

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY CLASS PLACES**

**THIS POLICY IS EFFECTIVE FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2019/20. 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. 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 2019 from families whose child attains 3 years of age between 01/09/2018 and 31/08/2019.

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

The nursery is generally fully subscribed with applications from the first five oversubscription criteria. Whilst the school welcomes applications from all categories, it is usually oversubscribed with Catholic candidates.

Please note that 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.

Where there are more applicants than available places, allocation is made through the operation of the oversubscription criteria. A waiting list for admissions is maintained as detailed below.

### **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, 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. 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. Other 'looked after' children and previously 'looked after' children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders.

10. Christian children of other denominations 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.

11. 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.

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.

The number of available places may vary each year depending on the number of parents who have chosen to continue their child's place at nursery because they are summer born children.

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

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

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

- a) **'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.
- b) **'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>
- c) **"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 CYTÛN 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.

d) **“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.

e) 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.

f) 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.

g) 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.

h) 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.

i) **‘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.

j) **‘Family’** includes the person or persons who have legal responsibility for the child.

k) **‘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.

- 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). 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.
- 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.) Children 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualify in this category.
- 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). A child 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualifies in this category.

## **CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE**

Applicants applying under criterion 2,3,4,5,6 and 7 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.

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND TIMETABLE**

To apply for a place at the Nursery, parents are required to complete our attached Supplementary Information Form (SIF).

If the child is baptised, the SIF should be accompanied by a copy of the baptismal certificate. The SIF is used by the Governors in their administration of the Admissions Policy.

Please ensure that you complete and return our SIF, copy birth certificate, proof of residence, copy of the child's baptismal certificate and completed and signed Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) where applicable to the school office by 15.30 on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Please ensure your e-mail address is included on the SIF as this will be used to confirm receipt of your application form.

Parents will receive an e-mail advising them of the application outcome on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and must accept the offer of a place in Nursery in writing by Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019.

If the application is unsuccessful, parents may ask for the reason related to the oversubscription criteria listed above.

## **APPEALS**

Please note that there is no appeals process for Nursery Class placements.

## **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.

## **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>
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>