



Diocese of Westminster



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Waltham Cross, Herts.

Governors' Admission Policy 2025 - 2026

'At St. Joseph's we live, love and learn by the example of Jesus.'

Applications are invited for September 2025 from families whose child will reach their fourth birthday between 1st September 2024 and 31st August 2025.

St. Joseph's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school maintained by Hertfordshire local authority. It was founded by and is part of the Catholic Church. The school is to be conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with Canon Law and teachings of the Catholic Church and in accordance with the trust deed of the Diocese of Westminster.

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 to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

The responsibility for the admission of pupils rests solely with the governing body of the school, who will give priority to children from practising Catholic families.

The governors intend to admit the Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 pupils to the Reception Class in the school year commencing September 2025. The school provides for the admission of children to the Reception Class in the September following their 4th birthday.

Reception Year Deferred Entry

Hertfordshire County Council's policy is that children born on or between 1st September 2020 and 31st August 2021 would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2025.

Applicants may defer entry to school up until statutory school age i.e. the first day of term following the child's fifth birthday. Application is made in the usual way and then the deferment is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term. Applicants may also request that their child attend part-time until statutory school age is reached. Entry may not be deferred beyond statutory school age or beyond the year of application. Therefore, applicants whose children have birthdays in the summer term may only defer until the 1st April 2025.

Summer Born Children

If a parent wishes his/her summer born child to start school in Reception in the September following his/her 5th birthday i.e. a child born between 1st April – 31st August being admitted to Reception at 5 years of age, they should make the school aware of this by writing a letter to the Chair of Governors at the time of application. Parents must then submit an application in the normal way. This application will be treated in the same way as all other applications and there is no guarantee that an offer will be made.

Children Educated Outside Their Chronological Age Group (except Reception applications for summer born children)

Parents may apply for their child to be educated outside his/her chronological age group i.e. a year behind or a year ahead. Application should be made to the Chair of Governors at the time of application and any supporting evidence should be submitted at the same time. Governors will consider each case on its own merits and permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Oversubscription Criteria

The published admission number for the reception class in the school year 2025 - 2026 is 30 children. Wherever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic applicants in accordance with the over-subscription criteria listed below.

These criteria need to be read in conjunction with the notes which are given below.

Category 1: Catholic looked after children and previously looked after children and Catholic children who have been adopted or made subject to Child Arrangements Orders or special guardianship orders immediately after having been looked after and Catholic Children Looked after from outside England(see notes)

Category 2: Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who have a sibling at St. Joseph's school at the time of proposed admission.

Category 3: Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice for whom St. Joseph's is the nearest Catholic school.

Category 4: Other baptised Catholic children.

Category 5: Other looked after children and previously looked after children and children who have been adopted or made subject to Child Arrangements Order or special guardianship orders immediately after having been looked after and Children Looked after from outside England(see notes)

Category 6: Children of catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian church.

Category 7: Children of other Christian denominations whose application is supported either by a certificate of baptism or by their Minister of Religion/Faith Leader in the form of a letter confirming membership of the faith community.

Category 8: Any other applicants.

Notes (these notes form part of the admissions criteria)

Looked after children

A "child looked after" 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 (section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) e.g. with foster parents.

Included in this rule are children who were previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order.

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.

Adopted – under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (section 46)

Child Arrangements Order – A Child Arrangements Order is an order under the terms of the Children’s Act 1989 (Section 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.

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.

Sibling is each of two or more children or offspring having one or both parents in common, and in every case living in the same house. (‘Sibling’ means brother or sister, to include adopted brothers and sisters, half, step or foster brothers and sisters. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older child will leave before the younger one starts’).

Parent is the person or persons who have legal responsibility for the child. (“Parents” in this context includes adoptive parents),

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
- “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 the amended joint application is received after the late date, it will be treated as “late”.

The late deadline for the 2025/26 transfer application process is 3rd February 2025 for reception, junior and middle applications. If these dates change, amendments will be published on the admissions web pages at the start of the 2025/26 application process in September 2024.

* 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.

Continuing Interest List

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list. A child’s position on a CI 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. The County Council will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. Continuing Interest lists will be maintained for every year group 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 (To retain a CI application after this time parents must make an In year Application).

Nearest Catholic School – is determined by distance information provided by Hertfordshire County Council.

Multiple births - Where an application by twins or multiple birth siblings would result in the published number of 30 pupils in an Infant Class being exceeded, the additional child (or children) can be admitted as an “excepted pupil”. This situation only arises where the last place (ie. 30th) is given to one twin/triplet and the other(s) would not receive an offer.

Medical or Social Need – The governing body will give top priority within a category to an application where compelling evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other need of the child which can only be met at this school.

To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child, the governing body will require written evidence from an appropriate professional, e.g. Doctor, Social Worker or Priest.

Catholic – means a member of a Church in 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 or a certificate of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

Catechumen – means 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.

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. (This used to be called a Statement of Special Educational Needs). 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.

Certificate of Catholic Practice

Applicants applying under criteria 2 and 3 should submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) by the closing date.

A 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' is a certificate issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of the child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests.

<http://www.rcdow.org.uk/education/governors/admissions/>

"Children of other Christian denominations" 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.

Application Procedures and Timetable:

Applications must be submitted to Hertfordshire County Council on their Common Application Form (either online or on paper) by January 15th 2025. If you do not reside in Hertfordshire, you must apply for primary places on your home LA's application form. Parents/carers are also requested to complete the attached Supplementary Information Form and submit it to the school by the same date.

The Certificate of Catholic Practice is also required from those wishing to be considered under criterion 2 or 3 and is available from the parish in which the family normally worships and from the Diocesan website at www.rcdow.org.uk.

Allocation details will be sent out by the Local Authority on behalf of the governors on April 16th 2025.

Appeals

Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal". Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details, log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system".

For In Year Admissions, the county council will write to you with the outcome of your application and, if you have been unsuccessful, will include registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals.

Tie Break

Where the offer of places to applicants in any of the categories listed above would lead to over-subscription, places will be allocated in that category on the basis of geographical proximity. Distance from home to school is carried out using the straight line distance measurement provided by Hertfordshire County Council. Hertfordshire County Council measure distances using a computerised mapping system to 2 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.

In the unlikely event of families living equidistant from the school, where only one place is available, admission will be decided by an independently witnessed lottery.

In the event of fraudulent or misleading information being supplied the governors reserve the right to withdraw the allocation of a place even if the child has already started in the school.

Applicants are advised to note that if they do not complete BOTH forms described above and return them by the closing date, the governing body may be unable to consider the application fully in this admission round which may result in their application being given a lower priority.

In-Year Admissions

Applications for In-Year Admissions are handled in conjunction with HCC. Applications for In-Year admissions must be made online to HCC, together with completing and submitting a SIF to the school (This can be downloaded from the school website). Where there is no waiting list, the local authority will be notified and the child will be admitted. 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, (with the following modifications: Catholic children without an offer of a school place elsewhere are given priority immediately after Catholic 'looked-after' children; similarly, other children without an offer of a school place are given priority immediately after other 'looked-after' children). 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. You will be offered the opportunity of being placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained by the governing body in the order of the oversubscription criteria (as modified above) and not in the order in which the applications are received. Names are removed from the list at the end of each academic year. When a place becomes available the governing body will re-rank the list and an offer will be made and the Local Authority will be informed accordingly. Vacancies and numbers on the school roll will continue to be notified to the LA.

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 governing body for the current school year. The governing body has this power even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number and to admit a child before those on the Continuing Interest List.