

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

ADMISSIONS POLICY
2025 - 2026

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 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 school year which begins in September 2025. Applications for Reception are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 4th birthday between 1st September 2024 and 31st August 2025.

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.

Pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC)

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 (see note 1). Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other children.

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.

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.

Application in previous years

For the past two years the governing body has been able to offer places to applicants through to criteria 10 due to an increase to our Published Admission Number.

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.

Application Procedure for entry in September 2025 – July 2026

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you **must** complete an online application form from your local authority (paper forms are also available on request.) You should also complete the

School's Supplementary Information Form (SIF). Whilst this is not compulsory, the information on the SIF enables the Governing Body to assess your application fully against the School's criteria in the event of oversubscription. Please return the SIF (in person or by post) to the school, together with all other relevant paperwork required for your application. If you do not complete both of the forms described above and return them by **15th January 2025**, 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.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application, on **16th April 2025**. This information will also be available on line for those who have submitted an online application. Parents should accept or decline the place as soon as possible. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child was offered a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above and you will have right of appeal to an independent appeal 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 and log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system. Appeals should be submitted by **1st May 2025**.

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.

Reception Year Deferred Entry

A child is entitled to a full-time school place in the September following his/her 4th birthday. Applicants may defer entry to school up until compulsory school age i.e. the first day of term following the child's fifth birthday. Application is made in the usual way and then the deferral until January or April is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term as applicable. Entry may not be deferred beyond compulsory school age or beyond the year for which the application has been made. Therefore, applicants whose children have birthdays in the summer term may only defer until the 1st April 2026. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school as soon as possible if they wish to defer until the spring or summer term.

Part-time attendance

Applicants may also request that their child attend part-time until compulsory school age is reached. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school as soon as possible if they wish to take up a part-time place.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside his/her normal age group e.g. if the child is more able or has experienced problems such as ill-health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child i.e. a child born between 1st April – 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of his/her normal age group, starting reception at 5 years of age. Any such request should be made in writing to Mrs Veronica Taylor, Chair of Governors, c/o St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The governing body will make its decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child, taking into account school organisation issues and the views of the parents and any professionals involved. **Parents must have received the agreement of the governing body before any admission application for delayed entry is made.** If permission is received, then the parents will make their admission application in the normal way for the year in which they wish their child to start school. No age-related priority will be given. **Applications cannot be held over from one academic year to the next.** If permission is refused, then parents must make their admission application at the normal time.

Waiting Lists

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 2026 unless applicants request in writing to remain on the list. **Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.**

In-Year Applications

An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Applications should be made to the school by contacting Mr Peter Coldwell, Headteacher, St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Great Hadham Road, Bishop's Stortford CM23 2NL. For further details about the process for making an in-year application, please visit the admissions section of the school's website- www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied.

If there are no places available, the child will be added to the waiting list (see above).

We will write to you with the outcome of your application and if you have been unsuccessful the County Council will write to you with registration details to enable you to log in and appeal online at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals

Fair Access

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 Governing Body 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 Governing Body for the current school year. The Governing Body has this power even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number, subject to the infant class size exceptions.

Nursery Children

For children currently attending the school's nursery, application to the reception class of the school must be made in the normal way to the home local authority. Attendance at the nursery **does not** guarantee a place in Reception.

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.

USEFUL WEBSITE LINKS

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk

Hertfordshire County Council (H.C.C.)
Children's Services

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

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. **'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. **'Eastern Christian Church'** includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.
8. **'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 in the Common Application Form ("CAF"). 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.

It is for a child's home Local Authority to determine address. If two applications, with different addresses are received from the same Local Authority, it will be for that Local Authority to determine permanent address. If two applications are received from two different Local Authorities, the above process will be used

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 map and will be applied to the admission arrangements for 2025-2026.