



Admissions Policy: 2020

St. Begh's Catholic Junior School



Walking hand in hand in the footsteps of Christ.
We are His hands; we are His feet.

Adopted by the Governing Body of St. Begh's Catholic Junior School on
8.1.19.

Signed: *Patricia McCarron* (Vice-Chair of Governors)

Reviewed: December 2018

Anticipated Review Date: December 2020



St. Begh's Catholic Junior School is a Roman Catholic Primary School under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Lancaster. It is maintained by Cumbria Local Authority. As a Voluntary Aided School, the Governing Body is the Admissions Authority and is responsible for taking decisions on applications for admissions. The co-ordination of admissions arrangements is undertaken by the Local Authority. For the school's year commencing September 2020, the Governing Body has set its admissions number at **75**.

ADMISSIONS TO THE SCHOOL will be made by the Governing Body. All preferences listed on the Local Authority Preference Form will be considered on an equal basis with the following set of ADMISSIONS CRITERIA forming a priority order where there are more applications for admissions than the school has places available.

1. Baptised Catholic children in public care, previously looked after children who have been adopted or have become subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order.
2. Baptised Catholic children who live in the parishes of St. Begh's Whitehaven and St. Benedict's Whitehaven with a sibling in the school at the time of expected admission.
3. Other Baptised Catholic children who live in the parishes of St. Begh's Whitehaven and St. Benedict's Whitehaven.
4. Other Baptised Catholic children with a sibling in the school at the time of expected admission.
5. Other Baptised Catholic children.
6. Other children who are in public care, previously looked after children who have been adopted or have become subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order.
7. Baptised Christian children with a sibling in school at the time of expected admission.
8. Baptised Christian children.
9. Other children.

If a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education, Healthcare Plan name our school, they must be admitted.

NOTES

- a) All applicants will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 15th March.
- b) 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 (under section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989. A previously Looked After Child is one who immediately moved on from that status after becoming subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order.
- c) For a child to be considered as a Roman Catholic evidence of such Baptism will be required.
- d) Clarification of Christian denominations recognised by the Catholic Church will be sought if necessary.



- e) If in any category there are more applications than places available, priority will be given on the basis of distance from home to school. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the front door of the child's home address (including the community entrance to flats) to the main entrance of the school using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system with those living nearer to the school having priority. If the distance is the same for two or more applicants where this would be last place/s to be allocated, a random lottery will be carried out in a public place.
- f) Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the child's "permanent place of residence" will be determined as the address of the parent who normally has responsibility for the majority of school days in a week.
- g) Sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.
- h) A waiting list for children who have not been offered a place will be kept and will be ranked according to the Admission Criteria. Parents will be informed of their child's position on the waiting list which will not be operated for longer than the end of the Autumn Term.
- i) For 'In Year' applications received outside the normal admissions round and if places are available then children qualifying under the published criteria will be admitted. Direct application to the school can now be made under this heading. If there are places available but more applicants than places then the published oversubscription criteria will be applied.
- j) If an application for admission has been turned down by the Governing Body, parents can appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. Parents must be allowed at least twenty school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to submit that appeal. Parents must give reasons for appealing in writing and the decision of the Appeals Panel is binding on all parties.
- k) The Governing Body reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a school place where false evidence is received in relation to baptism, sibling connections or place of residence.



A Summary of the Changes to the Regulations for Admission in 2016 and Beyond.

The School Admissions Regulations 2014 come into force on 19 December 2014, the same time as the new School Admissions Code. The Regulations and the Code update the versions published in 2012. The changes to the Regulations mostly concern timing.

The significant changes are

1. The frequency with which the admissions authority must consult on their published arrangements where no changes are proposed is now at least once in every seven years;
2. The dates by which the admissions authority must consult on and determine the arrangements are changed for admissions in 2016 and change again for 2017 and thereafter;
3. The date by which a local authority (LA) must publish school admission arrangements for its area has changed
4. The date by which objections must be received by the Schools Adjudicator has changed;
5. The frequency with which a local authority is required to consult on a qualifying scheme is now at least once every even years;
6. The date by which a local authority must inform the Secretary of State whether they have secured the adoption of a qualifying scheme is now 28 February in the qualifying year. If this is not done, the Secretary of State may make and impose a scheme.

Other Significant Changes

1. All state funded schools **may** now able to give priority in their admission arrangements to children eligible for pupil premium or service premium funding, which was previously enjoyed only by academies and free schools.
2. Primary schools **may** now give priority to children eligible for the early years pupil premium, pupil premium or service pupil premium who attend a nursery which is part of the school.
3. **All** children whose statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan names the school **must** be admitted.
4. All schools must determine and publish criteria to be applied where there are more applications than places. The highest priority **must** be given, unless otherwise provided in the Code to looked after children and all previously looked after children.



Priority to Catholic Applicants.

In circumstances where there are fewer applications than places (i.e. the Published Admission Number has not been reached), the governing bodies of Catholic schools are required by law to offer places to all applicants, whether Catholic or not.

Where there are more applicants than places, the Code allows the governing body of a Catholic school to use faith-based oversubscription criteria and allocate places by reference to faith.

Catholic schools are founded by the Catholic Church for the advancement of the Catholic religion. In Canon Law, parents are under a duty wherever possible to send their children to schools which will provide them with a Catholic education and the diocesan bishop is under a duty to establish such schools, with state assistance wherever possible.

