

Admissions Procedure and Policy for entry to school September 2023

We aim to provide a safe, caring and inclusive environment in which every child is able to learn, try new things and grow as a fully rounded individual: *finding strength in God and soaring on wings like eagles.*

The school is open to every child in the community, regardless of their family's faith, background or circumstance.

The Governing Body of St Mark's Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School is the admitting authority for the school. Following consultation with the Diocesan Board of Education and the Local Authority, the Governing Body has set the published admission number for access to the Reception class at **30**.

The Admissions Information Pack for Parents contains an application form and timetable for admission to school in Cumbria. It is also possible for an application to be made on the Local Authority's website.

An application for entry in September 2023 must be made subject to the LA Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme and by the LA published closing date. Applications made after that date and before allocations are made will be passed on to the LA via the school.

Parents are encouraged to name three schools in order of preference on the application form. The Governing Body operates a system whereby they consider all preferences equally. So the order of preferences will not be used in considering any application. (It will only be used if a place is available for a child at more than one school.) Places at this school will be allocated according to this Admissions Policy and the Local Authority's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. A letter informing parents of the success or otherwise of their application will be sent out by the Local Authority in April. Parents of those children not offered a place will be informed of the reason and offered an alternative school by the Local Authority. They will be informed of their right of appeal.

All children will be admitted unless there are more applicants than places, in which case the Governing Body will make allocations using the following criteria. These are listed in order of priority.

1. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. 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 the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
2. Children who have physical, medical, social or emotional needs who would be disadvantaged by travelling to another school. Written evidence from an appropriate professional would be required for the Governing Body to consider admission in this category.
3. Children living within the catchment area having a brother or sister attending our school at the time of their admission giving priority, if necessary, to those children with the youngest siblings. Brothers and sisters are those living at the same address including step, adopted and foster children.
4. Children living in the catchment area
5. Children living outside the catchment area who, at the time of their admission, have brothers or sisters in the school.
6. Children living outside the catchment area.

A map of the school catchment area is available from Cumbria County Council or from the school office by request.

Exception to Criteria

The criteria outlined above will be strictly followed, there being one exception: If a child has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming St Mark's CE Church of England Primary School then, irrespective of the criteria, the child *will* be admitted as, in these circumstances, the Governing Body has a statutory duty to admit the child concerned.

Tie Break

In some categories, where there are more applicants than places available, distance between the home and school will be the determining factor. This distance is measured from the centre of the child's address to a common point on the school site as determined by the LA. The Governing Body will use the Local Authority's current computerised geographical information system to ensure consistency of measurement. Children living at the closest addresses will have priority.

Address of Pupil

The address on the application form must be the current one at the time of application. Where a child can live at more than one address the home address is to be the one where the child sleeps and thus wakes up for all or the majority of the school week. Where there is any doubt the Governing Body reserves the right to verify the information provided by the parents / carers.

In-Year Admissions

In-year admissions are those which occur outside the "normal" admission time. If a parent / carer wishes their child to attend St Mark's school, they should arrange a visit. Admission details will be provided if there is a vacancy in the relevant year group. If a child is refused a place parents / carers will be informed of their right to appeal.

Fraudulent Applications

If the Governing Body discovers that a child has been awarded a place as a result of an intentionally misleading application from a parent, for example, an incorrect address and as a result it effectively denies a place to a child with a stronger claim, then the Governing Body will withdraw the offer of a place. If a place is refused, the Governing Body will reconsider the application and the right of appeal offered.

Deferred Admission

For children beginning school following their fourth birthday admission is normally in September. However, if a parent wishes, entry can be deferred until later in the year or until the term in which a child reaches compulsory school age. For example, if a child's fifth birthday is between September and December then, if you wish, admission may be deferred until the beginning of the Spring term. If it is between January and April, admission may be deferred until the beginning of the Summer term. Parents can also request part-time education until the term in which a child reaches compulsory school age. The Governing Body recommends that it is in most child's interests for full-time education to be deferred no later than the start of the Spring term.

Summer Born Children: Delayed Entry

Summer born children do not attain compulsory school age until the September after they would normally start in Reception. In line with current government recommendations, the Governing Body will consider admitting these children into a Reception class a year later than usual at their parents' request. These children will remain eligible for their full entitlement to schooling, and will subsequently transfer to secondary school with other children in the same year group in which they have been educated, rather than with their 'chronological cohort'.

Appeals Procedure

If the Governing Body is unable to offer a place to a child because of over subscription, parents have a right of appeal under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and subsequent legislation. Parents must notify the Clerk to the Governing Body within 14 days of receiving the letter which will have outlined the grounds for refusing a place. Parents will have an opportunity to submit their case to an appeals panel independent of the Governing Body. Grounds for the appeal must be provided in writing. Parents will receive at least 20 days' notice of the time and venue for an appeal hearing at which they will be able to present their case in person. This right of appeal does not prevent a parent from making

an appeal in respect of any other school. The Independent Appeal will be organised on behalf of the Governing Body by the Local Authority Legal and Democratic Services Unit at Carlisle.

Waiting List

Those children who are not offered a place may, if parents so wish, be placed on a waiting list. The names will be placed on the list in the order of the admissions criteria above. Late applicants will be slotted into the list, also according to the admissions criteria. It is thus possible for a child recently arrived in the area to have a higher priority than a child who has been on the waiting list for some time. Irrespective of whether an appeal has been submitted, if a place becomes available it will be offered to the child at the top of the list. The waiting list will remain open for the whole of the first term to which it relates, i.e. 31st December 2023.

Infant Class Size

If a child is refused a place in a Reception or Key Stage 1 class because of Government limits on infant class size, the grounds on which an appeal could be successful are limited. Parents would have to show that the decision was one which no reasonable Governing Body would have made, or that a child would have been offered a place if the Governing Body's admissions policy had been properly implemented.

Multiple Births

As far as possible, the Governing Body will ensure that twins, triplets or those children born in the same year are not separated. Such children will be given priority in any particular category.

Excepted Pupils

While no infant class is to contain more than 30 pupils there can be very limited exceptional circumstances. The admittance of such a child will be known as an "excepted pupil" for the time they are in an infant class or until the numbers fall back to the size limit. An excepted child would be one whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil. It might also include:

- a child born in the same school year
- a child with an EHCP
- a Child Looked After or Previously Looked After
- a child of UK Armed Services Personnel
- a child admitted after a procedural error
- a child admitted after an independent appeals panel has upheld an appeal
- a child whose family has moved into the area outside the normal admission period and for whom there is no other available school within a reasonable distance

Nursery

If a parent has a child in St Mark's Nursery, parents must still make a separate application for entry to school in the Reception Class. A place at the Nursery does not guarantee a place in St Mark's CE Primary School Reception Class.

Signed: *Peter Barfoot* (Peter Barfoot)
Headteacher

Signed: *Tim Ward* (Tim Ward)
Chair of Governors

Date: 18th October 2021

Date of additions suggested by the Diocesan Board of Education: July 2021

This policy will be reviewed
Date: Autumn 2022