



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Part of the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust

Determined Admission Arrangements for 2026-2027

Sixth Form Policy for EXTERNAL* Admissions - September 2026-2027

*external means 'not already on roll at St. Mary's'; those already on roll do not need to 'apply' for a place as their place is guaranteed, providing they meet the minimum entry criteria, as published on our website.

St Mary's is a Catholic School founded by the Catholic Church to meet the educational needs of Catholic children aged 11-18. It is a comprehensive school with six forms of entry. It is an all ability school and children will be admitted without reference to their aptitude or ability. 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 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.

St Mary's is part of the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust. The academy company is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round.

The school makes every possible effort to place all external applicants who fulfil the academic admissions criteria; we have a proud tradition over many years of being able to accommodate every external applicant who fulfils the entry criteria. The school currently offers at least 20 external places per year for pupils applying for places in Year 12. This number is determined by reference to the actual teaching accommodation available. In the case of oversubscription, the criteria below will be applied in the order listed below. For the academic year 2024/25, governors were pleased to offer places to all external applicants who fulfilled the entry criteria.

All applicants will be required to complete the school's application form (via Applicaa). The application must be made by the pupil themselves and can be found on the website www.stmarys.net. The governors will first consider applicants who have completed and returned this form by the specified deadline.

Entry requirements for individual courses vary and are outlined in the Sixth Form Prospectus. St. Mary's reserves the right to offer individual students the combination of courses that it judges appropriate, given their predicted grades, and therefore requires particular grades for specific courses, which are published on the Sixth Form website. Official school statements of results which fulfil the entry requirements must be provided to St. Mary's on results day in order to commence study at St. Mary's Sixth Form.

All procedures must be completed within the published time limits. The governing body cannot be held responsible for any delays in submitting applications or responding to the offer of a place. The governors may withdraw the offer of a place if:

- the place is not accepted within the prescribed time scale
 - information provided on the application form is incorrect or purposely misleading or fraudulent.
- 1 Catholic looked after, children who have been in care outside of England, and Catholic children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangement Order or a Special Guardianship Order.)
 - 2 Baptised Catholic applicants who have provided a Certificate of Catholic Baptism and who have a sibling who attends the school at the time of application.
 - 3 Baptised Catholic children of staff who have been in employment at the school for 2 years at the time of application, or 1 year if there is a demonstrable and acknowledged skill shortage. The child must live at the same address as the member of staff.
 - 4 A Baptised Catholic child with no sibling connection, in the following proportions:
 - 45% of the remaining places to those living in the Catholic Parish of Bishop's Stortford which consists of the six Civil Parishes of Bishop's Stortford, Thorley, Little Hadham, Much Hadham, Sawbridgeworth, and High Wych.

- 40% of the remaining places to those living in other parts of the Lea Valley Deanery
- 15% of the remaining places to those living in the Catholic parishes that are based in Dunmow, Bardfield and Thaxted, Saffron Walden and Stansted.

These areas are defined in the maps which accompany these criteria. They can be found at <http://www.stmarys.net/admissions>. If any of the three designated areas is under-subscribed, the places will be redistributed among the designated areas in the relative proportions above, before any offers are made to applicants in Criterion 5.

- 5 Any other Baptised Catholic applicant.
- 6 Any other Looked After Children, children who have been in care outside of England, and non Catholic children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangement or a Special Guardianship Order.)
- 7 Any applicant who is a catechumen or member of an Eastern Christian Church.
- 8 Any non-Catholic children of staff who have been in employment at the school for 2 years at the time of application, or 1 year if there is a demonstrable and acknowledged skill shortage. The child must live at the same address as the member of staff.
- 9 Any other non-Catholic applicant with a sibling who attends the school.
- 10 Any applicant who is a Christian of another Christian denomination. Evidence of belonging is simply provided by a signed letter from the relevant Minister confirming the child belongs to that church.
- 11 Any other applicant.

NOTES:

- (a) **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. For the purposes of this Policy it also includes a "looked after" child who is in the process of adoption by a Catholic family. Family is defined as those who live at the residential address of the parent or legal guardians who are submitting an application for a place on behalf of a child. **'Catechumen'** means a child who is a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens. **'Eastern Christian Church'** includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church. **'Christian'** for the purposes of this policy, means a member of one of the Churches affiliated to 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland'.
- (b) **Certificate of Baptism** means a certificate of Baptism in a Catholic church (or if the applicant was baptised in another Christian church and has been received into full communion with the Catholic Church, the certificate of Reception or a letter from a Catholic priest giving evidence of reception into full communion).
- (c) To qualify as a Sibling, the child needs to be a brother or sister which includes step brothers and step sisters, half brothers and sisters, or adopted brothers and sisters, who live at the same home as the child at the time of application. "At the time of application" means that the sibling must actually be on the roll of St Mary's Catholic School at the school, or have been offered a place but not yet started at the school. Given the high staying on rate into the sixth form, and the desire of the Catholic community for 11-18 Catholic education provision, Year 11 students count as siblings as there is a reasonable expectation that they will wish to attend the school's sixth form, and that they will be eligible to do so. Residential address is defined as where the child lives for more than 50% of the school week.

