Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Admissions Policy and Procedures 2026-27

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Reviewed by:	Mrs Margaret McAleese, Chair of Governors Miss Isabel Quinn, Headteacher

Ratified by the Full Governing Board

Our Lady's Catholic Primary 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 Board 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 admissions. However, the Governing Board also welcomes applications from those of other denominations and religions and from those who have no faith who support the Catholic 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 2025, up to 30 pupils, the published admission number (PAN), without reference to ability or aptitude.

Where the number of applications exceeds 30, the Governors will offer places using the following criteria in the order stated below:

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 siblings of children currently on the school roll at the time of admission. A Certificate of Practice will be required.
3. Baptised Catholic children, in possession of a Certificate of Practice.
4. Baptised Catholic children. A baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church must be provided.
5. 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
6. Children enrolled in the Catechumenate. Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate will be required.
7. Children who are members of Eastern Catholic Churches. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
8. Children who are members of other faiths, Churches and denominations. Evidence of Baptism/dedication or evidence of membership required
9. Any other children.

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

1. **Looked after or previously looked after Catholic children or children in the care of a Catholic parent**
   - **'Catholic'** includes members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.
   - The definition of a **'parent'** includes a natural or adoptive parent of the child (regardless of whether the child lives with them, has contact with them, or they have parental responsibility for the child). It also includes a person who is not a natural or adoptive parent of the child, but who has care of and/or parental responsibility for the child.
   - A **'looked after child'** (LAC) means any 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 at the time of making the application to the school.
   - A **'previously looked after child'** (PLAC) is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order including those Catholic children, who appear to the Governing Board, to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or in the case of previously looked after Catholic children, ceased to be because they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order.
   - Applications in this category may need to be supported by documentary evidence confirming the child's status, such as a signed letter from the child's social worker or former social worker confirming their current or previous status, an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. In the case of children adopted from state care outside England (as defined above), evidence of having been in state care outside England and of being adopted will be required. Ideally, this should be received by the application deadline in the normal admission round. When assessing the evidence provided, the DfE and Diocesan guidance will be followed.
   - Where the Virtual School Head has already verified the child's status, the parent should let the Local Authority/School know, as there should be no need for further evidence to be provided in this case.
   - A copy of the child's baptism certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church will be required. A Certificate of Practice will also be required.
   - In the cases of a LAC or a PLAC in the care of a Catholic parent, a copy of the parent's baptism certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church will be required.

2. **Baptised Catholic siblings of children currently on the school roll at the time of admission.**
   - **'Catholic'** means a member of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.
   - A **'sibling'** means children who live as brother and sister including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. For avoidance of doubt, a child of a friend or extended family member (e.g. cousin) will not be a 'sibling' for this purpose, even if they live at the same address as the applicant child.
   - A copy of the child's baptism certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church will be required. A Certificate of Practice will also be required.

3. **Baptised Catholic children, in possession of a Certificate of Practice.**
   - **'Catholic'** means a member of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.
   - A copy of the child's baptism certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church will be required.
4. **Baptised Catholic children. A baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church.**
   - **'Catholic'** means a member of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.
   - A copy of the child's baptism certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church will be required. A Supplementary Form will be required.

5. Other Looked after Children and all previously looked after children who have been adopted.

- A **'looked after child'** (LAC) means any 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 at the time of making the application to the school.
- A **'previously looked after child'** (PLAC) is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order including those children, who appear to the Governing Body, to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or in the case of previously looked after children, ceased to be because they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order.
- Applications in this category may need to be supported by documentary evidence confirming the child's status, such as a signed letter from the child's social worker or former social worker confirming their current or previous status, an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. In the case of children adopted from state care outside England (as defined above), evidence of having been in state care outside England and of being adopted will be required. Ideally, this should be received by the application deadline in the normal admission round. When assessing the evidence provided, the DfE's guidance will be followed.
- Where the Virtual School Head has already verified the child's status, parents should let the Local Authority/School know, as there should be no need for further evidence to be provided in this case.

