



## **ST. MARK'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL – ADMISSIONS POLICY** **2024 - 2025 ENTRY**

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate 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 are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

The Governing Body will always accord the highest priority to Catholic applicants. In recent years the school has been over subscribed with applications from practising Catholic families.

'Catholic' means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally be evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism in a Catholic church or a Certificate of Reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy, it 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 the 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.

Evidence of Catholic practice will be sought from the Certificate of Catholic Practice. This certificate is issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of the child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests <http://redow.org.uk/education/governors/admissions>. This certificate can be obtained from the priest at the parish where the family normally worships or from the diocesan website (follow: schools, for parents.)

The published admission number for the school is 186 pupils per year. Any admissions in excess of this limit will cause overcrowding and be detrimental to the quality of education provided.

Where there are more than 186 applications, they will be treated as follows:

## Over Subscription Criteria

Category One: Catholic “looked after”<sup>1</sup> children and Catholic children who have been adopted<sup>2</sup> or made subject to child arrangement orders<sup>3</sup> or special guardianship orders<sup>4</sup>. This includes internationally adopted previously looked After Children (IAPLAC).

Category Two: Baptised, Catholic applicants with a Certificate of Catholic Practice.

Category Three: Baptised, Catholic applicants without a Certificate of Catholic practice.

Category Four: Other looked after children and children who have been adopted (or made subject to residence orders or special guardianship orders). This includes internationally adopted previously looked After Children (IAPLAC).

Category Five: Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a Minister of religion. This 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.

Category Six: Any other applicants.

Applicants in each category will be placed into groups, depending on the Deanery in which they reside. A proportion of the places will be offered in each Deanery as follows:

Hounslow Deanery	65%
Hillingdon Deanery	10%
Upper Thames Deanery	15%
Ealing Deanery	10%

In the event of oversubscription in each Category, the following criteria will be used to place applicants in order of priority.

- (a) Children with a brother or sister (including step/half siblings) who will be attending the school (including 6<sup>th</sup> Form) at the time of admission.

- (b) Children with a parent employed by the School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made.
- (c) Distance tie-break  
St. Mark's Catholic School use the LA's measuring system. The route from home to school has been measured using the "shortest designated route"

In order to be fair to all applicants, Hounslow has a standard method of measuring the home to school distance. For all schools where the Local Authority (LA) is the Admissions Authority (AA) for the school and any schools where the Admissions Authority (the Governing Body or Academy Trust) has a policy to use the LA's measuring system, the walking route is measured by using a geographical information system.

It starts from a "seed point" which is a point of measurement in the footprint of the home address. The seed point is provided by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) from information compiled by the Local Authority or from the National Land Property Gazetteer (NLPG) for addresses outside our borough.

From the seed point, the route firstly connects to the nearest node of the digitised network. It will always measure using the centre of the road nearest to this point even if your home address is on the corner of two roads. The positioning of front doors, driveways and back gates are not relevant to the route or the measurement and are not programmed to be used by the measuring system. The digitised network is constructed from road data supplied by Ordnance Survey called OS Mastermap Highways Network. OS Mastermap Highways Network has been accurately digitised to measure along the centre of the road. The LA has no control over how OS digitise the road and footpath network.

The network starts from the seed point in the property provided as the child's address and continues by the walking route to the nearest of the school gates which is used by pupils to enter the school grounds. Where there are multiple applications with equal distances, the LA's database will randomly order these.

The walking route is established using an algorithm within the software used by the LA. This software is called Mapx and is produced by MapInfo. This programme integrates with the LA's database (Synergy/School Admissions Management) which is supplied by Servelec Education Ltd ([www.servelec.co.uk](http://www.servelec.co.uk)). Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the Local Authority cannot take a measurement from another measuring system

Where it is possible to offer places to all Category One and Two applicants in a Deanery, the remaining places will be offered to Category Two applicants from the remaining Deaneries in rotation so as to preserve the relative proportions identified above.

If any places are still available after all Category One and Two applicants have been offered places, Category Three to Six applicants will be allocated places using the same Deanery quotas and criteria as applied to applicants in Category One and Two.

If twins or triplets are competing for one or two remaining places, Governors have agreed to admit both/all applicants and exceed the Published Admissions Number.

## **Tie breaker**

If there is one place available and two or more children next in order of priority or next on the waiting list meet the appropriate criterion equally, the place will be allocated using the distance criterion. If the distances are equal, the LA's database will randomly order these.

