St JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Great Hadham Road, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2NL

ADMISSIONS POLICY for Nursery 2027 - 2028

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. 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 Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. We therefore hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school. This does not affect the right of an applicant who is not Catholic to apply for and be admitted to a place at the school in accordance with the admission arrangements.

The governing body is the admission authority and has responsibility for nursery admissions to the school. The governing body has set its Published Admissions Number (PAN) at 45 children for the school year which begins in September 2023. Applications for Nursery are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 3rd birthday between 1st September 2026 and 31st August 2027.

The governing body will admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last ranked within the school's PAN.
Please note that attendance at our nursery will not in any way guarantee subsequent admission into the main school. However attendance at our nursery will provide an excellent start to your child's education and ensures a seamless transition for those who are offered a place in 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.
The school offers 15 hours and the option for 30 hours provision within the school day. Places will be allocated through the operation of the oversubscription criteria listed below.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for places 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 were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

2. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice 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.

3. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice 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. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who are resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2.

5. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who are not resident in the Civil Parishes listed in criterion 2.

6. Baptised Catholic children who are resident in the Civil Parishes in criterion 2 who do not necessarily practise their faith on a regular basis.

7. Baptised Catholic children who are not resident in the Civil Parishes in criterion 2 who do not necessarily practise their faith on a regular basis.

8. Other 'looked after' or children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

9. Catechumens and Members of an Eastern Christian Church.

10. Any other applicants.

Parents can obtain a Certificate of Catholic Practice from the parish in which they worship or from the Diocese of Westminster. Applicants from other Christian denominations and other faiths may attach either a certificate of baptism or a letter from their minister or religious leader, confirming membership of that faith community.

Please also read the notes at the end of this policy for further clarification.

Within each of the categories listed above, the provisions below will be applied in the following order:

i. The Governing Body will give top priority, within a category, to an application where compelling evidence is provided at the time of application, from an appropriate professional such as a doctor, priest or social worker, of an exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other need ***of the child***, which can only be met at **this** school.

ii. The attendance of a brother/sister at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within a category, so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made, after children in (i) above.

Tie Break

Priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distances are calculated on the basis of a straight-line measurement between the front door of the child's home address (including the community entrance to flats) and the main entrance of the school. In the event of distances being the same for two or more children where this would determine the last place to be allocated, random selection will be used. All relevant names will be entered into a hat and the required number of names will be drawn out.

Nursery Application Procedure for entry in September 2027 – July 2028

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 5th March 2027.
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 15th March 2027 and must accept the offer of a place in Nursery in writing by Friday 26th March 2027.

Appeals

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

Waiting List

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.

USEFUL WEBSITE LINKS

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk
Diocese of Westminster Education Service	www.rcdow.org.uk/education
DfE Code of Practice on Admissions & Appeals	www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode

NOTES

These explanatory notes form part of the oversubscription criteria

1. **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.

2. **A 'Looked after child'** has the same meaning as in S.22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (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. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the governing body) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

3. **'Adopted'**. An adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted, having previously been in care and whose parent/ guardian can give proof of this.

4. **'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. Children 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualify in this category.

5. **'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.

6. **'Catholic'** means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally 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.

7. **'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

8. **'Catechumen'** means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens for a child aged 7 or over. For a child under 7 years of age it will be the certificate of the parent. '**Eastern Christian Church**' includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.

9. '**Brother' or 'Sister'** includes:
a. 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

b. 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.

10. A **'Parent'** means 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**.**

11. 'Resident' –Resident refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided. The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application.

'At the time of application' means the closing date for applications.
'Permanent' means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year.

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months and the child must be resident in the property at the time of application.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If a child's permanent residence is disputed, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes. If two applications are received, with different addresses and/or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address, e.g., containing different preferences, parents/carers will be invited to submit a joint application or provide court documentation to evidence the preferences that should be used for the admission process. Until the preference issue is reconciled neither application will be processed.

12. **Parish Boundaries** – for the purposes of this Policy, parish boundaries are as shown on the attached 1map.