



St Mary's Catholic High School Policy

Admissions

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ST MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Admissions Policy and Procedures 2024-2025



St Mary's Catholic High School (SMCH) is a voluntary aided school in the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is in the trusteeship of the Archdiocese. 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. However, the Governing Body welcomes all applications, particularly from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

Having consulted with the Diocese, Local Authority and other admission authorities, the Governors intend to admit into Year 7, in September 2023, up to 120 pupils without reference to ability or aptitude.

After the admission of students with an Education, Health and Care Plan and where the number of applications exceeds 120, the Governors will offer places using the following criteria in the order stated:

1. Looked after Catholic children or looked after children in the care of Catholic families, looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order and 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. Evidence of Baptism will be required with completed SIF form.
3. Looked after children, looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order and 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.
4. Children enrolled in the catechumenate. Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate will be required.
5. Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
6. Children of families who are committed 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 (see explanatory note A).

7. Children of other faiths. Evidence of religious commitment provided by a priest, minister or religious leader of a designated place of worship will be required.
8. 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. The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith is demonstrated by the level of the child's Mass attendance on Sundays. Applications will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary Form; firstly those who attend Mass weekly, then at least once a month, less than once a month. This evidence must be provided by the parents/carers and be endorsed by a priest at the church(es) where the child normally worships (see explanatory note D)
2. A brother or sister on the school roll at the time of admission. Evidence of the relationship may be required (see explanatory note B).
3. Social and medical needs which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong and relevant evidence must be provided by an appropriate professional authority (e.g. qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, social worker or priest).
4. Distance from home to school. Evidence of residence may be required (see explanatory note C).

Explanation Notes

Catholics include members of the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome. Reference to other Christian denominations refers to denominations that are full members of Churches Together in England.

A. *Families are defined as being the child's natural or adoptive parents or officially designated carers. It would not include grandparents or other relatives unless they are officially designated carers.*

Members of Churches Together in England: *Antiochan Orthodox Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Cherubim and Seraphim Council of Churches, Church of England, Church of God of Prophecy, Church of Scotland (in England), Congregational Federation, Coptic Orthodox Church, Council of African and Caribbean Churches UK, Council of Oriental Orthodox Christian Churches, Icthus Christian Fellowship, Independent Methodist Church, International Ministerial council of Great Britain, Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches, Lutheran Council of Great Britain, Mar Thoma Church, Methodist Church, Moravian Church, New Testament Assembly, New Testament Church of God, Oecumenical Patriarchate, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Religious Society of Friends, Roman Catholic Church, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate and Occumenical Patriarchate), Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist Church (NOT a full member – only an observer), Transatlantic Pacific Alliance of Churches, United Reformed Church and Wesleyan Holiness Church.*

- B. *“Brother and sister”, means children who live as brothers and sisters, including natural siblings, adopted siblings, stepbrothers and sisters and foster brothers and sisters. It would not include other relatives e.g. cousins.*
- C. *The distance will be measured in a straight line from the centre of the child’s main home address (or designated centre in the case of shared properties) to the nominated entrance of the school using a computerised measuring system (GIS) and geographical reference points as provided by the national Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). Those living closer to the school will receive higher priority. Where the last remaining place is to be allocated and two or more are deemed to live the same distance from the school the place will be decided by the drawing of lots. This will be independently verified.*
- D. *On the advice of the Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Southwark the governing body of St Mary’s Catholic High School has agreed the following statement in order to clarify how its faith-based oversubscription criteria will be interpreted whilst churches are closed or attendance at church is not possible due to COVID19. This statement has been shared widely with parishes in order to ensure that determinations made by parish priests concerning regular practice of the faith are being made on a consistent basis.*

As of the 5 June 2022, Pentecost, the Bishop of England and Wales reinstated the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Parents applying for a place at St. Mary’s High School, under a faith based criteria will need to complete a Supplementary Information Form. 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 18 March 2022. These arrangements apply to admissions round for 2023 and subsequent rounds.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Applicants may choose to seek a place outside their child’s chronological (correct) year group. Decisions on whether to offer a place outside of a child’s chronological year group will be made by the Governors on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parents’ views; views of the Headteacher, 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. Applicants should state clearly why they feel admission to a different year group is in the child’s best interest and provide what evidence they have to support this.

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. Even if the Governors agree to the parent/carer’s request to admit the child outside of their normal age group, there can be no guarantee of a school place being available at the school. This will be dependent on whether the child fulfils the admissions criteria and the number of applicants applying. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a

place at the 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.

Admissions procedure

In addition to the Common Application Form (CAF) supplied by the Local Authority or completed on-line, the Supplementary Information Form (available from the school and from the Local Authority), should be completed and sent to the Admissions Secretary at the school not later than the National Closing Date 31 October 2023. This should be done even if the CAF is completed online. If the Supplementary Information Form is not completed, the Governing Body of the school may only be able to consider the application after all applicants who have completed a Supplementary Information Form.

Complete and sign Part 1 of the Supplementary Information Form (you are advised to keep a copy) and in the case of:

- **A Catholic child** hand it to your parish priest/ the parish priest at the church which you normally worship - ask them to add their reference at Part 2 and return it to the school; **or**
- **A non-Catholic child** hand it to your minister or equivalent - ask them to add their reference at Part 3 and return it to the school.

The completed form must be returned to the Admissions Secretary at SMCH no later than the 31 October 2023.

Offers of places will be sent to parents by their home local authority on the common offer date 1 March 2024.

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 school address. Parents/carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

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 will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above and will remain open until the end of the autumn term of the admission year or until PAN is reached. 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.

Late Applications

Any late applications will be considered by the Governors' Admissions 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 whom a place is sought at the normal age of transfer to secondary education (Year 7), applies also to succeeding years, subject to availability of places. Applications for this phase should be made in the first instance to the child's home local authority and contact made directly with the school to ascertain if there are places available.

Admissions Secretary
St Mary's Catholic High School
Woburn Road
Croydon CR9 2EE

March 2023