

Admissions policy

St. Mary's CofE Primary School



Reviewed by the Local Governing Body: Autumn 2025

To be reviewed: Annually

Next review: Autumn 2026

School Mission and Vision

Our mission statement is based upon John 15 vs 12: 'Love each other as I have loved you.'

St Mary's Church of England Primary School Mission Statement:

Our vision is for St Mary's to be a place of transforming growth, where Christian education inspires children and adults for achievement in the whole of life.

Our vision means that by the time our children leave at eleven, they will be confident, independent learners, with enquiring minds, have a lifelong love of learning and a thoughtful and considerate approach to life.

Our school policies have all been carefully thought out to reflect our mission and vision.

Our values are: Wisdom, Forgiveness, Caring, Respect, Faith, Truth, Equality

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at the school
- Set out the school's arrangements for allocating places to the pupils who apply
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- School Admissions Code 2021
- School Admission Appeals Code

As an academy, the school is required by its funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at the school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

Looked after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

- **Actively Involved** is defined, in accordance with national Church of England guidance as being 'at the heart of the church'. This means attending Sunday services at least twice a month or/and involved in weekday worship, with the exception of holidays and illness,
- A **Christian Church** is defined as one which is part of a church in membership of, or holding observer status of, 'Churches Together in England' and/or has church membership of the 'Evangelical Alliance' and/or is a member of Affinity (formerly the British Evangelical Council).
- **Neighbouring Parishes:** St Peter-In-The-Forest, St John, St Michael and All Angels, St Saviour, St Barnabas with St James the Greater, St Andrew (Higham Hill), Emmanuel (Leyton), All Saints (Leyton), St Catherine and St Paul (Leyton) known as 'Cornerstone'. All churches mentioned are those in Walthamstow, unless stated differently.
- A **sibling** is defined as a child living at the same address who is also: a full brother or sister related by blood or adoption, or half brother or sister related by blood or adoption, or step-sibling (for children in foster care please see Note 1 above).
- The **Parish of Walthamstow** refers to the boundaries of the Church of England ecclesiastical parish, as defined by the Diocese of Chelmsford. A map outlining the boundaries may be obtained from the school office.

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

4. How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

St Mary's CofE Primary School provides high quality education for the whole community, in addition to church-goers. As well as Christian pupils, we serve those families with other faiths or no faith – all of whom are welcomed equally. While each year varies, approximately 50% of places go to pupils applying via Church criteria.

A supplementary information form can be downloaded from our website or be provided by the school office. Prospective parents must complete this form and hand it into the school office as well as completing the form for the Local authority.

Before completing the form, parents/carers are advised to read carefully the following notes.

St. Mary's School aims to give a thorough academic education in the context of the Christian Faith while welcoming and celebrating other faiths. Education within a Voluntary Aided Anglican School is a partnership

between Church, School and Home and, as such, parents/carers are asked to set an example to their children by supporting the Parish and the school where possible to reflect the Christian Ethos and Values – which are applicable across other faiths and for those with no faith.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority.

5. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' 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
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The headteacher's views

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

6. Allocation of places

6.1 Admission number

The school has an agreed admission number of 90 pupils for entry in Reception

6.2 Oversubscription criteria

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plans name the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that the school receives more applications than the number of places it has available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order until all places are filled.

- 1) Children in Public Care who are Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children (See note
- 2) Children recorded in the Child Protection Register or who are 'at risk' as advised by the Local Authority's Child Protection Officer.
- 3) Children who are siblings will be accepted if their sibling is on roll at the School at the time of admission.
- 4) Children of parents who are active members of the Churches of St. Mary's, St. Stephen, St. Luke or St. Gabriel, Walthamstow (known as "The Parish of Walthamstow"), or who are resident in the Parish of Walthamstow and are actively involved in the work and worship of other Christian Churches within that ecclesiastical Parish boundary. (see Note 2 and 3)

5) Children of parents who are staff of The C of E Federated Schools of St Mary's & St Saviour's in the following circumstances:

a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admissions to the school is made, and/or

b) the member of staff is/has recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage

6) Children of parents and carers resident in the Parish of Walthamstow, or within the neighbouring parishes, who are actively involved in the work and worship of other Christian Churches within those Parishes (see note 2).

7) Children of Parents resident in the Parish of Walthamstow who wish to send their children to a school with a Christian ethos.

8) Children of Parents resident outside of the Parish of Walthamstow who wish to send their children to a school with a Christian ethos (see note 5).

Notes

Note 1. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into 4 main groups: (i) children who are accompanied under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20) (ii) children who are subject to a care order (section 21) or interim care order (section 38) (iii) children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection (section 44 and 46) (iv) children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21). The term 'looked after children' therefore includes: children in children's homes, foster care, unaccompanied minors, and other emergency provisions. For 'looked after children', late applications or mid-term transfer requests will receive the highest priority, second only to a Statement of Educational Need for vacant places at St. Mary's. Where the request is for a place where a sibling attends, including the foster carer's own children and other unrelated children resident in the same foster home, the School will consider the request even in cases where admission would result in the School exceeding the published admissions limit, in order to accommodate the child.

Note 2. In categories 3 and 6 "active members" means that at least one parent attends the Church for public worship a minimum of twice a month. A Supplementary Information Form (SIF) must be submitted directly to the school, in addition to the Local Authority process. This is available via the school office or the school website.

Note 3. In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church [or, in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship] has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these [admissions] arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church [or in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship] or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

Note 4. Under the coordinated admissions scheme, the admissions committee requires THREE official documents showing proof of parents' or guardians' residence at the address shown on the application form. These must be:

1. the most recent Council Tax bill or tenancy agreement and

2. your most recent Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit letter showing your child's name and your address and

3. the most recent utility bill for the address showing your name (this must be one for Gas, electricity or Water, no other bill will be acceptable).

Note 5. Where the offer of places to all applicants in any sub category listed above would lead to over subscription, the places will be offered to those living closest to the school. Distance is measured in a straight line from the school's main entrance to the home's front door and sourced from the Local Authority. For

admission purposes, the home address is where the child usually lives with their parent or carer. You must not give the address of a childminder or relative. When we make an offer, we assume your address will be the same in the following September but you must use your current address. If you move after the deadline in January 2020, you must tell the school and the Local Authority of your new address. In the case of a child whose parents do not live together but have joint custody, the "home" address will be considered the one where child benefit is registered to.

6.3 Tie break

If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, a tiebreak will be used by applying the next rule to those children. Where there is a need for a tie-breaker where two different addresses measure the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random. Where there is a tie breaker between siblings within the same family living at the same address, the place will be offered to the first born.

6.4 Challenging behaviour

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these pupils to the Fair Access Protocol. We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked after children, previously looked after children and children with EHC plans listing the school.

6.5 Fair Access Protocol

We participate in Waltham Forests Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

7. In-year admissions

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 plans name the school will be admitted.

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available, it will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.2 of this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to the following

address: st-marys-school@genesistrust.net

Parents will be notified of the outcome of your in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

8. Appeals

St Mary's is a popular School and parents will appreciate that, owing to over-subscription, it may at times not be possible to offer a place to everyone who applies. The 1980 Education Act gives parents the right to appeal against decisions of the Governors regarding admissions. Parents wishing to do so should notify both of the following:

A) The Education Appeals Committee, Democratic

Services, Town Hall, Forest Road,

Walthamstow, LONDON E17 4JF.

B) Chair of Governors,

St Saviour's C of E Primary School, Verulam Avenue,

Walthamstow, LONDON E17 8ER.

You can find details of the school's appeals timetable on the following webpage

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Local Governing body every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.