



ADMISSIONS POLICY – 2016 - 17

St Mary's is a Catholic School founded by the Catholic Church to meet the educational needs of Catholic children aged 11-18. It is a comprehensive school with five forms of entry. It is an all ability school and children will be admitted without reference to their aptitude or ability. As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeates 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. All applicants and candidates are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

The school's Published Admissions Number (PAN) is 155. This number is determined by reference to the actual teaching accommodation available. The governing body is not able to offer any further places. Where the number of applications exceed the number of places available, the oversubscription criteria listed after these notes will be used.

Application Procedure:

All applicants **must** complete a **Common Application Form (CAF)** which is available from and returnable to the local authority in which the family is resident. In addition, applicants should complete **St Mary's Supplementary Information Form (SIF)** which is supplied in the application pack. The CAF and the SIF are also obtainable from your local authority and are available on line. The CAF must be completed and submitted to the local authority by 31st October 2015. The Supplementary Information Form (SIF) is available from the school or the local authority and should be completed and returned to the school by the closing date. If you do not complete both the CAF and the SIF and return them by the closing date, the governing body may be unable to consider your application fully and it is very unlikely that your child will get a place at the school. Late applications will be considered after the initial allocation process has been completed.

Applications for criterion 1 must be accompanied by written proof of the child's status from the appropriate authority. Those wishing to be considered under criterion 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 should also provide the School with a copy of the child's baptismal certificate. If the certificate is not available, applicants should indicate in writing the reasons for this being the case. Those applying under criterion 3 should obtain a Diocesan Priest's Reference form from the school or parish and hand it to their parish priest when completed. The Diocesan Priest's Reference form is also available on the Diocesan website at www.rcdow.org.uk/schools/parents/admissions at the top right hand corner of the page.

Your local authority will write to you on behalf of the governing body with the outcome of your application on 1st March 2016 and the information will also be available on line. You should indicate your acceptance of the place as soon as possible.

Tie Break: In cases where there are more applicants in any criterion than there are places available, the places will be offered to those living nearest the school, as measured using the home-school measurement system used by Hertfordshire County Council as outlined in the County's admission arrangements and application literature for the year of application (see Note i), subject to the proportional distribution in Criterion 3 and Criterion 5 among the three designated areas. If one sibling from a multiple birth gains a place, the other(s) will be admitted automatically, even if this means the published admission number will be exceeded. Similarly if two children were eligible for the last place and they lived the same distance from the school, both would be admitted.

Where the Supplementary Information Form is not completed by the applicant, or where the required documentation is not provided, the application will be dealt with under the lowest criterion.

All procedures must be completed within the published time limits. Late applications will be processed using the procedures published by Hertfordshire County Council in its "Moving On" booklet. The governing body cannot be held responsible for any delays in submitting applications or responding to the offer of a place. The governors may withdraw the offer of a place in any of the following circumstances:

- the place is not accepted within the prescribed time scale;
- in the case of fraud or the deliberate supply of misleading information;
- supporting documentation is not supplied within the prescribed time scale.

Catholic applicants should note that preference is given to members of practising Catholic families as evidenced by a Parish Priest's Reference provided they live in one of the three areas designated in Criterion 3. Catholic applicants who do not supply a Parish Priest's Reference should also note that they are required to produce a Certificate of Baptism with their application. Applicants who are practising Christians of other denominations will be required to produce evidence of regular church or chapel attendance from the appropriate priest or minister of religion.

*Kindly read the **notes** that are integral with the criteria (they are printed after them).*

You are hereby advised that in the event that you do not gain admission, you have the right of appeal under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002). If you wish to exercise that right, you should advise the Admissions Officer at St Mary's School.

CRITERIA (ORDER OF PRIORITY IN THE EVENT OF OVERSUBSCRIPTION):

Important: kindly read the **notes** that follow the criteria. The notes are integral with the criteria.