## **Students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)**

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

## **Children educated out of chronological age group**

Application may be made for a child to be educated out of his/her age group i.e. a 12 year old being admitted to Year 7, a 17 year old to Year 12 or any child admitted in-year to the year below or above their chronological age group. The applicant should write to the Chair of Governors at the time of application requesting that the child be admitted out of his/her chronological age group. If the request is granted the oversubscription criteria will be applied and no priority will be given for being out of age group.

## **Application Procedure**

To apply for a place at St. Mark's School you should complete and return two separate forms. The closing date is October 31<sup>st</sup> 2023. In order to make an application you should complete the school's Supplementary Information Form (SIF), attached to this policy and return it to the Governors' Admissions Panel via the school office, together with all other relevant paperwork required for your application. Whilst the SIF is not compulsory, it enables governors to rank candidates according to the published oversubscription criteria. Without the information on the SIF candidates will not be given any priority according to the religious criteria and are unlikely to obtain a place. You must also complete a Common Application Form from your Local Authority and return it to them as per their instructions.

Applications received after the closing date will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed. Last year the school was heavily oversubscribed and we were unable to offer places to all applicants in Category Two. The Governing Body were not able to offer any places to applicants in Categories Three to Six.

Notification letters will be sent out by the Local Authorities on behalf of the Governors on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

## **Right of Appeal**

If an applicant is not offered a place at St. Mark's, there is a right of appeal to an Independent Appeals Committee set up in accordance with the provisions of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. Details of the procedure can be obtained from the Clerk to the Governors at the School.

## **Waiting List**

Children's names are kept on a waiting list at the request of the parents throughout the following Academic Year. Places on the waiting list will be prioritised according to the admissions policy above. The allocation of any places from the waiting list will maintain the balance between the four Deaneries, as identified above.

The waiting list will include those who have moved to the area and were unable to make an 'on time' application. Waiting lists are held in the order of oversubscription criteria, **not** in order of when an application is received. This means a child's position **can move down as well as up** following the addition of any applications that may have a higher priority.

The waiting list will be in operation until the **31 August 2024**. St Mark's will contact parents/carers in August 2024 to advise that they will need to complete an in-year application to continue on the waiting list from **1 September 2024**.

## **Sixth Form**

An offer of a place in the Sixth Form is conditional on the following criteria being met:

The school can provide a course suited to the applicant's age, ability, aptitude and educational needs.

Applicants will be required to have achieved at least 5 GCSE passes at level 5 or above including English and Mathematics; and the appropriate entry criteria for each subject outlined in the Sixth Form Prospectus.

St. Mark's is able to admit up to 150 students to the Sixth Form. In addition to the places reserved for the School's own students the Governors propose to admit a minimum of 15 external students into the Sixth Form, subject to the fulfilment of course requirements. Where there are more applicants who meet the minimum academic criteria than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority after students already attending St. Mark's Catholic School:-

1. Catholic 'looked after' children and Catholic children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders, immediately after having been looked after. This includes internationally adopted previously looked After Children (IAPLAC).
2. Other Baptised Catholic students.
3. Other 'looked after' children and children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders, immediately after having been looked after. This includes internationally adopted previously looked After Children (IAPLAC).
4. Other students.

### **Tie Break for external applications to the Sixth Form**

Where the offer of places in the Sixth Form to external applicants would lead to oversubscription in any category, the places up to the admission number will be offered to those living nearest to the School using a standardised measuring system.

## **In-Year Admissions**

In-Year admissions are made to the Local Authority.

Applications for In-Year admissions are dealt with in the same way as those made during the normal admissions round. 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 a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained by the governing body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the 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 re-rank the list and the L.A. will send an offer letter.

## **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 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.

### **Definitions**

1. **‘Looked after child’** has the same meaning as in S.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). This includes internationally adopted previously looked after children (IAPLAC)
2. **‘Adopted’** means any child who ceased to be looked after because they were adopted and whose parents can give proof of this status.
3. **‘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.
4. **‘Special Guardianship Order’** A special guardianship order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.14A which defines it as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian(s).
5. **‘Parent’** means the adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child.
6. **‘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.



## **Home Address**

The address used in an application must be that where an adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child live, as described in the admissions policy. However, we may not use this if we consider it to be an address of convenience.

All school admission applications are subject to address checks to ensure school places are allocated fairly and in accordance with published admission arrangements. These checks may be made using council systems, agencies, fraud departments, other education settings, or other resources available to us. Applicants may also be asked to provide additional evidence to support their application.

We will not accept possible future addresses as a basis for allocating school places. If you move after submitting your application, you must inform the School Admissions Team within two weeks of your move so that your application is considered using the correct address for school admission purposes.

