



St. James The Great

Roman Catholic Primary and Nursery School
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DRAFT-Admission Policy – 2020/2021

St James the Great RC Primary and Nursery School is an academy in the Diocese of Southwark. It is in the trusteeship of the Diocese. 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 Jesus Christ. The school exists primarily to serve the Catholic community and Catholic children always have priority of admission. However, the Governing Body also welcomes applications from those of other denominations and faiths and from those who have no faith who support the religious ethos of the school.

The Governing Body has responsibility for all admissions to the school. Having consulted with the local authority and other admission authorities, they have declared their intention to admit 60 children to the Reception classes formed for intake in September 2020. Places are offered without reference to ability or aptitude. Children will be admitted at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. Please also refer to the section regarding Admission of children below compulsory school age.

The Governors may admit up to 52 children into the Nursery class. Note: Admission to the Nursery class does not automatically guarantee a place in the main school. Applicants will be required to apply for a place in Reception.

Where the number of applications for admissions exceeds the number of places available, the Governing Body will apply the following criteria, in the order of priority set out below, to decide which children to admit.

1. Looked after Catholic children or looked after children in the care of Catholic families and previously looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.
2. Baptised Catholic children who have one or two parents who are practising Catholics and who have siblings attending the school at the intended time of admission.
3. Baptised Catholic children of a member of teaching staff, where either the teacher or other parent is a practising Catholic and where: the member of the teaching staff has served at the school in a permanent post for two or more years at the time of application.
4. Baptised Catholic children who have one or more parents who are practising Catholics.
5. Other baptised Catholic Children not included in criteria 1-4 above.
6. Other looked after children and other previously looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.

7. Children of parents who are adherents to the Eastern Christian Churches including Orthodox Churches and who have no access to a school of their own denomination. Evidence of Baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church will be required.
8. Children of families who are committed members of other Christian denominations that are part of CTBI, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland or the Evangelical Alliance. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) and practice provided by a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
9. Children who are members of other faiths. Evidence of membership of the faith of religious commitment provided by a priest, minister or religious leader of a designated place of worship will be required.
10. Any other children. If there is over-subscription in any of the above categories,

If there is over-subscription in any of the above categories, the Governing Body will apply the following sub-criteria to decide which children to admit.

- i. Children with a sibling at the school at the intended time of admission.
- ii. For categories 2, 3 and 4 above, the strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of the family's Mass attendance on Sundays over a period of 3 years will increase the priority of an application within each category. Priority will be further increased by length of time of Catholic practice. Applications will be ranked in the order shown on the supplementary form: firstly to those who attend Mass weekly, secondly to those who attend Mass three times a month, thirdly to those who attend Mass fortnightly, fourthly to those who attend monthly and finally to those who attend less than once a month.
- iii. Living in the parish of St Andrew's, Thornton Heath or St Bartholomew's, Norbury.
- iii. The Governing Body may increase the priority of an application within a category where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which made the school particularly suitable for the child in question.
- iv. Proximity to the school of the child's home address. Evidence of residence will be required. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the school entrance by the local authority using a geographical computerised system. Where the last remaining place is to be allocated and two or more children are deemed to live at the same distance from the school the place will be decided by the drawing of lots.

NOTES (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

- a. 'Looked after' children has the same meaning as in Section 22 of the Children's 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) and adopted children previously looked after.
- b. In the context of school admissions Catholic children are defined as children who are baptised or received into the Eastern Churches in union with Rome and children of members of the Ordinariate.
- c. Reference to other Christian denominations refers to other denominations that are full members of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland or the Evangelical Alliance.
- d. By 'committed practising members of the Catholic Church' we mean at least one parent and the children attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation as a central part of their lives. Within criteria 2,3 and 4 places will be allocated firstly to those who attend Mass weekly, secondly to those who attend Mass three times a month, thirdly to those who attend Mass fortnightly, fourthly to those who attend monthly and finally to those who attend less than once a month. The length of time a parent has been practising will also increase their priority within this criteria, with those whose commitment is over 3 years receiving priority over those whose commitment is under 3 years within each, subject to regularity of attendance being the same. However, the governors will ensure that Catechumens and those where it is not possible to prove previous practice elsewhere (e.g. refugee situations) are not disadvantaged by this element of the criteria.

- e. A sibling is defined as a full brother or sister or step/half brother or sister living at the same address, a child who is living as part of the family unit by reason of a Court Order or a child who has been placed with foster carers as a result of being 'looked after' by the authority.
- f. 'Nearer the school' will be measured as the distance from the child's home to the main reception office entrance of the school in Windsor Road in a straight, line using Local Authority geographical information system.
- g. To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the Governing Body will require formal written evidence from an appropriate professional such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

Admission Procedure .

To apply for a place at this school, you should complete and return **two** sets of separate forms.

1. **The Common Application Form** is available online from or the Local Authority where you and/or you child live. This form **must** be submitted to the Local Authority where you live by their published closing date.

2. **The School Supplementary Information Form** is available from the school or on our website and should be completed and returned to the school with all supporting documentation.

Completion of the Supplementary Information Form is not mandatory; however, if one is not received the Governors will not be able to apply their admission criteria in regard to religious practice and the application will be considered under the 'all other children' category.

3. The closing date for the School Supplementary Information Form is 15th January prior to the September of the school year in which the child is due to attend the reception class. You will be advised of the outcome of your application by letter on the National Offer Day. You will receive a letter from the local authority followed by a letter from the governing body.

4. If you are unsuccessful you may ask the school for the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

5. Both the Supplementary Information Form and the Common Application Form and Priest's reference form need to be completed if you wish your son/daughter to be considered for a place under the religious criteria. You are advised to make a copy of the forms for your records.

Admission of children below compulsory school age.

The governors will provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year; parents may also request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

- In Line with the School Admissions Code, parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group. We are aware that some parents of summer-born children may not want to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. The school will manage such request via the following process:
- Parents applying for an out-of-year group place must submit professional documentation (as per over subscription criterion 3 – Children with exceptional medical/social reasons with their application. The

Admissions Committee will then decide (along with the headteacher) whether such an out-of-year group place will be offered. This will allow the school to comply with section 2.17 of the Code, where it states that *“Admission authorities must make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent’s views; information about the child’s academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. They must also take into account the views of the head teacher.”*

- This application must be received in the correct year in the relevant admissions round.
- If the request is granted, then the child will be offered a place in the year group agreed by the school.
- If the place is NOT offered and no offer is made for the child to attend the school in any other year group, then the family will be given the right of appeal.
- If another year group has been offered in the school then there will be no right of appeal.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

The admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or with an EHC plan is dealt with by an entirely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements and EHC plans by the pupil’s home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with a statement or EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

Appeals

Parents whose application for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with section 85 (3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and set out the reason on which the appeal is made. Appeals should be made to the Admissions Appeal Clerk at the school address. Parents/Carers have the right to make oral representation to the Appeal Panel.

Infant classes are restricted by legislation to 30 children. Parents should be aware that an appeal against refusal of a place in an infant class may only succeed if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) The admission of additional children would not breach the infant class limit or;
- b) The admission arrangements did not comply with admission law or had not been correctly or impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly or impartially applied;
- b) Or the panel decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

Waiting Lists

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child’s name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be operated using the criteria listed above. Placing your child’s name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place. The waiting list will be maintained for one academic year.

Fair Access Protocol

The school participates in the local authority's to allocate places to vulnerable and other children in accordance with the School Admission Code. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the planned admission number for the relevant year group.

Late Applications

Any late applications will be considered by the school, in the event of there being any available places using the school's admissions criteria. If all places have been filled, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.