

ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR SCHOOL PLACES

THIS POLICY IS EFFECTIVE FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2016/17. 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 2016 from families whose child attains 4 years of age between 01/09/2015 and 31/08/2016. The final date for applications is January 15th 2016.

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 2015/16 a total of 103 applications were received, of which 49 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 who have siblings at the school at the time of admission who are members of a practising Catholic family and 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 who have siblings at the school at the time of admission who are members of a practising Catholic family as previously defined and not resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2.
4. Catholic children who are members of a practising Catholic family as previously defined and resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2.
5. Catholic children who are members of a practising Catholic family as previously defined, but 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 who are members of a practising Catholic family as previously defined, but 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 parents wish them to have a Catholic education and whose application is supported by a religious leader.
11. Other children whose application is supported by a religious leader.
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:

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) '**Practising Catholic**' means a Catholic child from a practising Catholic family where weekly practice is verified by a declaration from a Catholic priest in the standard format laid down by the Diocese. 'Family' includes the Catholic or Catholics who have legal responsibility for the child.
- 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 a statement of Special Educational Needs or 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 a Statement of SEN or EHC plan you must contact your local authority SEN officer.
- e) 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.
- 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 H.C.C. 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. Further information is available on the H.C.C. 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, except possibly where proof is provided of a pending move to a different address, as contemplated in the DfE Code of Practice on Admissions.
- i) 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.
- j) '**Parent**' is defined as the adult or adults who have legal responsibility for the child.
- k) '**Family**' includes the Catholic or Catholics who have legal responsibility for the child.

- l) **'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.
- 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).
- n) **'Adopted'**. An adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted, having previously been 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.
- 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).

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.** Applications arriving after the closing date of 15th January 2016 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 18th April 2016. Parents/carers should accept the place as soon as possible.

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

PRIEST'S REFERENCE

Parents of practising Catholic children who wish to be considered under oversubscription criterion 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 must complete and sign the enclosed forms and forward them to the Parish Priest for completion. The completed and signed forms must then be returned to the school by the parents.

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 summer-born children may attend part-time for the whole of the Reception year.

CHILDREN EDUCATED OUT OF CHRONOLOGICAL AGE GROUP

Any application for a child to be educated out of his/her age group will be considered by governors on an individual basis and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Such requests must be made in writing to the Chair of Governors, c/o the school, during the autumn term in the (academic) year of the application. When the application is made, it will be ranked with all the other applications and no further exceptions will be given. A statutory right of appeal will be given upon refusal if no place has been offered in any school year.

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 on line should log on to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal". If you did not apply using Hertfordshire's on line 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

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| St Joseph's Catholic Primary School | www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk |
| Hertfordshire County Council (H.C.C.) | www.hertsdirect.org/admissions |
| Diocese of Westminster Education Service | www.rcdow.org.uk/education |
| DfE Code of Practice on Admissions & Appeals | www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode |