

POLICY FOR ADMISSIONS



ST FRANCIS RC PRIMARY

2024-2025

St Francis Catholic Primary School, SE15 1RQ

Vision and Mission Statement and Gospel Values

Our Vision

Providing every child with the tools to choose their path to success.

Our Mission

In St Francis children succeed because:

- ✓ We are an outward looking Catholic Primary school, which welcomes all children from the surrounding area. We work together to nurture our pupils, helping them to become resilient and inspired learners, who will become responsible global citizens of the future.
- ✓ We cultivate our pupils through our broad and diverse curriculum and loving Catholic Parish community
- ✓ We provide a welcoming, safe and supportive environment that helps children feel respected, confident and motivated to achieve their goals.
- ✓ We also foster a spiritual and moral view of life that provides children with a sense of self-worth and a strong Catholic ethos

Our Gospel Values

Love

Honesty

Courage

Tolerance

Justice

Jeremiah 29:11

“I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for”



St. Francis 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 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 and from those who have no faith who support the religious ethos of the school.

Having consulted with the Local Authority and other admission authorities, the Governors intend to admit into the reception class, in September 2024, up to 60 pupils without reference to ability or aptitude

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

The admission of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs or with an EHCP Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements and EHC plans by the pupil's home Local Authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with a statement or EHCP plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the criteria below.

Where the number of applications exceeds 60, 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. Catholic children, a baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church must accompany the supplementary information form.
3. Children enrolled in the catechumenate. Evidence of enrolment in the catechumenate will be required.
4. Looked after children or 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.
5. Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of baptism will be required.
6. Children of families who are members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. (See attached list). Evidence of baptism (or dedication) provided by a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
7. Children who are members of other faiths. Evidence of membership of the faith 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. For Category 2 above – The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by the level of the family's Mass attendance on Sundays over a period of 3 years. This evidence must be provided by the parents/carers and be endorsed by a priest at the church(es) where the family normally worship. Applications will be ranked in the order shown on the supplementary information form; firstly those who attend Mass weekly, then once or twice a

month etc. As of the 5th June 2022, Pentecost, the Bishops of England and Wales reinstated the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Parents applying for a place at St Francis R.C Primary 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 18th March 2020. These arrangements apply to the admissions round for 2023 and subsequent rounds.

2. A brother or sister on the school roll at the time of admission. Evidence of the relationship may be required.
3. Living in the parish of Our Lady of Sorrows.
4. Social, pastoral 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).
5. Proximity to the school of the child's home address, the distance measured in a straight line from the school entrance using a geographical computerised information system. Evidence of residence will be required. Where the last remaining place is to be allocated and two or more children are deemed to live at the same distance from the school the place will be decided by the drawing of lots.

Notes:

- a. Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and 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.
- b. A "brother or sister" means children who live as brother and sister including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. It would not include other relatives (eg cousins).
- c. Home refers to the permanent home address at which the child lives for the majority of his/her time and with the parent who is in receipt of child benefit.
- d. Looked after children are those in the care of a public authority and are in public care. Applications made under this criterion must be accompanied by details of circumstance and professionally supported evidence (eg from an appropriate social worker).

Admissions procedure

In addition to the Local Authority's on-line application at www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions a Supplementary Information Form which is available from the school and the Local Authority should be completed and returned to the school no later than the closing date as stated by Southwark. If a supplementary information form is not received by the school the Governing Body will not be able to apply their admission criteria and the application will be considered under the 'any other children' category. The school will retain one copy and give the parent a copy. You will be advised of the outcome of your application by a common offer date specified by the local Authority (April 2024) for applications received on time for Reception 2024).

Looked After Child:

"A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence orders in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians). See definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school if you wish to view further guidance.

Any references to previously looked after children in the School Admissions Code 2014 means such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders) immediately having been looked after.

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.

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.

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.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents who are seeking a place for their child outside of their normal age group, e.g: the child has experienced problems such as ill health or the parents of a summer born child preferring not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

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

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. 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.

Waiting Lists

Parents of Reception children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list. The Local Authority maintains the waiting list until 31st August. The school then maintain the waiting list for a minimum of one term. Parents are notified at the time of review and will be asked if their application is to remain on the list or to be removed. Putting 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. When a child is directed under the local authority's fair access protocol they will take precedence over those children already on the list.

Late Applications

Any late applications will be considered by the Governors' Admission 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 entry to primary education (Reception), applies also to succeeding years, subject to availability of places.

In-Year Admissions

Parents must complete an In-Year Form provided by the Local Authority which is obtainable from the school office. Applications for places outside the normal round of admissions (in year admissions) will be allocated in accordance with the school's published admission criteria and processed as per Southwark's agreed protocol.

Reviewed November 2020