



ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023 - 2024

St. Mary's Catholic Infant School is an Infant Academy within St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools Trust, a Multi Academy Trust within 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.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. Catholic doctrine and practice permeates every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education is fully supported by all families in the school.

The school is an Infant School. Children leave at the end of Key Stage 1 to continue their education in a junior school. The majority of children apply to the neighbouring school, St. Mary's Catholic Junior School, Sydenham Road.

The Governing Body has responsibility for admissions to this school and, having consulted with the local authority and other admissions authorities, intends to admit 60 pupils to the Reception class. We adhere to the statutory infant class size limit of 30 children per class.

Note: A place in the Nursery class does not guarantee or indicate that a place may be offered in the Infant School.

Admissions procedure

To apply for a place at this school, you must complete and return by the date specified by Croydon that is written on the application form

1. The **Common Application Form (CAF)**, available from Croydon Local Authority available online by their stipulated date.
2. The **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)** and **Priest's Declaration Form**, available from the school, the school website or Croydon Council, once completed must be returned to St. Mary's Catholic Infant School, Bedford Park, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 2AQ.
If an applicant completes the SIF but does not complete and submit the CAF it will not be able to be treated as a valid application by the Local Authority.

Completion of the Supplementary Information Form and Priest's Declaration form is not mandatory. However, should they not be received the Governors will not be able to apply their Admission Criteria and the application will be considered under Category E: 'any other children'.

You are advised to make two copies of the forms. You should retain one copy and pass the second copy to the school or your priest, as indicated.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by a common offer date specified by the local authority (usually in April). This will initially be by letter from the local authority on behalf of the school. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher on your Common Application Form), 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.

These forms must be filled in for **in-year applications** also (children applying at other than the usual start of school into the Reception class in September).

Over Subscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, after allowing for places allocated to children with an Education, Health and Care plan naming the school, or whom the Governors believe will receive such a plan before 1st September in the year of intended admission, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

Category A: Baptised Catholics

1. Looked after Baptised Catholic children or looked after children in the care of practising Catholic families and previously looked after Baptised Catholic children, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, or becoming the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order.
2. Weekly Mass attendance, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 3 years
3. Weekly Mass attendance, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 1 year
4. 3 times a month, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 3 years
5. 3 times a month, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 1 year
6. Fortnightly Mass attendance, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 3 years
7. Fortnightly Mass attendance, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 1 year
8. Child and applicant are enrolled in the catechumenate
9. Parent / carer and child attend Mass irregularly
10. Parent / carer and child never attend Mass

The school is usually over-subscribed with Category A children.

However, *in the event of places still being available after places have been accepted*, the Governing Body welcomes applications from those who support the religious ethos of the school. Priority will be given in the following order.

Category B: Other Looked After Children.

Category C: Children of families who are committed members of other Christian denominations. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) of child, and of religious commitment provided by a priest or minister where the family regularly worship, will be required.

Category D: Children of other faiths. Evidence of religious commitment provided by a priest, minister or religious leader where the family regularly worship, will be required.

Category E: Any other children.

Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the categories listed above would lead to over subscription, the allocations will be made in the following order within each category.

- i. The attendance of a brother or sister at the **Infant School** at the **time of admission** (not at the time of application) will increase the priority of an application within each category.
- ii. Pastoral benefit to be derived by a particular child being educated in a Catholic School, on the grounds of an exceptional social or medical need. To demonstrate that an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child can be most appropriately met at this school, the governing body will require written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest, at the time the application is considered by the Governors.
- iii. After the above, priority will be given to children living nearest to the school. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the designated main entrance of the school (Bedford Park), using a computerised measuring system (GIS) and geographical reference points as provided by the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). Those living closer to the school will receive higher priority within each category. For shared properties, e.g. flats, the geographical references will determine the start point within the property boundaries to be used for distance calculation purposes.

Tie-breaker

Where two or more applicants share priority for a place, (e.g. live equidistant from the school) and there is only one place remaining, priority will first be given to a child who has had a sibling previously in this school and who is now in the neighbouring Junior School. If this is insufficient, counters, one allocated to each child, will be placed in a bag, and places offered in the order drawn from the bag by the Chair of the Admissions Committee.

Definitions (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

Looked After Child means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them (e.g. children with foster parents) or one who has previously been looked after, and has now been adopted. An application under the ‘looked after criterion’ must be supported by a letter from the relevant Local Authority (Children’s Services) Department. This includes a looked after child who is part of a Catholic family where a priest’s reference demonstrates that the child would have been baptised or received if it were not for their status as a looked after child (e.g. a looked after child in the process of adoption by a Catholic family).

