

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR SCHOOL PLACES**

**2020/21**

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 be fully understood and appreciated by all families making an application.

The governing body is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to the school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round. The governing body has set its Published Admissions Number (PAN) at 60 children for the Reception class which begins in September 2020. Applications for Reception are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 4th birthday between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020.

For the past four years the governing body has been unable to offer places to any applicants beyond oversubscription criterion 5. Whilst the school welcomes applications from all categories, it is usually oversubscribed with Catholic candidates.

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

Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic applicants in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Westminster. Applications will be ranked using the criteria listed below.

**Pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC)** – (see additional information and definitions)

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. (This used to be called a Statement of Special Educational Needs). 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. The admission of children with an EHC Plan will reduce the number of places available to other children.

If the school has fewer applications than places available all applicants will be offered a place.

## **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 previously 'looked after' children, who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders.
2. Baptised 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, which includes 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. Baptised 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 Civil Parishes of Gilston and Eastwick. Boundary details are available on the school website.
4. Baptised 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 or 3.
5. Baptised Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' (as defined below) who are resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2.
6. Baptised Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' (as defined below) who are resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 3. Boundary details are available on the school website.
7. Baptised Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' (as defined below) who are not resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2 and 3, 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.
8. Baptised Catholic children who are resident in the Civil Parishes in criterion 2 and 3 who do not necessarily practise their faith on a regular basis.
9. Baptised Catholic children who are not resident in the Civil Parishes in criterion 2 and 3
10. Other 'looked after' children and previously 'looked after' children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders.
11. Christian children of other denominations who are resident in the Civil Parishes in criterion 2 and 3 whose application is supported either by a certificate of baptism or by a letter confirming membership of the faith community.
12. Children of other faiths who are resident in the Civil Parishes in criterion 2 and 3 whose application is supported by a letter confirming membership of the faith community.
13. 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 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 the Reception Class.

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

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND DEFINITIONS:

- a) **An Education, Health and Care Plan** is a plan made by the local authority under S.37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the educational provision required for a child.
- b) **'Catholic'** means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will be evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism in a Catholic church or a Certificate of Reception into full communion with the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy this includes a looked after child in the process of adoption and living with a Catholic family, where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised were it not for his/her status as a looked after child. For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception in the Catholic Church will be required. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism should contact their parish priest who, after consulting with the diocese will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.
- c) **'Certificate of Catholic Practice'** means a certificate issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of the child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on

that occasion or occasions. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/governors/admissions>

- d) **“Children of other Christian denominations”** means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledge God’s revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God’s will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An ecclesial community which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above.

All members of Churches Together in England and CYTŪN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local Churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis.

- e) **“Children of other faiths”** means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of ‘other Christian denominations’ at 7 above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in that supreme being through worship.

- f) The admission of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) 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 EHCP you must contact your local authority SEN officer. Children with this school named in their EHCP will be admitted to the school.
- g) 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.
- h) 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.
- i) 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.

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.

- j) **'Parent'** is defined as all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for the child or any adult with legal responsibility for the child.
- k) **'Family'** includes the person or persons who have legal responsibility for the child.
- l) **'Sibling'** means (i) all natural brothers and sisters, half-brother and sisters, adopted brothers and sisters, stepbrothers and sisters, foster brothers and sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address, and (ii) the child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant.
- m) **'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). A previously 'looked after' child is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because he or she was adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.
- n) **'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.
- o) **'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.) Children 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualify in this category.
- p) **'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). A child 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualifies in this category.

## **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 online Application Form (CAF) obtainable from the Home Authority must be completed and returned to the Home Authority. This can be completed online. 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 of your child's baptismal certificate (if the child has been baptised) and all relevant paperwork required for your application. The SIF is used by the Governors in their administration of the Admissions Policy.

If you do not complete both of the forms described above and return them by 15th January 2020, the Governing Body will be obliged to consider your application using only the

documents available. If you don't return the SIF on time your child may receive a lower ranking because of this and not be offered a place.

All the published information for Hertfordshire residents, including the Application Form, are available at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions).

The final date for applications is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Applications arriving after the closing date of 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 will be dealt with after all offers have been made.

The relevant Local Authority will dispatch to parents the allocation information on behalf of the school's Board of Governors on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Parents/carers should accept the place as soon as possible.

## **LATE APPLICATIONS**

Applications received after the closing date will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed. If the school is oversubscribed it is very unlikely that late applicants will obtain a place.

## **CHANGE OF DETAILS**

If any of the details on either of your forms changes between the date of application and the receipt of the letter of offer or refusal, you must inform the School and the local authority immediately. If misleading information is given or allowed to remain on either of your forms, the Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the place, even if the child has already started at the School.

## **CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE**

Applicants applying under criterion 2,3,4,5 and 6 should 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 2021 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 let the school know 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.

### **RIGHT OF APPEAL**

If you are unsuccessful you may ask us for the reasons for the refusal of a place. These reasons will be related to the oversubscription criteria listed in the policy. You have the right of appeal to an independent panel.

Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal".

Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details, log into [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals) and click on the link "log into the appeals system".

Appeals must be submitted by Friday 22nd May 2020.

The county council will write to you with the outcome of your application and, if you have been unsuccessful, will include registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals)

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 list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Waiting lists for admission will operate throughout the school year and will be held open until 31st July 2021 unless applicants request in writing to remain on the list.

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.

**Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.**

### **IN YEAR ADMISSIONS**

Applications for In-Year admissions are made directly to the school. If a place is available and there is no waiting list the child will be admitted. If there is a waiting list, then applications will

be ranked by the Governing Body in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. If a place cannot be offered at this time then you may ask us for the reasons and you will be informed of your right of appeal. You will be offered the opportunity of being placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained by the Governing Body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which the applications are received. Names are removed from the list at the end of each academic year. When a place becomes available the Governing Body will re-rank the list and make an offer to the person at the top of the list. The local authority will be informed of the offer as soon as it has been accepted. If you have been unsuccessful in your application and wish to appeal, the county council will write to you with registration details to enable you to login and appeal on line at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions).

## **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 the power to admit a child under the Fair Access Protocol before any child on the continuing interest list and above the published admission number.

## **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.

## **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>