ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Admissions Policy

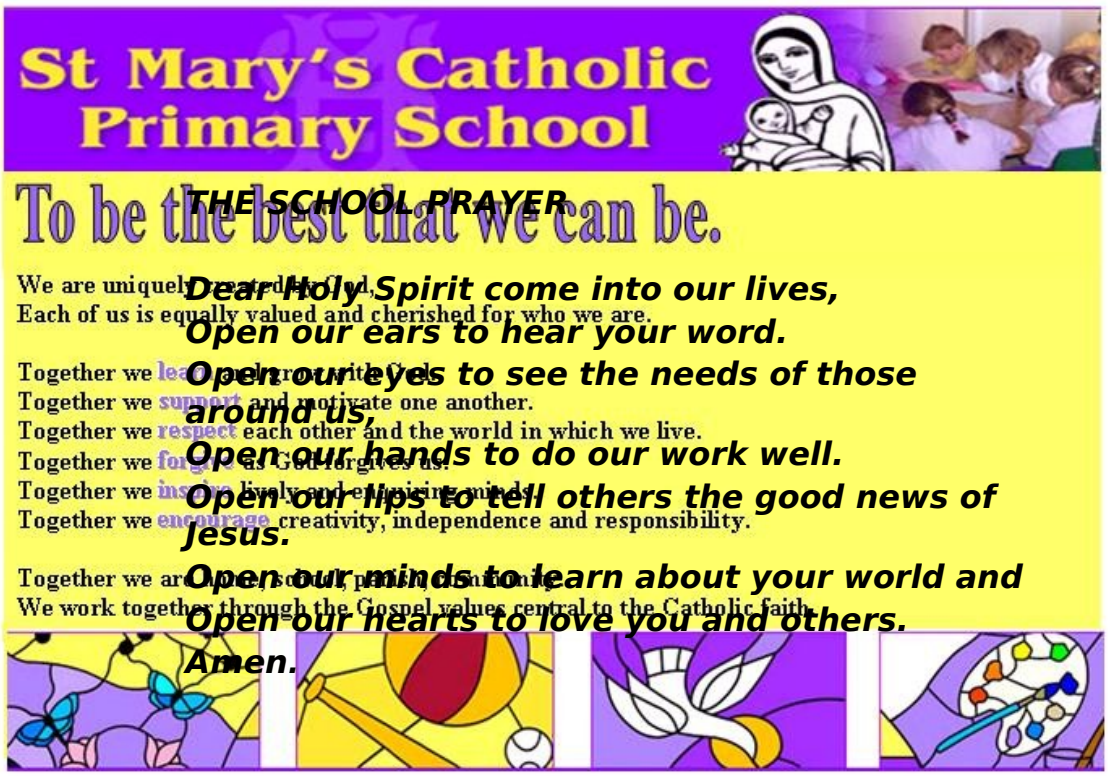
Policy Reviewed:	September 2025
Reviewing Body:	Admissions Committee
Policy Ratified:	September 2025
Next Review:	September 2027

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL

'To be the best we can be.'

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2026-2027

Our Mission Statement



Our School Prayer

THE SCHOOL PRAYER

Dear Holy Spirit come into our lives,
Open our ears to hear your word.
Open our eyes to see the needs of those around us,
Open our hands to do our work well.
Open our lips to tell others the good news of Jesus.
Open our minds to learn about your world and
Open our hearts to love you and others.
Amen.

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ADMISSIONS POLICY 2026-2027

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St Mary's School is to provide a broad education based on the Gospel values, which are central to the Catholic Faith. At the heart of this is the fostering of positive relationships between all members of the school and its wider community and the development of a loving relationship with God our Father. This takes place within a strong partnership of home, school and parish.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

St Mary's is a Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary School in the Archdiocese of Southwark. 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. Places will be offered without reference to aptitude, disability or race.

PLACES AVAILABLE

The governing body has responsibility for admissions to this school and having consulted with the local authority and other admission authorities, intends to admit 60 pupils to the Reception class in the school year which begins in September 2026.

APPLICATION FOR PLACES IN THE RECEPTION CLASS AT SCHOOL

Before Governors can consider the allocation of places the application process has to be complete. There are four points to remember in order to make it complete:

1. Three forms should be completed. These are: the Local Authority's Common Application Form (CAF), the school's Additional Information Form and, if applicable, the Certificate of Catholic Practice. The Additional Information Form and the Certificate of Catholic Practice are available from the school office.
2. The Additional Information Form and the Certificate of Catholic Practice are to be returned to the school and the CAF to the Local Authority directly by the date published by Merton Local Authority. No application is valid without completion of a CAF. If an Additional Information Form is not completed the school cannot rank the application until after all applicants who have returned a Additional Information Form have been considered.
3. If applicable, the child's baptismal certificates must be produced and will be copied for the school records when the Additional Information Form is returned to the school. If the child gains a place at the school, a copy of the birth certificate and proof of address must be provided prior to the child starting school.

The school encourages parents/carers who wish to defer a place or to choose to start part-time to discuss this with the Headteacher in advance.

Where the child is attending the school nursery, a separate application must be made for entry into Reception Class. Places are allocated according to the admissions criteria shown below; no automatic entry or priority is given to children attending the school nursery.