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful applicants will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a continuing interest list. This list will be maintained by the Governing Body's Admissions Committee; the list will follow the order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and *not* the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Parents will be contacted periodically to check that they wish for their applications to remain on the List. The Governing Body's Admission Committee meets once a term to review the list and any new applications, and to admit pupils where a place becomes available.

- (d) Priority will be given to children who live nearest to the school measured using the Hertfordshire Local Authority's 'Find your nearest school' online facility. The measurement is taken from the point of your child's house to a point

of distance which has been agreed by the Governors on the school site. Should two applicants have the same house to school distance a random allocation will be made and that process will be independently supervised.

Further details can be found on www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

- (e) An incomplete application is one where sections of the admission form have not been completed and/or the requested supporting documentation has not been provided.
- (f) A late application is one where the Application Forms fails to be submitted by the school's published deadline (see website). Applications received after the deadline will be dealt with after all initial offers have been made.
- (g) 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 Local Authority for the current school year. The governing body has this power even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number. Children under the Fair Access Protocol can also be admitted above those on the Continuing Interest list if necessary.
- (h) In-Year Admissions: Applications for In-Year admissions are made directly to the school. 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 above. 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. Parents should contact the Appeals Team at HCC, school.appeals@hertfordshire.gov.uk, who will advise them as to how to lodge an Appeal. An independent appeal committee will consider your case to see if the particular circumstances of your case are sufficiently exceptional to override the consideration of the school and justify the admission of your child.
- (i) 'Looked after child' has the same meaning as in Section 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). Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised if the child's previously looked status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School". The child's previously looked status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:
 - i. to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and
 - ii. to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.A child is in "state care" if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by –
 - (a) a public authority,
 - (b) a religious organisation, or
 - (c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society
- (j) 'Adopted': An adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted and whose parent/guardian can give proof of adoption.
- (k) '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
- (l) '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). Children who were 'looked after' immediately before the special guardianship order was made qualify for this category.
- (m) The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application
 - At the time of application" means the closing date for applications
 - "Permanent" means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12* months and the child must be resident in the property at the time of application.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If a child's permanent residence is disputed, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes. If two applications are received, with different addresses and/or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

It is for a child's home Local Authority to determine address. If two applications, with different addresses are received from the same Local Authority, it will be for that Local Authority to determine permanent address. If two applications are received from two different Local Authorities, the above process will be used

If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address, e.g., containing different preferences, parents/carers will be invited to submit a joint application or provide court documentation to evidence the preferences that should be used for the admission process. Until the preference issue is reconciled neither application will be processed.

For the transfer application rounds, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received "on-time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before the "late deadline".

** If, because of the nature of the agreement, it is not possible to provide a 12-month tenancy agreement, alternative proof of address will be requested and verified as necessary with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service.*

- (n) Appeals: The school will write to you with outcome of your application and if it has not been possible to offer your child a place, you do have the right of appeal. An independent appeal committee will consider your case to see if the particular circumstances of your case are sufficiently exceptional to override the consideration of the school and justify the admission of your child. Parents should contact the Appeals Team at HCC, school.appeals@hertfordshire.gov.uk, who will advise them as to how to lodge an Appeal.
- (o) The Governing Body will determine whether there is a national demonstrable skills shortage for posts by applying the criteria that, for a post the same as or similar to that for the member of staff in question, there was just one appointable candidate at the final interview stage, or the post had been previously and unsuccessfully advertised for.
- (p) **"Children of another Christian denomination"** 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 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.

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

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

Change of details

If any of the details on your form change between the date of application and the receipt of the letter of offer or refusal, you must inform the School immediately. If purposely misleading &/or fraudulent information is given or allowed to remain on the form, governors reserve the right to withdraw the place, even if the child has already started at the School.

Children educated outside their chronological age group

Parents who wish their child to be educated outside his/her chronological age group should write a letter, addressed to the Chair of Governors, at the time of application, giving reasons for their request.

The families of children who are seeking admission to St Mary's, must be fully aware of the aims of the school in seeking to implement the Catholic Church's mission in Catholic Education and are expected to be fully supportive of the Christian ethos of the school.