It is for the home Local Authority to determine if, on the balance of probability, the address given on an application is a child's normal place of residence or is considered to be an address of convenience. Some examples of circumstances which may be considered an address of convenience are:

- using the address of a relative, friend, childminder or business
- using the address of a parent with whom the child spends the minority of the week \* see shared or joint residence
- purchasing a new property or renting accommodation and using this address in order to gain a school place, whilst continuing to own or rent an alternative property.
- owning a property which is or has previously been used as your home address and applying from another address in order to gain a school place, but still retaining ownership of the initial property
- use of a local address whilst the child lives overseas \* see applications from abroad

In making a decision, the following factors will be taken into account alongside any evidence seen during the address checking process:

- the preference schools and if they are oversubscribed
- if the address being used gains an advantage in the admissions process
- the distance of the properties to the preference schools
- the length of time the arrangement has been in place
- current education providers and services working with the family
- any state benefits in payment

If an address of convenience is found to have been used, the home Local Authority will determine the address to be used based on the evidence found in their investigations. Where this address or preference schools fall within another Local Authority, they may be consulted in the decision.

If a fraudulent address or address of convenience is found to have been used after the allocation of places, any offer made will also be withdrawn, and this may be the case even if your child has started at the school.

If you are not registered to pay council tax, either because you are not liable or have recently moved, you will be asked to provide:

- A mortgage statement/tenancy agreement

**and two of the following:**

- Recent utility bill – gas/electricity/water/ TV licence
- Credit card statement
- Driving licence
- Entitlement to benefits letter e.g. Child Benefit (pages 1&2)/Child tax credit/Housing benefit/Income support/ Jobseekers allowance
- Inland Revenue document
- Pay slip/P45/P60 (not more than 1 of these)
- Car/House Insurance certificate
- NHS medical card/GP registration
- Electoral register
- A letter confirming placement at your address from Social Services/National Asylum Support Service/United Kingdom Border Agency/Housing Department.

Any proof of address provided must show **the full name and match the details provided at the time of application.**

Any supporting information not in English language must be accompanied by a certified translation. If we are not satisfied with the documentation provided, we reserve the right to ask for additional evidence of the address used for your application.

### **Shared or joint residency**

The Local Authority will only accept one application per child and only one offer of a school place will be made. We ask that parents work together to agree on the address to be used and the school preferences to be applied for. Any disagreements should be resolved before submitting an application. If parents are unable to reach an amicable agreement, then both parents should seek their own legal advice or recourse through the Family Courts. The Local Authority will not mediate between parents.

Where a child lives with parents with shared parental responsibility, each for part of a week, the address where the child lives is determined using a joint declaration from the parents stating the pattern of residence. The declaration (including the addresses of both parents) must be submitted at the time of making the original application.

If a child's residence is split equally between both parents, then parents will be asked to determine which residential address should be used for the purpose of admission to school. If no joint declaration is received and the residence is split equally by the closing date for applications, Hounslow will consider the address of the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit or if Child



Benefit is not being received, the address at which the child is registered with a doctor (GP.) You must send us a copy of your latest benefit entitlement notice or your child's medical card. We may also ask for further evidence if required.

If the residence is not split equally between both parents, then the address used will be the address where the child spends the majority of the school week. It is for the home Local Authority to determine the address to be used for the allocation of a school place.

### **Applications from abroad**

This policy does not apply to Crown Servants, who are dealt with under the statutory provisions of the School Admissions Code \* see Members of UK Armed Forces and Crown Servants.

We will accept applications with an overseas address once we are satisfied there is evidence of a link to an address in the London Borough of Hounslow. Such a link should satisfy the terms under the child's home address, and must not be the address of a friend, relative or other address of convenience unless there is evidence it will be a permanent arrangement. It is for the Local Authority to determine whether there is a link to an address.

Where we are satisfied that there is evidence of a link to an address in the London Borough of Hounslow, we will also need to be satisfied that the child will be resident at the address used on the application on or before the date of admission (1 September). Evidence must be submitted to verify this. Evidence might include

- Booked flights
- End of lease /notice to tenants in property
- Start of employment contract in London/SE area
- End of employment contract abroad

Whilst your child is resident abroad, the link address will not be used for allocation of a school place. This will be updated once your child returns to the UK. If you do not return to the linked address by 1 September, Hounslow will withdraw the application and any offer made.

Parents should ensure that their child has a right of abode or the conditions of their visas otherwise permit them to access a state-funded school.