



## St Mary's Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School, Northchurch

### ADMISSION POLICY 2024/2025

The Governing Board is the admissions authority for St Mary's Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School, Northchurch (St Mary's). The Governing Board will admit up to 30 pupils into the Reception Year each September. This number has been agreed by the Governing Board and applies to the year 2024/25. Admission numbers and policies for future years may be different.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school.

If there are fewer applicants than places available at the school, all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applicants than places available at the school, the criteria outlined below will be used by the admissions authority to prioritise applications.

**Oversubscription criteria** (see explanatory notes and definitions beginning on page 5)

Rule 1	Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order).
Rule 2	Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school.  A panel of governors will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements of this rule. The evidence must relate specifically to St Mary's and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs.
Rule 3	Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school at the proposed time of entry.
Rule 4	Children who are eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium, Pupil or Service Premium who live within Area A or B on the Admissions Map.
Rule 5	Children whose parent(s)/carers(s) have a regular worship commitment at St Mary's Church, Northchurch, verified by the Church Minister on the school's Supplementary Information Form.
Rule 6	Children whose parent(s)/carers(s) have a regular worship commitment at another Anglican church or a church of any other Christian denomination verified by the Church Minister

	concerned on the school's Supplementary Information Form and who live in Area A or B on the Admissions Map.
Rule 7	Children who live in Area A on the Admissions Map.
Rule 8	Children who live in Area B on the Admissions Map.
Rule 9	Children who live nearest to the school.

These rules are applied in the order they are printed above. If any category is oversubscribed the places will be determined in that category by the proximity of the child's permanent home address to the school using the same computerised mapping system as is used by Hertfordshire County Council.

### **Tie Break**

When there is a need for a tie break where two different addresses are the same distance from the school, (in the case of a block of flats for example), the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random. Every child entered onto the Hertfordshire County Council admissions database has an individual random number assigned, between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. When there is a need for a final tie break the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority.

### **Continuing Interest**

For admission into Reception (other than In-Year admissions – see below), after places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a Continuing Interest (CI) list (waiting list) until the summer term (date to be specified and confirmed to parents at the time of allocation). To remain on the CI (waiting) list after this time, parents must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form. A child's position on the list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and a child's place on the list can change as other children join or leave it. Hertfordshire County Council will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child.

### **Fair Access**

The Governing Board (as the admissions authority) will admit children in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's Fair Access Protocol before those on the Continuing Interest list, and over the Published Admissions Number (PAN) if required.

### **Twins/Multiple Births**

The Governing Board (as the admissions authority) will admit over the school's PAN when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated the last place at the school.

## **ADMISSION PROCEDURE**

### **Applying for a place**

St Mary's and the Local Authority (Hertfordshire County Council) manage admissions under an agreed coordinated admissions scheme for Reception and initial school entry admissions. The Local Authority will coordinate the process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published each year. The Governing Board, as the admissions authority, will allocate the available places in line with this policy, but the offers will be made by the Local Authority. All applications must be made on your own Local Authority's application form. For Hertfordshire residents the form and information on completing it and important dates can be found at: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions). The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the Local Authority is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

If you name this school as one of your preferences, you should also complete the school's Supplementary Information Form in addition to your own Local Authority's application form. St Mary's Supplementary Information Form can be found on the [Admissions page](#) on the school's website. It should be sent to the school to arrive not later than 15 January 2024. Without the Supplementary Information Form some of the admission priorities may be unavailable. This means that your application may be of a lower priority rank than if the school had received your Supplementary Information Form.

### **Appeals**

Parents who are not offered a place for their child have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. Parents wishing to appeal should contact the school office by email at [admin@stmarys916.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarys916.herts.sch.uk)

### **In-Year Admissions**

The Governing Board (as the admissions authority) can accept applications for In-Year admissions into the school at any time. Parents/carers should complete the school's In-Year Admissions form and Supplementary Information Form which can be found on the [Admissions page](#) on the school's website.