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OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

Where the number of applications exceeds 60 the governors will offer places in the following order:

1. Looked after Catholic children and all previously looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order. This includes Catholic children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted. (See Note 1)
2. Baptised Catholic children, in possession of a Certificate of Catholic Practice. (See Note 2).
3. Baptised Catholic children. Evidence of Baptism or reception into the Catholic Church will be required.
4. Looked after children and all previously looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order. This includes children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.
5. Children enrolled in the catechumenate. Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate will be required.
6. Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
7. Children of families of who are committed members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) and of religious commitment provided by a priest or minister where the family regularly worship will be required. See Note 6.
8. Children of other faiths. Evidence of religious commitment provided by a priest, minister or religious leader where the family regularly worship will be required.
9. Other children.

The following order of priorities will be applied when applications within any one of the above categories exceed places available and it is necessary to decide between applications:

A. Children who are living in the Catholic parish of St. Winefride's South Wimbledon.

B. A brother or sister of a pupil or former pupil on the school roll. The governors will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's published admissions number. Evidence of the relationship may be required. See Notes 3, 4 and 8

C. Medical, pastoral or social grounds which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong and relevant evidence must be provided by an appropriate authority (e.g. qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, social worker or priest.)

D. Children who are living in the Catholic parish of Christ the King, Wimbledon Park and St Joseph's, Colliers Wood. See Note 7.

E. Children who are living in other Catholic parishes.

F. Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the categories listed above would still lead to over-subscription the places up to the admission number will be offered to those living nearest to the school. The

distance is measured as a straight line between the home address and the front door of the school on Russell Road, as determined by the geographical mapping system used by Merton Local Authority. Evidence of residence may be required. Where parents have shared responsibility and a child lives at more than one address, we will use the address supplied by Merton Council. 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. See Note 5.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

In addition to the Common Application Form (CAF) supplied by the Local Authority, parents should complete the Additional Information Form which is available from the school and send it to the Headteacher at the school no later than the closing date published by the Local Authority. This should be done even if the CAF is completed online. If the Additional Information Form is not completed, the governing body of the school will only be able to consider the application in category 9 of the policy ('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.

Offers of places will be sent to parents by the Local Authority on the common offer date as notified by the Local Authority.

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;

B. Or 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.

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 a 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. Names are removed from the list after twelve months. In the case of a place becoming available, this will be offered in accordance with the criteria listed above. Once a place is offered it must be accepted within 7 days. The child should start school as soon as possible and no later than 14 days from the date on which the offer was made. If the place is not accepted, it will be allocated to the next child on the waiting list. It is possible that when a child is directed under the local authority's fair access protocol they will take precedence over those children already on the list.

PUPILS WITH A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP)

The admission of pupils with an EHC Plan is dealt with by a completely 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 EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

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. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place. Applications for places outside of the normal admission round will be coordinated by the Local Authority and an application form will be available from the Merton Local Authority. A additional form, which is available from the school, should also be completed.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

In-year applicants should contact Merton Admissions by visiting www.merton.gov.uk/admissions to enquire about potential vacancies and the application process. Applications should be made to the London Borough of Merton on an 'In-Year Application Form'. In the case of a place becoming available, this will be offered in accordance with the criteria listed above. Once a place is offered it must be accepted within 7 days. The child should start school as soon as possible and no later than 14 days from the date on which the offer was made. If the place is not accepted, it will be allocated to the next child on the waiting list.

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN BELOW COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

Parents/carers may also request that their child attends part-time until their child reaches compulsory school age. If a child attends part-time then the change to full-time attendance should be at the start of a term or half-term, unless agreed otherwise with the school.

The School admits children to the reception class in the September of the school year in which a child attains the age of 5 years (the school year runs from 1 September to the 31st August). Parents/carers may opt to defer entry to the reception class until the beginning of the term after their child is five years old, but cannot defer entry beyond the end of the school year (the place will be lost if it is deferred beyond the end of the school year).

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF THEIR NORMAL AGE GROUP

Parents who are seeking a place for their child outside of their normal age group e.g., the child has experienced problems such as ill health 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 child concerned. This will include taking account of the parents' views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; their medical history and the views of a medical professional (where relevant); 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.

This admissions policy, although primarily relevant to children for whom a place is sought at the normal age of entry to Primary education (Reception), applies to Nursery and succeeding years, subject to availability of places.

Notes

1. A looked after child has the same meaning as in section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 that is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being 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. A previously looked after child is a child who was looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. This will include children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.

2. In the context of school admissions Catholic children are defined as Children who are baptised or received into the Catholic Church, children baptised or received into the Eastern (Oriental) Churches in union with Rome and children of members of the Ordinariate.

3. 'Former pupil' means a child who was on the school roll at St Mary's School for a minimum of three years.

4. A "brother or sister" means children who live as brother and sister including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. It would not include other relatives (eg cousins). Siblings are defined as one of two or more individuals having one or both parents in common through blood, marriage or adoption. They will not necessarily be residing at the same address or have the same surnames.

5. Home refers to the permanent home address at which the child lives for the majority of his/her time and with the parent who is in receipt of child benefit.

6. Reference to other Christian denominations refers to denominations that are full members of Churches Together in England. A list of these is held at the school office.

7. Maps showing parish boundaries are held in the school office.

8. 'On roll' refers to children in Reception to Year 6