

ADMISSION POLICY AND PROCEDURE 2021

Our Lady Queen of Heaven School is a voluntary aided school 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. 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. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education is fully supported by all families in the school. The school exists primarily to serve the Catholic community and Catholic children always have priority of admission. However, the Governing Body welcomes applications, subject to the availability of places, from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

The governing body has responsibility for admissions to this school. Having consulted with the Local Authority, the Diocese and other admission authorities the Governors intend to admit into the Reception class in September 2021 up to 30 pupils without reference to ability or aptitude.

Where the number of applications on behalf of children exceeds 30, the Governors will offer places, in the order stated, using the following criteria:-

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. (See Note i)
2. Baptised Catholic children and children enrolled in the catechumenate from Catholic families resident in the parishes of Our Lady and St Peter, Christ the King and St Gregory's. Evidence of Baptism/catechumenate will be required.
(Parish Boundary maps are available at each presbytery and at the school)
3. Baptised Catholic children living in neighbouring or other parishes
4. Other Looked After children. 'Children Looked After and those who ceased to be Children Looked After because they were adopted, or because they became subject to a residence order or a special guardianship order'.
5. Children who are members of Eastern Christian Churches including Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church will be required.
6. Children of families who are members of other Christian denominations. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) and confirmation that the family are members of the faith community provided by a priest or minister where the family regularly worship will be required.
7. Children of other faiths. Confirmation that the family are known to the priest, minister or religious leader where the family regularly worship will be required.
8. Any other children.

The following order of priorities will be applied, in the order listed, to rank the children within each category when applications exceed the places available and it is necessary to decide between applications:

1. **For Category 2 to 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 at least 2 years. This evidence must be provided by the parents or guardians and be endorsed by a priest at the church(es) where the family normally worship. Applications will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary form - firstly those who attend Mass weekly, then twice a month etc.
2. A sibling (see note v) on the school roll at the time of admission will increase the priority of an application within each category. Evidence of the relationship may be required.
3. Medical or social grounds which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong and relevant evidence must be provided by an appropriate professional authority (eg qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, social worker.)
4. Distance from home to school – as measured by Wandsworth Council using a straight line. Evidence of residence will be required. (see Note vii)

NOTES (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

- i. ‘A child looked after is a child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. An adopted child is defined by Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A residence order is defined by Section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A special guardianship order is defined by Section 14A of the Children Act 1989.’
- ii. *‘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 Churches in union with Rome and children of members of the Ordinariate’.* This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of Baptism in a Catholic church or a certificate of reception into full communion of the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy, it 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).
- iii. Reference to other Christian denominations refers to other denominations that are full members of Churches Together in England.
- iv. ‘catechumen’ means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic church. This will normally be evidenced through the parish priest, for example with a letter confirming enrolment.
- v. A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, and 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)
- vi. ‘residence’ and ‘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.
- vii. The straight-line measurement used to prioritise applicants for admission to schools in Wandsworth commences in all cases at the location of the property determined by the National Land Planning Gazetteer and terminates at the central point of the school site as determined by Wandsworth Council’s Geographical Information System. Measurements by alternative systems and/or to other points will not be taken into account in any circumstances. Where applicants have identical distance measurements, priority will be allocated by the drawing of lots.

Admissions procedure

To apply for a place at this school please complete:

1. The **Common Application Form** available from, and returnable to Pupil Services at Wandsworth Council. This can be completed online at <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/schools-and-admissions/admissions/primary-school-admissions/apply-for-a-primary-school-place/>
2. The **Supplementary Information Form** available from Pupils Services at Wandsworth Council or the school, returnable to the school office.

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.

Note: The closing date for return of these two forms is **15th January 2021**.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by a common offer date specified by the local authority (i.e. 16th April 2021). 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.

Please note: that while the Common Application Form constitutes a 'valid' application, if you do not also complete and return the school's Supplementary Information form, the governors may not be able to apply their admission criteria and the application may have to be ranked in a lower category.

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. Deferral and part time attendance will be subject to approval by the Governing Body.

Admission of children outside 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 choosing not to send that 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 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.

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 Appeal 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.

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, which will be maintained until the end of the academic year in which they apply will be operated using the same admissions 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. It is possible that when a child is directed under the LA fair access protocol they will take precedence over those children already on the list.

In year (casual) admissions

Application for in year admission must be made to Wandsworth Council on the Council's in year application form. The Council will refer the application to the school which will inform the applicant whether or not a place can be offered and advise the Council of the outcome. The school supplementary form should also be completed to enable the governors to rank the application in the event of there being more than one application for a place. The governors will use the same criteria to rank the applicant as those listed above. In the event of the governors deciding that a place cannot be offered, 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.

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 the School Admission Code 2014. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the planned admission number for the relevant year group.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

The admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or 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 statement or an 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' Admission 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.

This admissions procedure, although primarily relevant to children for who a place is sought at the normal age of entry to primary education (Year R), will also apply to succeeding years, and will be subject to the availability of places.