- 1 Catholic Looked After Children and Catholic children who have been adopted (or made subject to child arrangements orders, or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after.
- 2 Catholic applicants who have provided a Certificate of Baptism and who have a sibling who attends (or attended up to Yr13 and has now left) the school.
- 3 Practising Catholic applicants with no sibling connection, who have provided a Certificate of Baptism and a Parish Priest's Reference, in the following proportions:
 - 42½% of the remaining places to those living in the Catholic parishes that are based in Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and Much Hadham
 - 42½% of the remaining places to those living in other parts of the Lea Valley Deanery
 - 15% of the remaining places to those living in the Catholic parishes that are based in Dunmow, Bardfield and Thaxted, Saffron Walden and Stansted.

These areas are defined in the maps which accompany these criteria. They are impossible to produce in hard copy due to technical issues; however they can be found at <http://www.stmarys.net/admissions/>

If any of the three designated areas is under-subscribed, the places will be redistributed among the designated areas in the relative proportions above, before any offers are made to applicants in Criterion 5.

- 4 A Catholic applicant who is the son/daughter of a member of staff at the school. The member of staff must be a direct employee of the governors, and have been in this employment for at least 2 years at the time of application; the child must live at the same address as the member of staff. Children of partners are not eligible under this criterion.
- 5 Catholic applicants with no sibling connection, who have provided a Certificate of Baptism, who live in the three areas designated in Criterion 3. *The allocation of places between the three areas will be such that the cumulative number of places in Criterion 3 and Criterion 5 taken together are in the "42½-42½-15" proportions described in Criterion 3. If any of the three designated areas is under-subscribed, the places will be redistributed among the designated areas in the relative proportions above, before any offers are made to applicants in Criterion.6.*
- 6 Any Catholic applicant who at the time of application is attending any primary school located within one of the areas designated in Criterion 3.
- 7 Any other Catholic applicant
- 8 Non-Catholic Looked After Children and non-Catholic children who have been adopted (or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders, immediately after having been looked after.
- 9 Any applicant who is a catechumen or member of an Eastern Christian Church.
- 10 Any applicant with a sibling who attends (or attended up to Yr13 and has now left) the school, or an applicant who is the son/daughter of a member of staff at the school. The member of staff must be a direct employee of the governors, and have been in this employment for at least 2 years.

- 11 Any applicant who is a practising Christian of another denomination. Evidence of regular church or chapel attendance will be required from the appropriate priest or minister of religion. This evidence should state that the priest or minister knows the applicant as a member of the faith community who regularly worships. A baptismal certificate is not required but a birth certificate will be required as proof of identity once a place has been offered.
- 12 Any other applicant.

NOTES:

