

ADMISSIONS POLICY for the NURSERY 2025-2026

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. At a Catholic school, 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 Nursery Class exists primarily to serve the Catholic community. However, the Governing Body welcomes applications, subject to the availability of places, from those of other faiths who support the religious ethos of the Nursery.

This Nursery accepts children for the year before compulsory schooling begins, (that is those who have their 4th birthday during the nursery year). Places in this Nursery are usually part-time and are free of charge. There are some full-time places available (9am to 3.20pm); a charge is made to cover the additional hours above the government funded 15 hours.

A place in the Nursery class does not guarantee nor entitle a child to a place in the Infant School, as Nursery education is not compulsory.

A separate application will need to be made at the appropriate time for consideration by the Governors for a place in Reception.

Over Subscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for nursery places than the number of places available (52 part-time), places will be offered in 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. Weekly Mass attendance, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 3 years
2. Weekly Mass attendance, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 1 year
3. 3 times a month, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 3 years
4. 3 times a month, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 1 year
5. Fortnightly Mass attendance, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 3 years
6. Fortnightly Mass attendance, by parent / carer and child, for at least the past 1 year
7. Child and applicant are enrolled in the catechumenate

8. Parent / carer and child attend Mass irregularly
9. 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 or St. Mary's Catholic Junior 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 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.
If a child lives in a shared property, 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	Albanian, Byelorussian, Bulgarian, Greek, Melchite, Italo-
Constantinople:	Albanian, Romanian, Russian Ruthenian, Slovakian Ukrainian, 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 other denominations that are 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 School must be notified of changes of address immediately. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of a place at the school.

Part-time means a place in either the morning or afternoon class, and is for 3 hours per day.

Full-time means an all-day place, and is for 6 hours 20 minutes per day, from 9.00a.m. to 3.20p.m. The first 15 hours are free of charge. There is a charge for the additional 16 hours and 40 minutes. There are a limited number of full-time places available.

There is no right of Appeal as Nursery education is not Statutory.

Waiting Lists

Parents of children who have not been offered a place in the Nursery may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list, which will be operated using the criteria listed above by the Governing Body. Should a place become available in year, the Governing Body will offer the place to the child who is ranked first. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available.

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 statements by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*.

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

Any late applications will be considered by the Governors' Admissions Committee, in the event of there being any available places using the above criteria. If all places have been filled, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list.

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.