If there are more In-Year applicants than places available then the oversubscription criteria will apply

The school will write to you with the outcome of your In-Year application and aim to do so within 10 school days and no later than 15 school days of receipt of the application. The offer of a place must be accepted in writing within 10 school days. If you wish to appeal this decision, please contact the school office by email at [admin@stmarys916.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarys916.herts.sch.uk)

Parents/carers have the opportunity to place their names on the Continuing Interest List (waiting list) if a place is not available at the time of application. This list is maintained by the school until the end of the academic year. To remain on the CI (waiting list) after this time, parents must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In-Year application form.

## **Nursery Provision**

St Mary's has nursery provision. The admission arrangements detailed in this document do not apply for those being admitted into the Nursery. A separate Admissions Policy for the Nursery is available on the [Admissions page](#) on the school's website.

Parents of children who are admitted to the Nursery at the school must apply in the normal way for a place at the school if they want their child to transfer to the Reception class. Attendance at the Nursery does not guarantee admission to the school.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to terms used in the admissions criteria.

**Rule 1: Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside England, and ceased to be so as a result of being adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order<sup>1</sup> or a special guardianship order<sup>2</sup>).**

Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

These children will be prioritised under rule 1.

Highest priority will also be given to children who were previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject of a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

A “child looked after” or 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 service functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989).

All children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under rule 1.

Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified by law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order<sup>3</sup> and the application would be prioritised under rule 1.

Children who were not “looked after” **immediately** before being adopted, or made the subject of a children arrangement order or special guardianship order, **will not** be prioritised under rule 1. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under rule 2.

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under rule 1 if the child’s previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire’s “Virtual School”.

The child’s previously looked after 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.

<sup>1</sup> Child arrangements order

Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

<sup>2</sup> Special guardianship order

Under 14A of the Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

<sup>3</sup> Placement order

A placement order is an order made by the court authorising a local authority to place a child for adoption (section 21 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002).

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## **Rule 2: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school.**

Rule 2 applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted.

All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However in a few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school.

Few applications under rule 2 are agreed.

All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

- a) Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or
- b) Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs.
- c) If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address, clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.
- d) For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Evidence should make it clear why one school is appropriate. A rule 2 application will generally not be upheld in cases where more than one school could meet the child's need.

In exceptional cases relating to a disability, where more than one school in the county can meet the child's specific needs, a clear and compelling case can be made for the "nearest" school with the relevant facilities, environment or location. You must explain why attendance at the "nearest" school with these facilities is essential.

Applications under rule 2 can only be considered when supported by a recent letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example a doctor, psychologist or police officer. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only this school can meet the social/medical needs of the child.

Applications for children previously “looked after” but not meeting the specific criteria outlined in rule 1 may be made under this rule.

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### **Rule 3: Definition of sibling**

A sibling is defined as including:

- brother or sister
- half brother or sister
- adopted brother or sister
- child of the parent/carer or partner
- looked after or previously looked after child.<sup>1</sup>

In every case, the sibling must live permanently<sup>2</sup> in the family home (at least from Monday to Friday) at the time of this application.

A sibling must be on the roll of the named school at the time the younger child starts or has been offered and accepted a place.

If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

<sup>1</sup> Children previously looked after are those children adopted or with a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. This definition was amended following a determination by the OSA in August 2014. For the definition of “looked after child”, see Rule 1 on page 5.

<sup>2</sup> A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parents but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement.

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### **Rule 4: Early Years Pupil Premium, Pupil or Service Premium**

Children may be eligible to receive Early Years Pupil Premium funding if a parent, carer or their partner receive:

- Universal Credit;
- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190);
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credits;

or if they have:

- been looked after by a local authority for at least one day;
- been adopted from care in England or Wales;
- left care under a special guardianship order or residence order in England or Wales.

