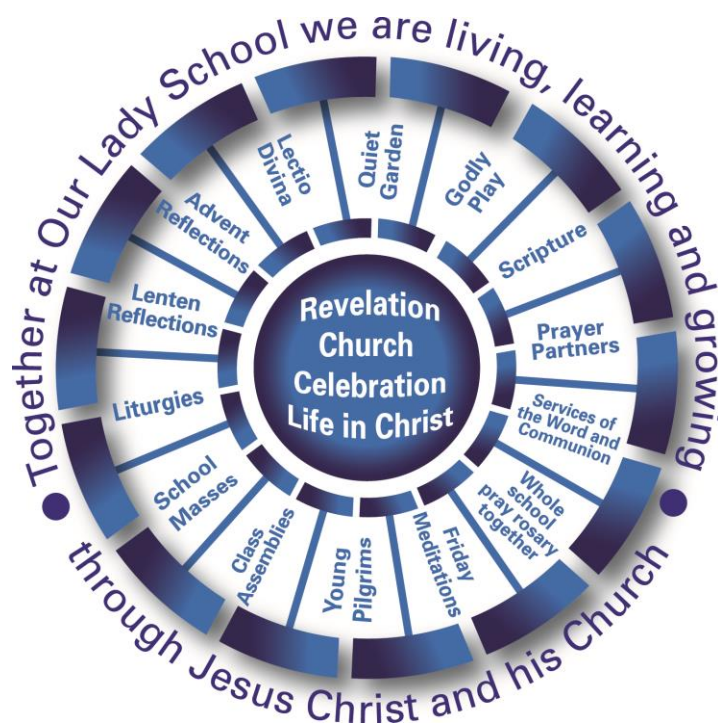




Our Lady Catholic Primary School

Admission Policy



The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust
A Catholic Academy

2023/2024

Our Lady Catholic Primary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. 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 expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for the reception class at Our Lady Catholic Primary School is 30. The Governing Body has sole responsibility for admissions to this school and intends to admit 30 children in the school year which begins in September 2023. Applications are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 4th birthday between 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023.

Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic applicants in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Westminster. Applications will be ranked using the criteria listed below.

In this policy *applicant* refers to the person making an application on behalf of a child; *candidate* refers to the child on whose behalf the application is being made.

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.

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

Where there are more applications than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority: -

1. Baptised Catholic 'looked after' and previously 'looked after' children, who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders as well as those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Baptised Catholic children from Catholic families with a Certificate of Catholic Practice of teachers at Our Lady School who have been employed at the school as a teacher for more than two years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made.
3. Baptised Catholic children from Catholic families with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who will have a sibling on roll at Our Lady School at the time of admission.
4. Baptised Catholic children from Catholic families with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who are resident in the parish of Our Lady Immaculate and St Andrew, Hitchin and baptised Catholic children from Catholic families with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who are resident outside the parish of Our Lady Immaculate & St Andrew and for whom Our Lady is the nearest Catholic school to their normal place of residence.
5. Other Baptised Catholic children from Catholic families with a Certificate of Catholic Practice.
6. Other Baptised Catholic children.
7. All other looked after children and children who have been adopted (or made subject to Child Arrangement orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following being looked after as well as those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
8. Other children of teachers at Our Lady School who have been employed at the school as a teacher for more than two years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made.

9. Children of Catechumens.
10. Members of an Orthodox Church.
11. Christians of other denominations.
12. Children of other faiths.
13. Any other applicants.

TWINS/TRIPLETS etc.

Where the last place is offered to a twin (or other child of multiple birth) the remaining child or children will be admitted as 'excepted children'. They will remain 'excepted' until the end of key stage 1. When a child in the class leaves they will not be replaced until the number drops to below 30.

APPLICATIONS IN PREVIOUS YEARS

For the past two years the governing body has been able to offer places to all applicants.

Please refer to the Notes over the page, for a definition of Catholic, Catechumen, Orthodox and other terms mentioned in the above list.

The attendance of a sibling* (see notes) at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application **within categories 3-13**.

TIE BREAK

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.

Distance Rule I: Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the subcategories listed above would still lead to oversubscription, the places up to the admission number will be offered to those living nearest to the school. This will be measured in a straight line distance measurement provided by Hertfordshire County Council.

Distance Rule II: If the last two children under any criteria live the same distance from school the offer of a place up to the admission number will be decided by random allocation. This will be a lottery which will be carried out by the governors in the presence of an independent witness.

FAIR ACCESS

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 local authority 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.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE for 2023-2024

In order to make an application, you **must** complete an **online Application Form** from your local authority. (paper forms can also be obtained from your local authority.) The application process opens on **Tuesday 1st November 2022**. All published information for Hertfordshire residents is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions. The closing date is **15th January 2023**. You **should** also complete the **School's Supplementary Information Form (SIF)**. Whilst this is not compulsory, the information on the SIF enables the Governing Body to assess your application fully against the School's criteria in the event of oversubscription. Please return the SIF (in person or by post) to the school, together with all other relevant paperwork required for your application. If you do not complete both of the forms described above and return them by **15th January 2023**, the Governing Body will be unable to consider your application against the oversubscription criteria and your child will be ranked under the lowest criterion. It is very unlikely that your child will be offered a place if a SIF is not supplied.

