



# St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools

Love one another  
Always do our best  
Take care of ourselves and the world  
around us

## Admissions Policy for 2024-2025

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The Federation of St Marys Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. 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.

Partnership with parents, the primary educators of their children, has long been a principle embedded in Catholic Education. The Trustees and Governors value and welcome, above all, the co-operation of parents in seeking to achieve these aims for pupils attending the school.

It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. All applicants are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

### **INFANT SCHOOL**

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for the reception class at St Mary's Priory Infant school is 30. The Governing Body has sole responsibility for admissions to this school and intends to admit 30 children in the school year which begins in September 2024. Applications for Reception are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 4<sup>th</sup> birthday between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

### **JUNIOR SCHOOL**

The Published Admission Number for the junior school is 60 and the Governing Body has sole responsibility for the admission of pupils. Applications are welcome for September 2024 from families whose child reaches his/her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

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.

In this policy *applicant* refers to the person making an application on behalf of a child; *candidate* refers to the child on whose behalf the application is being made.

### **OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

Where there are more applications than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority: -

1. Catholic 'looked after' children and previously 'looked after' children, who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders.
2. Baptised Catholic children who have a sibling at the school at the time of admission (Baptism Certificate required).
3. Other Baptised Catholics.

4. Other 'looked after' children and previously 'looked after' children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders.
5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church whose application is supported by a certificate of Baptism.
6. Non-Catholic children who have a sibling at the school at the time of admission.
7. Christians of other denominations whose application is supported either by a certificate of baptism or by a letter from their Minister of Religion confirming membership of the faith community.
8. Children of other faiths whose application is supported by a letter from their religious leader, confirming membership of the faith community.
9. Any other children.

### **TIE BREAKS**

- a. **EXCEPTIONAL NEED:** The governing body will give top priority within a criterion to an application where compelling evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can only be met at this school.
- b. The attendance of a brother or sister at the infant or junior school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in a above.
- c. **DISTANCE:** Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the criteria listed above would still lead to oversubscription, the places up to the admission number will be offered to those living closest to the school measured in a straight line from the Ordnance Survey Address Point for the child's home, to the Ordnance Survey Address Point of the school, calculated using a computerised mapping system. The distance will be measured by the local authority.
- d. Where two families live at exactly the same distance from the school the applicant will be offered using random allocation which will take place in the presence of an independent witness.

### **MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS**

Where the final place is offered to a child who has other siblings applying for a place in the same school year, these siblings will also be admitted.

### **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.

### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE for 2024 – 2025 (This applies to both Reception Class and Y3 for entry into the Junior School)**

In order to make an application, you **must** complete an application form from your local authority either online or on paper and return it to them. 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 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the Governing Body will be unable to consider your application against the oversubscription criteria and your child will be ranked under the lowest criterion. It is very unlikely that your child will be offered a place if a SIF is not supplied.

### **CHILDREN EDUCATED OUTSIDE THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL AGE GROUP (except summer born children)**

Parents may apply for their child to be educated outside his/her chronological age group i.e. a year behind or a year ahead. Application should be made to the Chair of Governors at the time of application and any supporting evidence should be submitted at the same time. Governors will consider each case on its own merits and permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

The local authority will inform you of the outcome of your application on behalf of the Governing Body, on or about 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024. This information will also be available on line for those who have submitted an e-application. Parents/carers should accept or decline the place as soon as possible..

### **NURSERY CHILDREN**

Attendance at the nursery **does not** guarantee a place in Reception.

Parents of children attending St Mary's nursery **must** make a fresh application for reception.

### **JUNIOR CHILDREN**

Attendance at the Infant School **does not** guarantee a place in the Junior School. Parents of children attending [St Mary's Infants **must** make a fresh application for Y3 (Juniors).

### **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

## **RIGHT OF APPEAL**

If you are unsuccessful you may ask us for the reasons for the refusal of a place. These reasons will be related to the oversubscription criteria listed in the policy and you will have the right of appeal to an independent panel. Should you wish to appeal please contact the school as soon as possible for an appeal form on which you must list your reasons for making an appeal. Appeals must be submitted to the school in writing by 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

## **WAITING LIST**

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 in the policy and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list.

Waiting lists are maintained throughout the year and are refreshed on an annual basis at the end of the summer term. At this time parents will be contacted to confirm if they wish for their child to remain on the waiting list

## **PUPILS WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND 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.

## **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.

## **IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS**

Applications for In-Year admissions are made directly to the school. If a place is available and there is no waiting list the child will be admitted. If there is a waiting list, then applications will be ranked by the Governing Body in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. If a place cannot be offered at this time then you may ask us for the reasons and you will be informed of your right of appeal. You will be offered the opportunity of being placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained by the Governing Body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which the applications are received. Names are removed from the list at the end of each academic year. When a place becomes available the Governing Body will re-rank the list and make an offer to the person at the top of the list. The local authority will be informed of the offer as soon as it has been accepted.

## **RECEPTION YEAR DEFERRED ENTRY**

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 is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term as

applicable. Applicants may also choose for their child to attend part-time until compulsory school age is reached. 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 1<sup>ST</sup> April 2025.

### **SUMMER BORN CHILDREN**

If a parent wishes his/her summer born child to start school in Reception in the September following his/her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday i.e. a child born between 1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> August being admitted to Reception at 5 years of age, they should make the school aware of this by writing a letter to the Chair of Governors at the time of application. Parents must then submit an application in the normal way for the year in which they wish their child to start school. This application will be treated in the same way as all other applications and there is no guarantee that an offer will be made.

### **NOTES (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)**

**‘Looked after child’** has the same meaning as in S.22 of the Children 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 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 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.

**‘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.

**‘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.

**‘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.

**‘Parent’** means the adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child.

**‘Sibling’** means brother or sister, to include adopted brothers and sisters, half, step or foster brothers and sisters. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older child will leave before the younger one starts.

**‘Catholic’** means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will be evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism

in a Catholic church or a Certificate of Reception into the full communion with the Catholic Church.

**‘Catechumen’** means a child or parent who is a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will 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 evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.

**‘Christian’** for the purposes of this policy, means a member of one of the Churches affiliated to ‘Churches Together in Britain and Ireland’.

**‘Children of other Christian denominations’** means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledge God’s revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and in obedience to God’s will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the church, which is his body: and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An Ecclesial community which on principle has no creedal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above.

All members of Churches Together in England and CYTUN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis.

**‘Children of other faiths’** means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of ‘other Christian denominations’ at 7 above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- A religion which does not involve a belief in a God.

Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in that being through worship.

**Home Address** – A child is deemed to be resident at a particular address when he/she resides there for more than 50% of the school week. If parents are separated, the application should be made by the parent the child normally lives with. Where a child spends equal time during the school week with each parent, the exact arrangements must be made clear in a letter with a copy of any custody or residency order submitted with the application. It is the parents’ responsibility to agree between themselves and make clear which address will be used and to provide supporting evidence in respect of that address. An application can only be processed from one address. The final decision about which address is to be used rests with the Governing Board.