

THE HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Nursery Admissions Policy 2023-2024

Date: September 2022

Review Date: September 2023



OFSTED July 2019

Pupils feel safe in school and believe that the adults take good care of them.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school is strong.



Section 48 Diocesan Inspection January 2016

The effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing is outstanding.

The vision and leadership of the head and senior leadership team together with the regular presence and encouragement of the parish priest all lead to an environment where the children flourish in the school's Catholic ethos.

At The Holy Family School we are committed to Safeguarding Children

As a family we live, love, learn and celebrate with Jesus

The Holy Family Catholic Primary School Nursery Admissions Policy 2023-24

The Holy Family Catholic Primary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families at our nursery, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the nursery's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the nursery's education be fully supported by all families in the school. We therefore hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the nursery. This does not affect the right of parents who of another faith or not of faith to apply.

Responsibility for the admission of pupils rests with the Board of Governors. The governing body has set its Published Admissions Number (PAN) at 26 children for the school year which begins in September 2023. Applications for Nursery are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 3rd birthday between 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023.

The Governors intend to offer 15 hours (morning only) or 30 hours (morning & afternoon). We will treat all applications with the same priority whether applying for part-time (15 hours) or full-time places (30 hours). All nursery aged children are entitled to 15 hours free nursery provision, it is the expectation of the governing body that the 15 hour allocation is the minimum attendance and that in accepting a nursery place each child meets this minimum expectation. The Holy Family Catholic Primary School offers this on a Monday to Friday basis, term time only 8.45am – 12pm. If eligible for 30 hours, The Holy Family Catholic Primary School offers 30 hours on a Monday to Friday basis, term time only 8.45am – 3.15pm.

Parents may be eligible for 30 hours of free provision and need to apply for an eligibility code. Please see the following website to check conditions of eligibility www.hertfordshie.gov.uk/parents Places for 30 hours will only be confirmed on receipt of a valid eligibility code. Parents must reapply each term for their eligibility code. A child will not be able to start the additional hours without the code.

If your child is not eligible for the 30 hours free childcare, you can pay for the additional 15 hours at Early Years payment rate.

If there is not a significant amount of applications for full time places, the Governors may decide to withdraw the 30 hour offer. However, the Governors will continue to offer the morning places (15 hours) regardless of take up.

Your child's attendance at our nursery does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education. Separate applications **must** be made to the school for admission to Reception class. Exceptional circumstances are not considered as part of the school's admission criteria.

If the nursery has fewer applications than places available, all applicants will be offered a place. 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 in accordance with the oversubscription criteria below.

Oversubscription Criteria

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

1. Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order¹ or a special guardianship order². (see notes 2-5);
2. Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school.
3. Baptised Catholic children who have a sibling in the school at the time of admission.
4. Baptised Catholic children, who are resident in the Parishes of Holy Family, Welwyn Garden City, St Bonaventure, Welwyn Garden City or St Thomas More, Knebworth. (see notes 6, 12, & 13);
5. Other baptised Catholic children for whom The Holy Family School is the nearest Catholic school (see note 6);
6. Other baptised Catholic children (see note 6);
7. Children of catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church (see notes 7 & 8);
8. Any other children.

Applications in any of the criteria listed above will be further prioritised according to the following:

- a) The attendance of a sibling at the school (in years R to 5) at the time of application.
- b) The distance from the candidate's residence to the school
- c) Where two candidates tie for the final place, the offer of a place will be determined by lottery, which will be carried out by the Governors in the presence of an independent witness. When the last offer is made to a child of a multiple birth i.e. twin, triplet etc., the remaining child(ren) will also be offered a place, even though it will mean exceeding the published admission number.

Applications in previous years

The Governing Body has been happy, in previous years, to welcome children from all categories to the Holy Family Primary School.

Timetable and Application Procedures

Open date: 2nd September 2022

Closing date: 15th January 2023

Applications will be accepted after the closing date until all places are allocated. If offered a place children are admitted to nursery in September, January and April.

To apply for a place at this nursery the applicant must complete the School's application form (SIF) and return it with the requested documentation being a copy of the Baptism certificate and proof of address to:

Admissions, The Holy Family School Office, Crookhams, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL7 1PG

If your application form and supporting documentation is received after the closing date, it will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed.

The information provided on the Nursery application form enables the Governing Body to fully assess your application in the event of over-subscription. If the copy of your child's baptism certificate are not submitted as requested, the Governing Body will apply their admission arrangements using the information supplied on your Nursery application form only, which may result in your application being given a lower priority.