CHILDREN EDUCATED OUTSIDE THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL AGE GROUP (except 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.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE

Applicants applying under criteria 2, 3, 4 and 5 should submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) by the closing date. This Certificate is available from the priest at the parish where the family normally worships or from the diocesan website. It is the parent's duty to ensure that the CCP is submitted to the school in good time. The priest will only sign this form if he knows you and agrees that you are a practising Catholic family.

OFFERS

Allocations will be despatched by the Local Authority on behalf of the Governing Body on **19th April 2023**.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications received after the closing date will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed. If the school is oversubscribed it is very unlikely that late applicants will obtain a place.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

If you are unsuccessful you may ask us for the reasons for the refusal of a place. These reasons will be related to the oversubscription criteria listed in the policy and you will have the right of appeal to an independent panel. Should you wish to appeal please contact the school as soon as possible for an appeal form on which you must list your reasons for making an appeal. Appeals must be submitted to the school in writing by **20th May 2023**.

CONTINUING INTEREST LIST

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list for all community and voluntary controlled schools. 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 the child. Continuing interest lists will be maintained for every year ground until the summer term (date to be specified and confirmed to parents at the time of application). 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.

CHANGE OF DETAILS

If any of the details on either of your forms changes between the date of application and the receipt of the letter of offer or refusal, you **must** inform the School and the local authority immediately. If misleading information is given or allowed to remain on either of your forms, the Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the place, even if the child has already started at the School.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

The school will remain part of the county council's coordinated In Year admissions scheme. Application forms can be accessed via www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or from the Customer Service Centre, 0300 123 4043. Parents should return the application form direct to Herts County Council and also complete a new Supplementary Information Form which must be returned to the school together with an up to date Certificate of Catholic Practice (where applicable).

Where there is no continuing interest 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 continuing interest list. This continuing interest 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 June each year, therefore parents will need to re-apply at the beginning of July for their child to be included in the continuing interest list and provide a new Supplementary Information form and an up to date Certificate of Catholic Practice. When a place becomes available the

governing body will re-rank the list so that the Local Authority can inform the parent that the school is making an offer. Classes at Key Stage 2 will be limited to thirty four pupils.

RECEPTION YEAR DEFERRED ENTRY

Applicants may defer entry to school up until compulsory 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 deferral is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term as applicable. Applicants may also request that their child attend part-time until compulsory school age is reached. Entry may not be deferred beyond compulsory school age or beyond the year for which the application has been made. Therefore applicants whose children have birthdays in the summer term may only defer until the 1ST April 2024.

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 for the 2024-2025 admissions round. This application will be treated in the same way as all other applications and there is no guarantee that an offer will be made.

The governing body reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where a child is already attending the school the place itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or place was obtained by deception.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

'**Looked after child**' has the same meaning as in S.22 of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them (e.g. children with foster parents at the time of making application to the school).

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will also be prioritised under the 'looked after' rules 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
- c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

'**Adopted**'. An adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted, having previously been in care and whose parent / guardian can give proof of this.

'**Child Arrangements Order**'. A Child Arrangements order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.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 qualifies in this category

'**Special Guardianship Order**'. A Special Guardianship order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.12A appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s). A child 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualifies in this category.

'**Parent**' means the adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child.

'**Sibling**' means brother or sister, to include adopted brothers or sisters, half, step or foster brothers or sisters. A child looked after or previously looked after and in every case living permanently in a placement within the

home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application. A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older child will leave before the younger one starts.

'Catholic' means a member of a Church in full 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. For the purposes of this policy this includes a looked after child in the process of adoption and living with a Catholic family, where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised were it not for his/her status as a looked after child. For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the Catholic Church will be required. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism should contact their Parish Priest who, after consulting with the Diocese, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the laws of the Church.

'Certificate of Catholic Practice' means 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 a 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 at <http://rcdow.org.uk/att/files/education/admissions/certificate%20of%20catholic%20practice%20guidance%20for%20clergy.pdf>

'Catechumen' means a child or parent who is a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens for a child aged 7 or over. For a child under 7 years of age it will be the certificate of the parent.

'Eastern Christian Church' includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.

'Children of other Christian denominations' means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledge 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 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.

'Children of other faiths' means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in that supreme being through worship.

'Resident'. A child is deemed to be resident at a particular address when he/she resides there for more than 50% of the school week.

'Parish Boundaries'. For the purposes of this policy, parish boundaries are as shown on the attached map.

'Distance from School'. 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. If distances are identical, the Governing Body will draw lots in the presence of an independent witness. The same measurement is used to determine the nearest Catholic school to your normal place of residence.