Catholic means ‘Children who are baptised or received into the Catholic Church, children baptised or received into the Eastern Churches in union with Rome and children of members of the ordinariate.’ Churches in communion with the See of Rome

Alexandrian:	Coptic Ethiopian
Antioch:	Malankrese, Malonite, Syrian
Armenian Constantinople:	Albanian, Byelorussian, Bulgarian, Greek, Melchite, Italo-Albanian, Romanian, Russian Ruthenian, Slovakian Ukranian, Hungarian
Chaldean:	Malabar

*Eastern Orthodox Churches, including Coptic, Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches are **not** in union with the See of Rome.*

This will be evidenced by a certificate of Baptism in a Catholic church or a certificate of reception into full communion of the Catholic Church of both child and parent or membership of the Ordinariate.

Canon Law 867 parents are obliged to see that their infants are baptised within the first few weeks. As soon as possible after birth, indeed even before it, they are to approach the parish priest to ask for the sacrament for their child, and to be themselves duly prepared for it.

By ‘regular practising Catholic family’, we mean at least one parent / carer and the child attend Mass on Sundays (or Saturday evening) and Holy Days of Obligation as a central part of their lives (*Canon Law 1247*). Missing Mass more than once a month would not be deemed as regular practice. Confirmation of Mass attendance will be obtained from the SIF and the Priest’s reference. The Governors consider that Mass attendance should be for a minimum of three years, unless parents can provide reasons why this has not been possible. If evidence of three years Mass attendance cannot be provided, the candidate will be placed in the lower category, one year, unless no evidence of attendance can be provided at all, in which case the Mass attendance will be placed in the lowest category available. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence of the length of Mass attendance. Where a family regularly attend Mass at more than one parish, or have moved during the past three years, it is important that the Priest at each parish confirms this.

Catechumen means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic church. Evidence of a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens will be required.

Other Christian denominations refers to full members of Churches Together in England.

Sibling is defined as a full brother or sister or step / half brother or sister or adopted brother or sister whose main residence is at the same address.

Families means being the child’s natural or adoptive parents or officially designated carers. It would not include grandparents or other relatives unless they are officially designated.

Home is defined as the address where the child normally resides as their only or principle residence. Addresses involved in child minding (professional or relatives) are excluded. Parents will be asked to provide documentary evidence to confirm an address and parental responsibility. The Authority must be notified of changes of address immediately. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of a place at the school.

Notes

Deferred entry

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

Appeals

Parents whose applications 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 must set out the reasons on which the appeal is made. Appeals should be made to the Admissions Appeals Clerk at the school address. Parents/Carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

Infant classes are restricted by the 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 size limit; or
- b) the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or had not been correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied;
- c) 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.

Children of multiple births

Infant classes are restricted by the legislation to 30 children, and children of multiple births will not all be admitted if this would exceed the infant class size. In such cases, the tie-breaker will be used to determine who can be offered a place(s).

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. This waiting list will be maintained for period that the child could attend the Infant School, unless we are informed that a place is no longer required.

The waiting list will be operated using the criteria listed above by the Governing Body. Should a place become available in-year, the Governing Body will inform the Local Authority of the name of the pupil who is currently ranked first; the offer of the place will then be made from the Local Authority on behalf of the Governing Body. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. As applications can be received throughout the year, a child's place can change on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

In-year applications

Croydon's in year CAF must be completed if applying at other than the usual start of school into the Reception class in September.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents who are seeking admission for their child outside their normal age group, e.g. the child has experienced health problems or the parents of a summer born child preferring not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group to Reception rather than Year 1. Governors will make decisions on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the individual child. 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 will also take into account the views of the school's head teacher. When informing a parent of the decision which year group the child should be admitted to, the governors will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

Where the governors agree to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school the local authority will process the application as part of the

main admissions round, (unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible) and on the basis of the determined admission arrangements, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. This procedure is integral to the making and maintaining plans by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*. If a child with Special Educational Needs is already admitted to the school, they will be counted towards the published admission number when considering whether there is still a place available for another child without a plan.

If a disability is likely to result in significantly reduced access to the curriculum, the Governors will undertake further consultations, in the interest of the child.

Fair Access Protocol

The school participates in the local authority's Fair Access Protocol to allocate places to vulnerable and other children in accordance with Appendix A of the School Admission Code 2014.

Late Applications

Forms received after the specified time and date on the Supplementary Information Form will be treated as late applications. Late applications received before the governors meet to rank applicants will be ranked after all timely applications. Those received after the governors rank applications will be dealt with after decisions have been made on and, if necessary, appeals heard in relation to timely applications. 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.

General Data Protection Regulation: The school is registered for holding personal data. The school has a duty to protect this information and to keep it up to date. The school is required to share some of the data with the Local Authority, the Diocese and with the DFE. Further details can be found on our Privacy Notice on the website or via the school office.