It follows therefore that the governing bodies of Catholic schools must, wherever possible confer priority to Catholic applicants. Applicants who are not Catholic should be given priority only in the most exceptional circumstances.

The governing bodies of Catholic maintained and publically funded independent schools must also bear in mind that in England and Wales, they form a vital and valued part of the overall pattern of state provision and that children from the wider community in urgent need of a place in a local Catholic school, even when they are not themselves Catholic, should not be neglected.

Exceptional Circumstances.

The following are considered 'exceptional':

- Where the child has a statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school must be admitted whether Catholic or not.
- In the spirit of the Code, Looked after and formerly Looked after Children whether Catholic or not should be conferred first priority.

The following are not considered 'exceptional':

- The admission of 'non Catholic' siblings where Catholic children are unable to secure places;
- The admission of all the children from a named Catholic feeder primary school, whether the children are Catholic or not. A place in a Catholic primary school for a child who is not Catholic should not be treated as a passport to a Catholic secondary school at the expense of Catholic applicants.

'Catholic' means

- Holding a certificate of baptism signed by a priest of the Catholic Church;



- Holding a certificate of reception of baptised Christians into the Catholic Church.

Any applicant experiencing difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception in to the Catholic Church with good reason may still be considered as baptised Catholics following consultation with the appropriate diocesan authority, normally the Episcopal Vicar for Education.

The religion or observance of religion by the child's parents is not a relevant factor in determining whether the child is Catholic.

Governing bodies may, if they wish, confer priority to applicants from other Christian traditions and other faiths. There is no expectation that they do so but where this is considered necessary or desirable, great care must be taken to define what evidence must be produced by the parents and how the evidence will be used when giving higher priority to some 'non Catholic' children ahead of others.

Consultation on proposed changes must be for a minimum of **6 weeks** and must be take place between **1 October and 31 January**.

The governing body must determine the policy no later than **28 February**

The policy must be published (as a minimum on the school website) and copied to the local authority no later than **15 March**.

Any objections to the policy must be submitted to the Schools Adjudicator by **15 May**.

The governing body must supply all the information needed by the local authority by **8 August**.

The composite prospectus compiled by the local authority must be published on line and in hard copy by **12 September**.

Further Notes for Governing Bodies

Acceptable Variations.

The following are generally considered to be acceptable additions or variations to the policy.

- Children with exceptional medical and/or social needs where these needs can be best met at this school. Written supporting evidence from a relevant professional must be supplied at the time of application.
- Children of staff at the school may be conferred where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application is made or the member of staff is recruited to fill vacant post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- Admission authorities may confer priority to the siblings of former pupils but this is not recommended.



In Year Fair Access Protocols.

Each local authority is required to prepare and agree with the majority of schools a 'fair access protocol' the purpose of which is to ensure that the most vulnerable and hard to place children (as defined in the protocol) requiring places outside the normal admissions cycle are offered school places as quickly as possible.

By virtue of section 96 of the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998, the local authority retains a very broad power to direct schools to admit what were in 1998 described as 'hard to place' children. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure that this power of direction is used fairly and according to agreed criteria. It must include arrangements for monitoring so it can be demonstrated that schools are being treated equitably.

It is therefore in the interests of schools to co-operate with the local authority in carrying out this challenging and sometimes controversial duty.

The Fair Access protocol is not required to take account of the faith designation of the school (although some do) or of class size legislation.

Governing bodies must not refuse to admit a child thought to be potentially disruptive or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour.

The fair access protocol must not require a school automatically to admit another child with challenging behaviour to replace a child excluded from the school.

The Admission of Children with Special Educational Needs.

By virtue of Section 324 of the Education Act 1996, Governing Bodies are obliged to admit a child with a statement of special educational needs that names their school. However in advance of that process the Local Authority must provide either a copy of the proposed statement and appendices or, where they are proposing to amend part 4 of an existing statement, either the proposed amended statement or the amendment notice together with a copy of the existing statement, and in either case, the appendices and give the Governing Body the opportunity to make observations.

The governing body may object to the direction on the grounds that the school is unsuitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs, or that the placement would be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom the child will be educated, or with the efficient use of resources. The Local Authority has a duty to consider such objections and may consider these sufficient to warrant the naming of another school.

In turn the parents may also appeal against that decision to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

For the child's needs to be best addressed it is important that the process outlined is applied thoroughly and with a clear understanding of the responsibilities resting on all parties.

Consultation

Where changes are proposed, arrangements for entry in September 2016 must be subject to consultation for a minimum of 8 weeks and must be completed by 1 March 2015.

Admissions authorities must consult with

- Parents of children between the ages of 2 and 18,
- Other persons in the relevant area who, in the opinion of the admissions authority have an interest in the proposed admissions
- All other admission authorities within the relevant area except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools



- Whichever of the Governing Body and the local authority who are not the admission authority [sic]
- Any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority and
- In the case of faith schools, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.

For the duration of the consultation, the admission authority must publish a copy of their full proposed admission arrangements, including the proposed PAN on their website together with details of the person within the admission authority to whom comments may be sent and the areas on which comments are not sought. Admission authorities must also on request a copy of the proposed admission arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed above inviting comment. Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent appeals or complaints.