



St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School

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ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023 -24

St. Vincent's is a voluntary aided Catholic Primary School with a Nursery class. Our Mission statement is 'Together through Christ we grow and learn' and this permeates all that we do.

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 be 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 Published Admission Number (PAN) for the reception class at St. Vincent's is thirty. The Governing Body has sole responsibility for admissions to this school and intends to admit thirty children in the school year which begins in September 2023. Applications are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 4th birthday between 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023.

Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic applicants in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Westminster. Applications will be ranked using the criteria listed below.

In this policy *applicant* refers to the person making an application on behalf of a child; *candidate* refers to the child on whose behalf the application is being made.

A place in the Nursery does not guarantee a place in the Reception Class.

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

Where there are more applications than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority: -

1. Catholic looked after children and Catholic children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who have a sibling at the school in the year of the admission. (A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister or stepbrother or sister whose main residence is the same address)
3. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who attended St. Vincent's Nursery Class.
4. Other Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice.
5. Other Baptised Catholic children.
6. Other 'looked after' children and other children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders, immediately after having been looked after.
7. Children of Catechumens and members of an Eastern Church whose application is supported by a certificate of baptism or by a certificate/letter of entry into the order of Catechumens from their minister of religion.
8. Christians whose application is supported either by a certificate of baptism or by a letter from their minister of religion confirming membership of the faith community.
9. Children of other faiths whose application is supported by a letter from their religious leader confirming membership of the faith community.
10. Any other applicants

TIE BREAK

Where the order of priority is otherwise equal, preference will be given to a child who lives the shortest distance from the school. Home address is defined as the address at which the child resides for 50% or more of the school week. Distances are measured by a straight line from the address seed point (determined by Ordnance Survey data) of the child's home address to the main school gate for pupils, as measured by the

Local Authority's computerised measuring system. Where it is necessary to differentiate between applicants living in flats using the same street entrance, priority will be given to the applicant(s) living closest to the ground floor and then by ascending flat number. These arrangements also apply equally to other ages than Reception. An admission panel composed of members of the governing body will make a final decision based on the criteria as set down in this policy on all admissions to the school.

EXCEPTIONAL NEED

The Governing Body will give top priority, after the appropriate category of looked-after children, to an application where compelling evidence is provided at the time of application, from an appropriate professional such as a doctor, priest or social worker, of an exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other need of the child, which can only be met at this school.

MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS

Where the final place is offered to a child who has a twin/ triplets etc applying for a place in the same school year, these siblings will be admitted.

RECEPTION YEAR DEFERRED ENTRY

Applicants may defer entry to school up until compulsory school age i.e. the first day of term following the child's fifth birthday. Application is made in the usual way and then the deferral is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term as applicable. Applicants may also request that their child attend part-time until compulsory school age is reached. Entry may not be deferred beyond compulsory school age year for which the application has been made, therefore applicants whose children have birthdays in the summer term may only defer until the 1st April 2024. If you wish to exercise this right please make an appointment to see the Headteacher after you have received your offer letter.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE 2023 - 2024

Applicants should apply in the first instance using the Common Applications Form (CAF) of their home borough and the St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School SIF Form. The child's Baptismal certificate and proof of date of birth must be presented at the time of application. We also require the Certificate of Catholic Practice, if applicable, and some proof of your address. You must complete a CAF. For the 2023/24 intake, the closing date for the applications is **15th January 2023**. Applications received after the closing date will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed.

All applicants will be notified on **16th April 2023** of the school's decision. If you do not complete both the CAF and the SIF and return them by the closing date, the governing body may be unable to consider your application against the oversubscription criteria and it is very unlikely that your child will get a place at the school. The Supplementary Information Form (SIF) is obtainable from the school or the school website (www.stvincentsprimary.org.uk) The Certificate of Catholic Practice can be obtained from the priest at the parish where the family normally worships and from the diocesan website. The CAF is also obtainable from the LA office of the home borough in which you are resident and should also be returned there.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE

Applicants applying under criteria 2 -4 should submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) by the closing date. This form is available from the parish where the family normally worships or from the diocesan website. It is the parent's duty to ensure that the CCP is submitted to the school in good time.

The local authority will write to you on behalf of the Governing Body with the outcome of your application on or about 19th April 2023. This information will also be available on line. Parents/carers should accept or decline the place as soon as possible.

PREVIOUS YEARS

St. Vincent's is over-subscribed and for the last sixteen years the governing body has been unable to offer places beyond category 4, in the first round of offers, although places can become available after this. As the school is usually oversubscribed by Catholic candidates it is very unlikely that candidates who are not Catholic will obtain a place.

CHANGE OF DETAILS

If any of the details on either of your forms changes between the date of application and the receipt of the letter of offer or refusal, you must inform the school and the local authority immediately. If misleading information is given on either of your forms, the governing body reserves the right to withdraw the place even if the child has started at the school.

APPEALS

You may appeal against the decision to refuse your child's admission to the school by writing to the Chair of Governors in the first instance. This must be within the set time limit. The deadline for submission of an appeal is Friday 19th May 2023. It is not possible to re-apply for a place within the same academic year unless there are new and exceptional circumstances and then only with the permission of the governing body. The appeal will be heard by an Independent Appeals Panel.

WAITING LIST

A waiting list is maintained in the order of the over-subscriptions criteria and not in order in which applications are received or added to the list. In the event of not being offered a place your child's application will be held on file for a maximum of one academic year unless the parent/carer indicates otherwise.

FAIR ACCESS

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.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

In year applications are made directly to the school. Where there is no waiting list the local authority will be notified and the child will be admitted. 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 with the following modifications: Catholic children without an offer of a school place elsewhere are given priority immediately after Catholic 'looked-after' children; similarly, other children without an offer of a school place are given priority immediately after other 'looked-after' children. 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 inform the parents whether an offer can be made or not.

PUPILS WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP)

The admission of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. (This used to be called a Statement of Special Educational Needs). Details of this separate procedure are set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. If your child has an EHCP you must contact your local authority SEN officer. Children with this school named in their EHCP will be admitted.

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE THEIR NORMAL AGE GROUP

Any application for a child to be educated out of his/her age group will be considered by governors on an individual basis and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents should write to the Chair of Governors during the autumn term in the (academic) year of application, giving reasons and providing compelling professional evidence. If governors give permission for the child to be educated out of his/her normal age group, parents must submit an application in the normal way. This application will be treated in the same way as all other applications and there is no guarantee that an offer will be made.

NOTES (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

'Adopted'. An adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted, having previously been in care and whose parent/ guardian can give proof of this.

'Catechumen' means a child or parent who is a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens for a child aged 7 or over. For a child under 7 years of age it will be the certificate of the parent.

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

'Certificate of Catholic Practice' means a certificate 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://rcdow.org.uk/education/governors/admissions/>

'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.

'Children of 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 credal 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 CYTŪN 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.

'Children of other faiths' means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- A religion which does not involve belief in God

'Christian' for the purposes of this policy, means a member of one of the Churches affiliated to 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland'.

'Eastern Christian Church' includes Orthodox Churches, and is evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.

'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).

'Parent' means the adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child.

'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.

'Sibling' means brother or sister, to include adopted brothers and sisters, half, step or foster brothers and sisters. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older child will leave before the younger one starts.

'Special Guardianship Order'. A special guardianship order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.14A appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s). A child 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualifies in this category.