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Growing in faith: loving and learning together with Jesus

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St. Mary's Catholic Primary School St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Pre-School Admissions Policy

(DETACH FROM APPLICATION FORM AND KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS)

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Committee:	
Signed:	

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
Pre-School Admissions Policy

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. The school is conducted by the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust, as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and instrument of government, and seeks at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ.

We ask all parents applying for a place to respect the school's Catholic ethos – to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils, and its importance to the school community. All applicants are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support of this. This does not affect the right of parents who are not of the faith of this school to be considered for a place here.

The Trust has responsibility for admissions to the school. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be applied in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed overleaf. In this policy, 'applicant' refers to you, the parent applying for a place, and 'candidate' refers to the child for whom a place is made.

Children are eligible to start Pre-School following their 2nd Birthday. There are 3 intakes per year into the Pre-School. Mid-term starts are permitted. The Pre-School offers applicants flexible attendance patterns to accommodate the needs of individual children and families, providing these do not disrupt the pattern of continuity in the setting. Funded children can receive their full entitlement of 15 / 30 hours of care a week, subject to availability. Additional hours can be purchased as per the Fees Agreement. Please note that parents are under no obligation to take any extra hours. For non-funded children, sessions can be purchased as per the Fees Agreement.

Applications for funding can be made at www.beststartinlife.gov.uk.

Children remain in the Pre-School until the end of the academic year of their 3rd Birthday, at which point they can transfer into the Nursery class, providing a place is available and subject to the Nursery admissions criteria[1]. A separate application form should be submitted for Nursery. The dates for entry and for transfers between Pre-School and Nursery are set out in the following table:

2nd Birthday	Entry to Pre-School	Transfer to Nursery
1 Sep – 31 Dec	Spring Term (January)	September the following year
1 Jan – 31 Mar	Summer Term (April)	September the following year
1 Apr – 31 Aug	Autumn Term (September)	September the following year

Although this is the general procedure, some flexibility remains, e.g. if it is felt that an individual child would benefit by delaying their entry to the Pre-School; these options will be discussed with the parents or carers. In order to maintain adequate staffing ratios, the number of children in any session should not exceed 24.

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Sessions

The weekly sessions for the Pre-School are:-

- Morning - Monday to Friday, 8.45 am – 11.45 am (3 hours per session)
- Afternoon - Monday to Friday, 12.30 pm – 3.30 pm (3 hours per session)
- All Day - Monday to Friday, 8.45 am – 3.30 pm (6 hours 45 minutes per session)

Children are required to attend a minimum of 2 sessions per week. Additional sessions can be purchased, subject to availability of places. These can be purchased on an ad-hoc or on-going basis.

If children are attending an All Day session, parents/carers must provide a packed lunch in accordance with the school's packed lunch policy. Lunch will take place between 11.45 am – 12.30 pm and these sessions are only available as part of an All Day session (6 hours and 45 minutes per session).

Admission Criteria

'Looked After' children, and children who have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) who name St. Mary's will be admitted. Thereafter, the Trust will consider all applications according to the criteria set out below without reference to the ability or aptitude of the child.

In case of oversubscription the Trust will give priority to children in the following order:

1 Existing Pre-School children wanting to change / increase sessions;

i. Funded, with sibling or parent in school
ii. Funded
iii. with sibling or parent in school
iv. other children

2 New Pre-School candidate

i. Funded, with sibling or parent in school
ii. Funded
iii. with sibling or parent in school
iv. other children

Method of Allocating Places: Equal Preference Method

The Trust may increase the priority of an application within a category where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school.

Tie Break

If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the Pre-School than the number of available places, the tie break will be the date of birth of the child, with older children being given priority. In the case of equal dates of birth, the earlier application date will be given priority. Priority will not be given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.

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Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place in the Pre-School, you **must** complete the school's application form and return it to the office. Receipt of the form will be acknowledged and the application date recorded.

Applications for each cohort of Pre-School pupils will be held on file, ranked according to the above admission criteria. At the cut-off date the whole cohort's list will be considered, and written offers of places will be made as follows:

Cut-off date	Offers made to children who will start in:	Offer letters sent out early in second half of:	Acceptance required within:
Autumn Half Term	January	Autumn Term	2 weeks of date of offer
Spring Half Term	April	Spring Term	2 weeks of date of offer
Summer Half Term	September	Summer Term	2 weeks of date of offer

If any places are not accepted, then the current list will be reconsidered following the deadline, and further offers made if necessary.

Waiting Lists

Unsuccessful candidates will be informed in writing and placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and **not** in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. The waiting list will be maintained while the child is still of Pre-School age.

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Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan

Children with an EHC plan will be admitted if St. Mary's is the named school. Pupils who have an EHC plan are required to be admitted to the school which is named in the plan, even if the school is full.

Additional Information (Notes)

1. A place in the Pre-School does not guarantee a place in the Nursery class. Nursery places are allocated in accordance with the school's Nursery admission policy. A separate application must be submitted for Nursery.

2. A 'looked after' child is one who is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989.

   A 'previously looked after' child is one who, immediately after being 'looked after', became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An 'adoption order' is an order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

3. A sibling refers to 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 and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.