6. Children enrolled in the catechumenate.

- **'Enrolled in the Catechumenate'** refers to a person who is preparing to become a Catholic usually by way of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of catechetical age. Younger children may be initiated through an adapted version sometimes referred to as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC)
- Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate will be required.

7. Children who are members of Eastern Catholic Churches.

- **Eastern Catholic (or Oriental Rite) Churches in union with Rome**. The Holy See's Annuario Pontificio gives the following list of Eastern Catholic Churches.
    1. Alexandrian liturgical tradition:
        1. Coptic Catholic Church (patriarchate):
        2. Eritrean Catholic Church (metropolia):
        3. Ethiopian Catholic Church (metropolia):
    2. West Syrian, including Malankara, liturgical tradition (which is part of Antiochene Rite):
        1. Maronite Church (patriarchate):
        2. Syriac Catholic Church (patriarchate):
        3. Syro-Malankara Catholic Church (major archepiscopate):
    3. Armenian liturgical tradition:
        1. Armenian Catholic Church (patriarchate):
    4. Chaldean or East Syrian liturgical tradition:
        1. Chaldean Catholic Church
        2. Syro-Malabar Catholic Church (Major Archepiscopate):
    5. Constantinopolitan (Byzantine) liturgical tradition:
        1. Albanian Catholic Church (apostolic administration):
        2. Belarusian Catholic Church (no established hierarchy at present):
        3. Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church (apostolic exarchate):
        4. Byzantine Church of Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (an eparchy and an apostolic exarchate):
        5. Greek Byzantine Catholic Church (two apostolic exarchates):
        6. Hungarian Greek Catholic Church (an eparchy and an apostolic exarchate):

7. Italo-Albanian Catholic Church (two eparchies and a territorial abbacy):
8. Macedonian Catholic Church (an apostolic exarchate):
9. Melkite Greek Catholic Church (patriarchate):
10. Romanian Church United with Rome (major archiepiscopate):
11. Russian Catholic Church (two apostolic exarchates, at present with no published hierarchs):
12. Ruthenian Catholic Church (a sui juris metropolia, an eparchy & an apostolic exarchate):
13. Slovak Catholic Church (metropolia and an eparchy):
14. Ukrainian Catholic Church (major archiepiscopate):

- A copy of the child's baptism certificate will be required.

8. Children who are members of other faiths, Churches and denominations.

- **'Other Christian denominations'** means: children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An ecclesial community which on principle has no creedal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above.
- All members of **Churches Together in England** and of CYTÛN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local Churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis. A full up to date list of Churches that are members of Churches Together in England (CTE) can be accessed from the CTE website - http://cte.org.uk/
- **'Membership'** means being a member of a group.
- A copy of the child's baptism certificate (or Dedication) will be required.
- **'Children of other religions'** means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 8 above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:
  a. A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
  b. A religion that does not involve belief in a God.

  Case law has identified certain characteristics that describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a Supreme Being and an expression of belief in that Supreme Being through worship.
- **'Membership'** means being a member of a group.
- A letter from the minister or faith leader confirming membership will be required.

9. Any other children.

- This category will include all children who do not fall into any of the categories above.

Admissions procedure

Applicants will need to complete the Local Authority's online Reception Common Application Form (RCAF). This can be found at https://kent.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/Synergy/Parents/default.aspx. If parents are unable to apply online, email kentonlineadmissions@kent.gov.uk for an alternative method. The Common Application Form (CAF) required by the Local Authority and the Certificate of Practice should be completed and received at the school not later than the national closing date for primary schools. The Certificate of Practice is not mandatory and is only required for those applying under Criteria 2 and 3.

Children with an Educational 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 EHC plans by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure is set out in the SEND code of practice. All children whose EHC Plan names the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated. As a result of this, the published admission number will be reduced accordingly.