Children are eligible to receive Pupil Premium Grant funding if they:

- have been recorded as being eligible for free school meals (FSM) in any of the 6 years prior to the proposed time of entry;
- have been a looked after child<sup>1</sup>;
- have ceased to be looked after by a local authority in England or Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order;
- have been recorded as a Service Child in any of the 5 years prior to the proposed time of entry or in receipt of a child pension from the Ministry of Defence.

<sup>1</sup> For the definition of “looked after child”, see Rule 1 on page 5.

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## **Rule 5 and Rule 6: Regular Worship Commitment**

A “regular worship commitment” means attendance at a public act of worship at least once a month for a period of at least one year at the time of application. Applications under rule 5 and 6 must include a completed Supplementary Information Form with the relevant section completed and signed by their church Minister confirming the required level of attendance.

If the family is new to the area rules 5 and 6 will apply where they have attended a relevant church at least once a month since their arrival in the area and also attended a relevant church at least once a month prior to moving. In such a case, the relevant section of the Supplementary Information Form must be completed and signed by:

1. the Minister of the relevant church that they have attended since their arrival in the local area indicating the level of attendance; and
2. the Minister of their previous church indicating the level of attendance at that church.

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

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## Christian Denomination

A Christian denomination is one which is a member of Churches Together in England.

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## Home Address

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 for the relevant year. "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. If you move after submitting the application we adopt the same process for proof of address as the Local Authority (see [School admissions and transport | Hertfordshire County Council](#) for details).

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 at for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a 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.

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 main Reception admissions round, 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 the amended joint application is received after the late date deadline, it will be treated as "late". The "late deadline" for the 2024/25 main Reception admissions allocation is 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024. If these dates change, amendments will be published on the HCC admissions web pages at the start of the 2024/25 application process in September 2023.

\*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.

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## Fraudulent applications

The Governing Board will work with Hertfordshire County Council to do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses, including referral of cases to the Shared Anti-Fraud service for further investigation as necessary.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. Action will be taken in the following circumstances:

- When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school;
- When a child lives at a different address to the applicant;
- When the applicant does not have parental responsibility;
- When a family moves shortly after the closing date of applications when one or more of the following applies:
  - The family has moved to a property from which their application was less likely to be successful.
  - The family has returned to an existing property.
  - The family lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than a year) over the application period.
  - Official/public records show an alternative address at the time of the application.
- When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application.

Parents/carers will need to show that they have relinquished residency ties with their previous property and they, and their child(ren) are permanently residing at the address given on the application form.

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### **Home to school distance measurement for purposes of admissions**

A "straight line" distance measurement is used in all home to school distance measurements. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences. This is the same mapping system as is used by Hertfordshire County Council.

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### **Applications from children\* from overseas**

All children of compulsory school age (5-16 years) in England have a right of access to education. However where a child is in England for a short period only, for example less than half a term, it may be reasonable to refuse admission to a school.

An application for a school place will only be accepted for such children currently overseas if, for In-Year applications, proof is provided that the child will be resident in Hertfordshire within two weeks of the application. In-Year allocations are made on the assumption that the child will accept the school place and be on roll within that timescale.

Applications will not normally be accepted from, nor places allocated to, an overseas address. The exception to this (for both In-Year and transfer processes) is for children of UK service personnel and crown servants (and from military families who are residents of countries with a Memorandum of Understanding with the UK). In these cases, the Governing Board will allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Hertfordshire County Council Unit postal address or quartering area address, for consideration of the application against oversubscription criteria.

Applications will also be considered, and places offered in advance for these families, if the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date but does not provide a quartering or unit address because the family will be residing in private accommodation. In these cases, if the family does not already have a permanent private address in Hertfordshire, the military base or alternative “work” address in Hertfordshire will be used for allocation purposes. If the family already has an established private address, that address will be used for admissions purposes.