- (a) **Catholic** means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. **'Practising Catholic'** means a Catholic child from a practising Catholic family where this practice is verified by a reference from a Catholic priest in the standard format laid down by the Diocese. **'Catechumen'** means a child who is a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens. **'Eastern Christian Church'** includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally 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'.
- (b) **Parish Priest's Reference** means a declaration by a Catholic priest that (i) he supports the application; *and* (ii) the parents are known to him; *and* (iii) the child is known to him; *and* (iv) the child is a member of a practising Catholic family or if this is not the case he (the priest) states the exceptional circumstances that give rise to his support for the application. The declaration must be made on a Brentwood or Westminster Diocesan Priests' Reference Form only and duly signed by the priest with the parish seal applied over his signature. *In any event, the parish priest where you live will be asked to confirm that you live in his parish. Priests will generally require to meet with parents prior to supplying a reference.*
- (c) **Certificate of Baptism** means a certificate of Baptism in a Catholic church (or if the applicant was baptised in another Christian church and has been received into full communion with the Catholic Church, the certificate of Baptism together with a letter from a Catholic priest giving evidence of reception into full communion).
- (d) To qualify as a Sibling, he/she needs to live at the same address as the applicant from Monday to Friday. "At the time of application" means that the sibling must be actually be on the roll of St Mary's Catholic School at the school, or have been offered a place but not yet started at the school. Subject to the Monday to Friday residential qualification, "sibling" is taken to include stepbrothers, stepsisters, half brothers, half sisters, and brothers and sisters by adoption. Given the high staying on rate into the sixth form, and the desire of the Catholic community for 11-18 Catholic education provision, Year 11 students count as siblings as there is a reasonable expectation that they will wish to attend the school's sixth form, and that they will be eligible to do so.
- (e) The admission of pupils with a statement of Special Education Needs is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. This procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements by the pupil's home Local Education Authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*. 'Under the Education Act 1996 the governors are obliged by law to admit any child with a Statement of Special Needs where this school is named in the Statement.'
- (f) This Admissions Policy applies only to admissions in the academic year beginning in September 2016 and ending in July 2017. Admissions policies are subject to annual review by the governing body. Consequently no assurance is given or implied that this policy will continue wholly or in part beyond July 2017.
- (g) Last year the school was oversubscribed. We received **671** applications for 155 places. All applicants in criteria 1 to 2 were offered a place, in the proportions set out in our policy based on the distance criteria set out in our tie breaker. We were unable to offer places to all those in Criteria 3.
- (h) In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful candidates will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a continuing interest list (the CI List). This list will be maintained by the Governing Body's Admissions Committee; the list will follow the order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and *not* the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Parents will be contacted periodically to check that they wish for their applications to remain on the List. The Governing Body's Admission Committee meets twice a term to review the list and any new applications, and to admit pupils where a place becomes available.
- (i) Distance measuring is carried out using the home-school measurement system used by Hertfordshire County Council as outlined in the County's admission arrangements and application literature for the year of application.
- (j) An incomplete application is one where sections of the admission form and/or the Supplementary Information Form have not been completed and/or the requested supporting documentation has not been provided.

- (k) A late application is one where the Common Application Form (CAF) fails to be submitted to the applicant's Local Authority by 31/10/15. The School Information Form (SIF) should be submitted by the same date(s). If the SIF is not submitted to the school until after the allocation of places has begun, then the application will fall into criterion 13 until the information required by the SIF becomes available. Applications received after 15/3/16 will be dealt with after all initial offers have been made.
- (l) Fair Access Protocols: 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 Diocese and the Local Authority for the current school year. The governing body has this power even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number.
- (m) In-Year Admissions: Applications for In-Year admissions are made directly to the school, and use the same criteria as for application to year 7. If more applications are received than there are places available 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 the continuing interest list. (see above). The Governing Body will inform parents whether or not a place is to be offered.
- (n) 'Looked after child' has the same meaning as in Section 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).
- (o) 'Adopted': An adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted and whose parent/guardian can give proof of adoption.
- (p) '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
- (q) '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). Children who were 'looked after' immediately before the special guardianship order was made qualify for this category.
- (r) The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application. 'At the time of application' means the closing date for applications. The application can only be processed using one 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.
- (s) Hertfordshire parents wishing to appeal who applied on line should log on to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal ". If you did not apply using Hertfordshire's on line application system please contact the Customer Service centre on 0300 123 4043 to request an appeal pack.

PUPILS WITH A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHC)

The admission of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan (EHC) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. If your child has a Statement of SEN or EHC plan you must contact your local authority SEN officer. Children with this school named in their Statement of SEN or EHC Plan will be admitted to the school.

Children educated outside their chronological age group

Any application for a child to be educated out of his/her age group will be considered by governors on an individual basis and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents should write to the Chair of Governors during the autumn term in the (academic) year of application, giving reasons and providing compelling professional evidence.

The families of children who are seeking admission to St Mary's, must be fully aware of the aims of the school in seeking to implement the Catholic Church's mission in Catholic Education and should be fully supportive of the Christian ethos of the school.

Following discussions between the Diocese and the County Council, it is likely that a new PRF and guidance will be issued before the start of the next academic year. The introduction of new paperwork will not fundamentally impact upon the school's allocation process. It is hoped that it will make the process simpler and more transparent for catholic parents.