



# Admissions Policy

St. Mary's School has been from its foundation a Church of England School which has always been open to children of all faiths or of no faith; and has responsibility for its own admissions. As a Free School, we commit to the adoption of practices and arrangements that are consistent or in accordance with the School Admissions Code and Appeals Code<sup>1</sup>. The school participates in the coordinated admission arrangements operated by Herefordshire Council as well as the local Fair Access Protocol.

The school has an admission number of 10 pupils in each year group. Additional pupils may be admitted in year, if the overall capacity of the school has not been met and depending on the size of the individual year groups. For admission of reception age children and in the eventuality of an oversubscription of places, decisions will be taken by governors in February each year (or as soon after admission applications have been received from the local authority, in addition to those directly received). If the number of pupils who apply is equal to or fewer than the pupil admission number, they will all be admitted. If not, then oversubscription criteria will be applied to determine who is admitted. For other admissions during the school year, the decision to admit or not will be taken by the Principal and the Chair of Governors.

## Reception age children

Children become of compulsory school age on the first prescribed day following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday: 31 August, 31 December or 31 March, or on that day if any of these are the child's birthday. Children are eligible for entry to Reception in the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday and applications must be made through Herefordshire Council **and** with the school directly by early January. Where a child is offered a place at this school:

- a) The child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday;
- b) the child's parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory

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<sup>1</sup> 'Free schools admissions models'; DfEducation, June 2014; 'Free School Admissions Guidance'; DfE; Dec.2014

school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made; and

- c) where the parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

In addition, the parents of a summer born child<sup>2</sup> may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group - to Reception rather than Year 1.

## **OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plan<sup>3</sup> or statement of special educational needs (SEN)<sup>4</sup> names the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

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

If the school receives more applications than the number of available places, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order of priority until all places are filled:

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children who apply for a place at the school<sup>5</sup>. (LAC/PLAC criterion)
  - a. Looked after children, and children who were looked after in England, but ceased to be due to being adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order

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<sup>2</sup> Summer born children are those born from 1 April to 31 August. They reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August). It is likely that most requests for summer born children to be admitted out of their normal age group will come from parents of children born in the later summer months or those born prematurely.

<sup>3</sup> An Education, Health and Care Plan is a plan made by the local authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special education provision required for that child.

<sup>4</sup> A Statement of Special Educational Need is a statement made by the local authority under section 324 of the Education Act 1996 specifying the special educational provision required for that child.

<sup>5</sup> A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority, or provided with accommodation by a local authority social services (e.g. foster care). Previously looked after children are who were looked after by the local authority but ceased to be so because they became adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. who were subsequently adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order.

- b. Looked after children, and children who were looked after outside of England, but ceased to be due to being adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order
2. The presence of older siblings<sup>6</sup> in the school at the time of application and admission. (Sibling criterion)
3. Children living within the civil parish of Dilwyn. (Parish Criterion) ranked by:
  - a. Children in families who are committed to Christian based education (Christian criterion)<sup>7</sup>
  - b. Other children.
4. Children who live outside the civil parish of Dilwyn nearest to the school by the shortest distance by road (Distance criterion) ranked by:
  - a. Children in families who are committed to Christian based education (Christian criterion)
  - b. Other children.

Prior to admission, parents/carers will be expected to enter into a 'Home/School Agreement' that defines the expectations of all concerned.

### **Waiting list**

The school will operate a waiting list for each year group and if a place becomes available, the oversubscription criteria will apply. Where in any year more applications for places are made than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until the end of the school year. This will be maintained by the school and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

### **Appeals**

All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Sibling' is a natural or half-brother/sister, a legally adopted brother/sister(or half-brother/sister), a step brother or sister, or other child living in the same household who, will be living with them at the same address at the date of their entry to the school.

<sup>7</sup> When requesting a place based on "Christian criterion", applicants could be asked to provide any supporting information.

Appeals should be made in writing by the parents, giving reasons, within 25 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful. Those wishing to appeal should contact the school for more details on the process.

### **Setting admission arrangements**

These admission arrangements are determined (formally agreed) and published by the **28th February** every year, for admissions that September - even where no changes have been made and no consultation undertaken. The St Mary's C.E. Academy Trustees/governors are responsible for admissions. The governing body will be quorate and decide on the proposed final arrangements. The final admission arrangements are then published on the school website for parents to see and also sent to the Diocesan Education Board and Herefordshire Council, by the **15th of March for admissions later that year**. Any objections are referred to the Schools Adjudicator by the 15th of May. The school will provide information about the school to the Council before **8 August** for inclusion in the local admissions prospectus. The trust will consult on its admission arrangements whenever it proposes a change or every 7 years if no change is proposed (see the Admissions Code for procedures and timelines).

### **Admissions and the local authority**

The School Admissions Code says that an LA cannot direct an academy to admit a child Section 3.22 says: "*Where an LA considers that an academy will best meet the needs of any child, it can ask the academy to admit that child but has no power to direct it to do so.*" It adds that the LA and the academy will usually come to an agreement. However, if the academy refuses to admit a child, the LA can ask the secretary of state to intervene.

Date Implemented:            March 2020

Approved by                    Chair of Governors

Responsibility:                Governing body and Principal

Review Date:                  February 2021