The Governing Board, as the admissions authority, will also consider accepting applications from children overseas\* whose family can evidence intent to return to and/or permanently reside in Hertfordshire prior to the start of the new academic year. These applications, if accepted, will be processed from the overseas address until sufficient evidence is received to show the child is permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Evidence must be submitted at the time of application.

Evidence submitted after the date for late applications cannot be taken into account before National Allocation Day (this is the day when local authorities notify allocated school places). Decisions on these applications will be made by the Governing Board, as the admissions authority, and communicated with parents within 6 weeks of the closing date for applications.

If an applicant owns a property in Hertfordshire but is not living in it, perhaps because they are working abroad at the time of the application, the Hertfordshire address will not be accepted for the purposes of admission until the child is resident at that address.

Other children, than those mentioned above, from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. An application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until they are permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Proof of residency such as an endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application, in addition to proof of Hertfordshire address, for example a council tax bill or 12-month rental agreement.

\*Children who hold full British Citizen passports (not British Dependent Territories or British Overseas passports), or have a UK passport describing them as a British citizen or British subject with the right of abode and normally have unrestricted entry to the UK. Freedom of movement into the UK for European Economic Area and Swiss citizens ended at the end of 2020. EEA (Irish citizen aside) and Swiss national children entering the UK after the end of 2020 are now treated the same as other foreign nationals. This means they will no longer have the right to enter the country to access a state-funded school unless they fall within certain immigration categories. Find out more about [visas and immigration](#) and the [EU Settlement Scheme](#) for European Economic Area and Swiss citizens.

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## **Age of Admission and Deferral of Places**

National policy is that children born on and between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020 would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2024. The school provides for the full-time admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. If a parent wants a full-time place for their child from September then they are entitled to that full-time place.

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age. Summer born children are only able to “defer” entry to Reception class until the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Where parents wish, children can attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age. Any parents wishing to take up a part-time place or deferred entry should contact the school to discuss their child’s requirements.

### **Summer born children (1st April – 31st August) – Entry to Reception**

Legally, a child does not have to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Children born between 1 April 2020 and 31 August 2020 are categorised as “summer born” and if parents/carers do not believe that their summer born child is ready to join Reception in 2024 they should contact the school for guidance before making an application.

If parents do not take up the offered place before the start of the summer term of the school year of entry, then they would have to re-apply for a place in Year 1.

However, if parents wish such a child to be educated “out-of-year group” i.e. in the Reception Year rather than Year 1 they may request this and should discuss it with the school as soon as possible. Such applications will be considered by the governors on a case by case basis and in the best interests of the child. Each case will be judged on its individual merits but to admit out of year group would require exceptional and extenuating circumstances and professional evidence, where available, explaining why the child’s needs cannot be met in the chronological year group.

All such parents should apply for their child’s normal age group at the usual time and may submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time.

The Governing Board will respond to this request prior to the offer of a place being made. If the request is agreed to the application can be withdrawn for that year before the place is offered.

If the request is refused, parents may decide whether or not to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or refuse it and make an in-year application for admission into Year 1 for the September following the child’s fifth birthday.

Where a parent's request has been agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year. These will be processed in the exactly the same way as all other Reception applications received at that time; there is no guarantee that a place will be offered at the school.

Parents do not have the right of appeal against a decision not to place the child in a year group outside their normal age group.

If parents wish to delay their application for a Reception place they are advised to discuss their child's needs/development with their current early years or nursery provider. If parents wish their child to remain in their existing nursery school or class for a further year (rather than moving into the Reception year group) they must let their current school know before the end of the Spring term in 2024 (before the Easter break).

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### **Children Out of Year Group (except applications for Reception from summer born children)**

The school's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".

If parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort. DfE guidance makes clear that "it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect parents to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case".

The Governing Board, as the relevant admission authority, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The Governing Board's decision will be based upon the circumstances of each case including the views of parents, the relevant headteacher(s), the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal. Similarly, there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school. The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Headteacher and senior leadership of the school.

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