Tie breaker

Where there are more applications than places remaining in any of the above categories, the order in which places will be allocated will be determined by the following:

i. Social/Medical:

Medical, health, social and special access reasons will be applied in accordance with the school's legal obligations, in particular those under the Equality Act 2010. Priority will be given to those children whose mental or physical impairment means they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Equally, this priority will apply to children where a parent's physical or mental health or social needs means that they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Such claims will need to be supported by written evidence from a suitably qualified medical or other practitioner who can demonstrate a special connection between these needs and the particular school.

ii. For category 6,7, 8 and 9

Siblings of children in these categories currently on the school roll at the time of admission.

iii. Nearness of children's homes to school

Evidence of residence may be required. We use the distance between the child's permanent home address (defined in KCC's annual admissions prospectus) and the school, measured in a straight line using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) address point. Distances are measured from a point defined as within the child's home to a point defined as within the school as specified by NLPG. The same address point on the school site is used for everybody. When we apply the distance criterion for the school, these straight-line measurements are used to determine how close each applicant's address is to the school. Where applications are made from properties or abodes that are not registered to the NLPG, including new build properties, KCC may be required to use planning sites or other relevant co-ordinates. In exceptional circumstances where alternative co-ordinates are not available, measurements will be determined by a Senior Admissions Officer and confirmed by Head of Service.

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

iv. Multiple Births

If within the school's published admission number a place has been offered to a child of multiple births (twins, triplets etc.), places will be offered to all the children of that birth even if doing so takes the school above its published admission number.

The tiebreaker is independently supervised.

The School office will also require sight of the following original documents in addition to the certificate of practice:

- Baptism certificate [Admissions criteria 1,2,3,4, 7, 8];
- Evidence of dedication if a baptism certificate is not available [Admissions criteria 8];
- Letter from minister or faith leader confirming membership [Admissions Criteria 8];
- Any supporting medical evidence, where appropriate.

Offers of places will be sent to parents on the common offer date as notified by the Local Authority.
When a parent accepts their child's place, the school will require sight of the following documents:

- 2 household bills as proof of residence;
- 1 document confirming your child's address;
- 1 document confirming your child's date of birth.

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. 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.

Deferred Entry and Part-Time Attendance in Reception Year

All children are entitled to a full-time place in Reception Year in the September following their fourth birthday. Children do not, however, reach compulsory school age (CSA) until one of three prescribed dates following their fifth birthday as follows:

Born on or between:	Prescribed date the child reaches CSA:	Must start school full time no later than:
1 September and 31 December	31 December	1st January
1 January and 31 March	31 March	1st April (usually following the Easter Holidays)
1 April and 31 August (summer born children)	31 August (a whole school year later)	1st September (starting from Year 1 – see outside of normal age group)

Parents have a right to decide that their child will not start school until they reach CSA, which is known as 'deferred entry' (or 'delayed entry' in the case of 'summer born children' - see below).

Where parents want to defer their child's entry and/or choose for them to attend school part-time, they should apply for a place in the normal way. Once they have accepted the offer of a place they must then notify the School of their decision, preferably in writing.

Where parents choose to defer entry until later in the school year, the School will hold their place in Reception Year for them for a maximum of two terms (i.e. until the Easter end of term holiday). Places cannot be deferred or retained beyond this point and will be offered to another child.

Parents also have a right to decide that their child will attend school part-time until they reach CSA. However, it is for the school to determine the part-time hours.

Admission of children outside of the normal age group

Parents seeking a place for their child outside of their normal age group, because their child may be a summer born child or have experienced ill health may prefer not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday. They can request that they are admitted out of their normal age group.

Requests for admission outside of the normal age group should be made in writing to the Headteacher as early as possible in the admissions round associated with that child's date of birth to allow the Governing Board sufficient time to make a decision before the closing date.