Late Applications

Application forms and supporting documents received after the closing date will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed. If the nursery is oversubscribed it is very unlikely that late applicants will obtain a place.

Outcome of application

We will notify you of the outcome of your application in writing by 1st March 2023. Please accept or decline your place by 14th March 2023 using the acceptance form enclosed with your application outcome.

NOTES

Change of Details

If any of the details on any of your forms changes between the date of application and the receipt of the letter of offer or refusal, you must inform the school. If misleading information is given or allowed to remain on either of your forms, the Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the place deeming the application to be fraudulent, even if the child has already started the nursery.

Fair Access

The nursery 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 fair access protocol that has been agreed by both the Diocese 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. Children submitted under this protocol will be prioritised above those on the Continued Interest List (also known as the waiting list).

In-Year Applications

In-year applications 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 over subscription 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 to 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 as above and not in 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 confirm who is at the top of the list so that an offer can be made.

Pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC)

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) is dealt with by a separate procedure. 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.

Waiting lists and appeals

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. If a place becomes available the Governing Body will confirm who is at the top of the list so an offer can be made. The Applicant must accept the place and start at the nursery within two school weeks of the offer being made. Failure to do so may result in the offer being retracted. If places are available they may be offered to children the term after they are 3 in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Definitions

‘Adopted’ child is any child who has been formally adopted, having previously been in care and whose parent/guardian can give proof of this.

‘Applicant’ refers to the parent/guardian with legal responsibility applying for a place

‘Candidate’ refers to the child for whom an application is made

‘Candidate’s residence’ must be the candidate’s current permanent address at the time of application. ‘At the time of application’ means the closing date for applications. “Permanent” means that the candidate has lived at that address for at least a year and/or the family own and reside at the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months. The application can only be processed using one address. If a candidate lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one which the candidate lives at for the majority of the time. If a candidate lives at two addresses equally, the address of the parent/carer that claims Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit will be considered as the candidate’s main residence. If a family is not in receipt of Child Benefit/Tax Credit, alternative documentation will be requested. If a candidate’s

residence is in dispute, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes.

‘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 full communion with the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy this includes a looked after child in the process of adoption and living with a Catholic family, where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised were it not for his/her status as a looked after child. For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception in the Catholic Church will be required. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism should contact their parish priest who, after consulting with the diocese will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

‘Catechumen’ means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally 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.

‘Child Arrangements Order’. Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

‘Distance’ from the candidate’s residence to the school as determined by ‘straight line’ distance measurement system is used for all home to school distance measurements. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places.

‘Eastern Christian Church’ includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church

‘Education, Health and Care Plan’ is a plan made by the local authority under S.37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the educational provision required for a child.

‘Looked after child’ Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

These children will be prioritised under rule 1.

Highest priority will also be given to children who were previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order. A “child looked after” is a child who is:

- a) in the care of a local authority, or
- b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989)

‘Medical or social need’ - Applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted.

All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However, in a few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school.

Few applications under Rule 2 are agreed.

All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

a) Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or

b) Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs.

c) If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.

d) For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate. A Rule 2 application will generally not be upheld in cases where more than one school could meet the child's need.

In exceptional cases relating to a disability, where more than one school in the county can meet the child's specific needs, a clear and compelling case can be made for the "nearest" school with the relevant facilities, environment or location. You must clearly explain why attendance at the "nearest" school with these facilities is essential. Applications can only be considered when supported by a recent letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example a doctor, psychologist or police officer. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child.

Applications for children who were not "looked after" immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order may be made under this rule.

'Parent' means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for the child or any adult with legal responsibility for the child.

'Parish Boundaries' – for the purposes of this Policy, parish boundaries are as shown on the attached map and will be applied to the admission arrangements for 2021-22.

'Resident' – A child is deemed to be resident at a particular address when he/she resides there for more than 50% of the school week.

'SIBLING' includes:

- brother or sister
- half brother or sister
- adopted brother or sister
- child of the parent / carer or partner
- children looked after or previously looked after. This doesn't include children temporarily living in the same house. For example, a looked after child in a short term foster or bridging placement.

In every case, the sibling must be living permanently in the same family home (at least Monday to Friday).

‘Special Guardianship Order’ Under 14A of The Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian or guardians. Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Rule 1 if the child’s previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire’s “Virtual School”.

The child’s previously looked after status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:

- i. to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and
- ii. to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is in “state care” if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by –

(a) a public authority,

(b) a religious organisation, or

(c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.