.
- e) The attendance at the school of a natural, step or adopted sibling living at the same address at the time of admission, will increase the priority of an application within a category only.
- f) In respect of children of multiple births, where not all the siblings are allocated places under the normal operation of the oversubscription criteria, we shall adopt the provisions of the Children's Services Admissions Policy. These seek to place all such siblings at the same school. Where the final place is offered to a child who has twin/triplets etc. applying for a place in the same school year, these siblings will also be admitted as exceptions to the Key Stage 1 legislation. Further information is available on the Children's Services and DfE websites shown below.
- g) The home address given must be where the child resides for 50% or more of the school week at the time of application i.e. the closing date for applications. The address of another relative or a temporary address is not acceptable.
- h) Home to school distance measurement for purposes of admissions follows the H.C.C. procedure of a 'straight line' distance measurement from the address point of the child's home to the address point of the relevant schools. Distances are measured using a computerized mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is carried out by H.C.C. and is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium data is a nationally recognized method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.
- i) '**Parent**' is defined as the adult or adults who have legal responsibility for the child.
- j) '**Family**' includes the Catholic or Catholics who have legal responsibility for the child.

- k) **'Sibling'** means brother or sister, to include adopted brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters or step brothers and sisters. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older child(ren) will leave before the younger one starts.
- l) **'Looked after children'** has the same meaning as in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, and means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them (e.g. children with foster parents at the time of making an application to the school).
- m) **'Adopted'**. An adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted, including children who have been previously looked after and whose parent/guardian can give proof of this.
- n) **'Child Arrangements Order'**. A Child Arrangements Order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.8 settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live. (Previously known as Residence Orders.)
- o) **'Special Guardianship Order'**. A Special Guardianship Order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.14A appointing one or more individuals to be a child's Special Guardian(s).

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND TIMETABLE**

To apply for a place at the school, parents should submit two separate forms. Information concerning the closing date for receipt of the forms is available from the Home Authority. First, the Common Application Form (CAF) obtainable from the Home Authority must be completed and returned to the Home Authority. Secondly, the attached Supplementary Information Form (SIF) should be completed and returned to the School Secretary at the address shown above, together with a copy baptismal certificate (if the child has been baptised). The SIF is used by the Governors in their administration of the Admissions Policy. **If you do not fully complete both the CAF and the SIF i.e. signed and dated with all additional documents provided by the closing date, the Board of Governors may be unable to consider your application fully and it is very unlikely that your child will get a place at the school.** The final date for applications is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Applications arriving after the closing date of 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017 will be dealt with after all offers have been made.

Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application by their Local Authority on behalf of the school's Board of Governors, on or about Monday 18th April 2017. Parents/carers should accept the place as soon as possible.

If the application is unsuccessful, parents have the right of appeal.

## **CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE**

Applicants applying under criterion 2,3,4,5 and 6 must submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) by the closing date. This form is available from the parish priest. It is the parent's duty to ensure that the CCP is submitted to the school in good time.

## **RECEPTION YEAR - DEFERRED ENTRY**

Applicants may defer entry to school up until statutory school age i.e. the first day of the term following the child's fifth birthday. Application is made in the usual way and then the deferral is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term as applicable.

Applicants may also request that their child attend part-time until statutory school age is reached. Entry may not be deferred beyond statutory school age or beyond the year of application. Applicants whose children have birthdays in the summer term should defer until the 1st April at the latest. However these children may attend part-time for the whole of the Reception year.

## **RECEPTION YEAR - SUMMER BORN CHILDREN**

If a parent wishes his/her summer born child to start school in Reception in the September following his/her 5th birthday i.e. a child born between 1st April – 31st August being admitted to Reception at 5 years of age, they should make the school aware of this by writing a letter to the Chair of Governors at the time of application. Parents must then submit an application in the normal way. This application will be treated in the same way as all other applications and there is no guarantee that an offer will be made.

## **CHILDREN EDUCATED OUTSIDE THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL AGE GROUP (except Reception applications for summer born children)**

Parents may apply for their child to be educated outside his/her chronological age group i.e. a year behind or a year ahead. Application should be made to the Chair of Governors at the time of application and any supporting evidence should be submitted at the same time. Governors will consider each case on its own merits and permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

## **APPEALS**

If you are unsuccessful in your application for a school place, you have the right to appeal against this decision. Hertfordshire parents wishing to appeal who applied online should log on to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal". If you did not apply using Hertfordshire's online application system please contact the Customer Service centre on 0300 123 4043 to request an appeal pack.

For "In Year" applications, parents wishing to appeal should contact the school directly in the first instance.

## **WAITING LIST**

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful candidates will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained by the Board of Governors in the order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and not in the order in which applications are received. When a place becomes available the Board of Governors will decide who is at

the top of the list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria and inform the parent that the school is making an offer. Names are removed from this list at the end of each academic year.

## **IN YEAR ADMISSIONS**

Applications for “In-Year” admissions are made directly to the school. Where there is a place available and no waiting list, the local authority will be notified and the child will be admitted. If more applications are received than there are places available then applications will be ranked by the Board of Governors in accordance with the oversubscription criteria, with the following modifications: Catholic children without an offer of a school place elsewhere are given priority immediately after Catholic ‘looked after children/previously looked after children’; similarly, other children without an offer of a school place are given priority immediately after other ‘looked after children/previously looked after children’. If a place cannot be offered at this time then you will have the right of appeal. For in-year applications parents wishing to appeal should contact the school directly in the first instance. You will be offered the opportunity of being placed on a waiting list.

## **NURSERY ADMISSIONS**

Admission to St Joseph’s Nursery and St Joseph’s Pre-School is covered by quite separate arrangements. Details are available from the School Secretary on request.

## **FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOLS**

The school is committed to taking its fair share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admissions round, the Board of Governors is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any local protocol that has been agreed by both the local authority and the Diocese for the current school year. The Board of Governors has this power even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number.

## **USEFUL WEBSITE LINKS**

St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School	<a href="http://www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk">www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk</a>
Hertfordshire County Council (H.C.C.) Children’s Services	<a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org/admissions">www.hertsdirect.org/admissions</a>
Diocese of Westminster Education Service	<a href="http://www.rcdow.org.uk/education">www.rcdow.org.uk/education</a>
DfE Code of Practice on Admissions & Appeals	<a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode">www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode</a>