Parents are required to complete an application for the normal point of entry at the same time, in case their request is declined. If the school agrees to accept a deferred application for entry into Reception Year the following year, the application for the normal point of entry will be cancelled and the place will be offered to a different child.

Parents are not expected to provide evidence to support their request to defer their application, however, where provided; it must be specific to the child in question. This might include medical or Educational Psychologist reports. There is no legal requirement for this medical or educational evidence to be secured from an appropriate professional, however, failure to provide this may impede a school's ability to agree to deferral.

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 their decision and to which year group the child should be admitted, the governors will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

Deferred applications must be made via paper CAF to the LA, with written confirmation from the school attached. Although requests for admission outside the normal age group may be agreed in principle, it does not guarantee that a place will be offered the following year as deferred applications will be processed in the same way as all other applications for the cohort in the following admissions round. Offers will be made in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.

While 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.

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.

Late Applications

Any late applications will be considered by the Governors' Admissions Panel, 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.

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 for Reception Year will be maintained and will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above.

Where, in any year, the school receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate. This will be maintained by the school and it will be open to any parent to ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list following an unsuccessful application. Places from the waiting list will be offered in the priority set out above, not in the order of the date applications are made. The waiting list will be re-ranked each time a child is added or removed and before the offer of any place.

Parents of children already on the waiting list will be contacted every September to establish their wish to remain on the list. The school will request that updated sections of the Supplementary Information Form, Certificate of Practice and any other documentation relevant to the application be provided in order to assist with the ranking of the waiting list as places become available.

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 Protocols

The school works in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocol held by the Local Authority. Should a vulnerable child within the protocol require a place at the school, they will take precedent over any child on the waiting list.

In-Year Application Process

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plan names the school will be admitted.

To apply for an 'In-Year' place at Our Lady's, parents must complete an 'In-Year' application form, which can be found on the school website. The relevant sections of the Supplementary Information Form should also be completed by practicing Catholic applicants to enable the Governing Board to rank the application in the event of there being more than one application for a place.

The School office will also require sight of the following original documents in addition to the supplementary form and certificate of practice:

- Baptism certificate [Admissions criteria 1,2,3,4, 7, 8];
- Evidence of dedication if a baptism certificate is not available [Admissions criteria 8];
- Letter from minister or faith leader confirming membership [Admissions Criteria 8].

The governors will use the same criteria, which can be found in this policy, to rank the application.

It is hoped that parents will be notified in writing of the outcome of application within 10 school days of receipt of the application. In any event, parents will be notified of the outcome in writing within 15 school days of receipt of the application.

If there is a place at the school an offer will be made by the school on behalf of the Governing Board. Arrangements will be made for the child to be admitted and to start school as soon as possible.

In the event that a place cannot be offered, parents will be provided with the reasons why the admission of their child would prejudice the efficient education of others, and/or the efficient use of resources, so that they can properly consider whether to exercise their right to appeal. Parents will also be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent them from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

Review and determination of the School's admission arrangements

The term **'admission arrangements'** means *"The overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places including any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered"*. The admission arrangements therefore include not only this policy, but all other admission related documents and any other published information about the School's admission processes.

Under the Code, the Admission Authority for a school, which in this case is the Governing Body, must formally determine the admission arrangements for the next intake at that school **every year on or before 28 February**.

Where no changes (other than changing dates/deadlines) are proposed, there is no need to go to consultation. However, where changes are proposed (other than a proposed increase in PAN), the Governing Board must carry out a 6 week statutory consultation in accordance with the Code between 1 October and 31 January ahead of determination of the admission arrangements.

Where no changes have been proposed in the intervening period, the Governing Board must in any event consult on the admission arrangements every 7 years.

Once determined on or before 28 February, the School's admission arrangements for that intake must be published, and cannot be varied except in very limited circumstances to correct a mistake or give effect to a decision of a Schools Adjudicator.

Consultation of these admission arrangements took place in December 2023.