

HOLY GHOST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

GOVERNORS' ADMISSIONS POLICY 2024 – 2025

- Entry for September 2024 -

Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school in the Archdiocese 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. The school exists primarily to serve the Catholic community and Catholic children always have priority of admission. Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome. 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.

Having consulted with the Local Authority, the Diocese and other admission authorities, the Governors intend to admit into the reception class, in September 2024, up to 30 pupils without reference to ability or aptitude.

The school is normally oversubscribed with applications. Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, places will be offered in accordance with the following categories order of priority stated:

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. 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.
2. Baptised Catholic children** who have one or two parents who are practising Catholics, and who attend Mass regularly (by which is meant weekly Sunday Mass attendance for the preceding 3 years before the closing date for applications as verified by a parish priest or equivalent) and who have a sibling who will be attending the school in September 2023.
 - *As a result of Covid 19, the suspension of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass was announced on the 18th March 2020 by Bishops Conference of England and Wales.*
 - *As of the 5th June 2022, Pentecost, the Bishops restored the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.*
 - *Parents applying for a place at Holy Ghost Primary School, under a faith based criteria will need to complete a Supplementary Information Form.*
 - *Following the restoration of the Sunday obligation, evidence of practice will be measured by frequency of attendance at Mass as validated by either a priest or minister, as was the case prior to 18th March 2020.*
3. Baptised Catholic children who have one or two parents who are practising Catholics and who attend Mass regularly (by which is meant weekly Sunday Mass attendance for the preceding 3 years before the closing date for applications as verified by a parish priest or equivalent) and who live in the Holy Ghost parish.
4. Baptised Catholic children who have one or two parents who are practising Catholics and who attend Mass regularly (by which is meant weekly Sunday Mass attendance for the preceding 3 years before the closing date for applications as verified by a parish priest or equivalent) living in neighbouring Catholic parishes, which do not have a Catholic school [e.g. St. Vincent de Paul]
5. Baptised Catholic children who have one or two parents who are practising Catholics and who attend Mass regularly (by which is meant weekly Sunday Mass attendance for the preceding 3 years before the closing date for applications as verified by a parish priest or equivalent) living in neighbouring Catholic parishes which have a Catholic school. [e.g. St Anselm's, St Mary's Clapham and St Bede's].
6. Other baptised Catholic children living in Holy Ghost Parish, who are not included in criteria 2 or 3 above.
7. Other baptised Catholic children living in neighbouring Catholic Parishes who are not included in criteria 4 or 5 above.
8. All other Baptised Catholic children.
9. 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. 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.
10. Children of families who are members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) provided by a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.

11. Other applicants not meeting criteria 1 - 10 above.

Tie-breaks

If there is over subscription in any of the above categories, the Governing Body will allocate places in accordance with the following sub-categories in the order of priority set out below:

- i. children who have a sibling*** attending the school at the time of admission (if it is necessary to decide between siblings with equal priority, places will be allocated in each instance by drawing lots before an independent person);
- ii. children with an established medical need, who can demonstrate that Holy Ghost School has characteristics which make it particularly suitable to meet their educational, physical or behavioural needs. Applications must be supported by written statement(s) from a doctor, and other relevant healthcare professionals, and disclosed at the time of application, or subsequently, but before the published date by which admissions are to be considered;
- iii. children in order of straight line distance from home to school, as measured by Wandsworth Council's Geographical Information System****.

Admission Procedures

All application forms, including the Local Authority Common Application Form (CAF), and the Supplementary Information Form are available from the Local Authority and the school websites.

Local Authority's Common Application Form (CAF) must be received by Pupil Services at Wandsworth Council on or before the **15th January 2024**. You are encouraged by the local authority to complete your application on-line.

Supplementary Information Form, accompanied by copies of the child's baptismal certificate, a current financial year's Council Tax Statement, and any letters of reference, should be received by the school on or before the **15th January 2024**. Please note that while the Common Application Form constitutes a 'valid' application, if the Supplementary Information Form is not completed, the governing body of the school will not be able to consider the application fully against the school's faith criteria (1-8)

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 their home local authority on the common offer date 16th April 2024.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

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 EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

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.

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 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 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 94 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 Local Authority. 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; or
- c) 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 List

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 maintained until 31st August 2025 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.

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.

Notes

- * A looked after child 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 or section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976. A residence order is defined by Section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangements order is defined by section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. A special guardianship order is defined by Section 14A of the Children Act 1989
- ** A Baptised Catholic child is a child who has been baptised as a Catholic or has been received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church or is baptised into a Church that is in union with the Bishop of Rome
- *** A sibling is defined as a full brother or sister, a step/half brother or sister living at the same address, a child who is living at the same address as part of the family by reason of a court order, or a child who has been placed with foster carers as a result of being looked after by a Local Authority.
- **** 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 amongst them will be determined at random.