St Mary's CE High School

'Everyone is equal; everyone deserves the best'

Admissions Policy 2026/2027

Please note that the information in this policy is correct for the year shown.
Policies for future years may well be different.

St Mary's CE High School
ADMISSION POLICY 2026/2027

This policy complies with the Department for Education School Admissions Code 2021.

St Mary's CE High School has Academy status, and it is the School Governors who determine the admissions arrangements for the school. It is a co-educational, multi-cultural school with a strong ethos of inclusion and a Christian character. The school, as far as possible, will ensure that students with disabilities have access to the same opportunities as other students.

Applications

The school's published admission number (PAN) is 240 and the Governors will admit 240 students to Year 7 in September 2025. The Governors warmly welcome applications from families of Christian or other faiths, or of no faith. The faith and other oversubscription criteria will only be applied when the number of applications is greater than the number of places available in any year group.

As St Mary's is the only Church of England secondary school in this part of Hertfordshire, we welcome applications from a very wide area.

ALL APPLICATIONS FOR THE MAIN YEAR 7 PRIMARY TRANSFER ROUND MUST BE MADE ON THE COMMON APPLICATION FORM FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IN WHICH THE CHILD RESIDES

St Mary's also requires the completion of the School's Supplementary Information Form (SIF) which once completed should be sent directly to the School c/o the Admissions Officer. If a SIF is not completed the Governing Body will apply their admission arrangements using the information submitted on the Common Application Form (CAF) only, which may result in your application being given a lower priority.

All applicants will be allocated a place if there are enough places available. In the event of more applications being received than there are places available, the Governing Body will allocate places in line with the oversubscription criteria set out in this Policy.

Each Local Authority operates an agreed coordinated admissions scheme. The LA will coordinate the process on behalf of the School according to the scheme published each year. The Governing Body, as the admission authority for St Mary's, will allocate the available places in line with this policy. However, offers will be made by the Local Authority in which the child lives.

The school co-operates with Hertfordshire County Council's Fair Access Protocol for children who are hard to place and children allocated a place at the school under the protocol will be given priority over others on the continued interest list and admitted even if the school is full (and over PAN if necessary).

Admissions of Children Outside of Their Normal Age Group

Families may seek a place for their child outside of his/her normal age group under various circumstances such as ill health, if the child is Highly Able or when the child has experienced problems. The Governors will make a decision on this on a case-by-case basis and in the best interests of the child. Applications for admission out of year group must be made in writing to the Governors and enclose supporting evidence.

Primary Transition Applications

The closing date for admissions application forms to be received by the Local Authority (LA) in which the child lives is as advertised by that Authority (31st October). Information on completing the on-line application and dates for notification of admission decisions are published in the LA admissions literature, which is also available from the LA website.

Offers of places for primary transition students are made by the Local Authority on 2nd March 2026 and parents need to confirm their acceptance of the offer of a school place for their child to the Local Authority.

The Over-subscription Criteria

A child with an Education, Health & Care Plan that names the School will be admitted before any over subscription criteria are applied.

In the event of more applications being received than there are places available, places will be allocated by the Governors Admissions committee in the order indicated.

RULE 1: Looked After Children (LAC) and all previously looked after children, including those who appear (to the Governing Body) to have been in state care outside England (IAPLAC) and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. The School uses HCCs published definition for this criterion, as set out in Note B at the end of this document.

RULE 2: **Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have an exceptional medical or social need to go to the school.** Clear evidence+ must be provided which clearly demonstrates why St Mary's CE High School is the only school that can meet the child's exceptional need. This evidence will be reviewed by the Governors' Admissions committee and clarification sought if necessary.

+ Evidence needed – recent independent objective evidence, for example from a doctor, psychologist, social worker or other professional involved with your child. Professional evidence that outlines the child's circumstances, making clear why only St Mary's CE High School can meet your child's exceptional medical or social need.

3. **Children of permanent staff employed by the School**. Priority will be given to children of staff employed by St Mary's in either or both of the following circumstances: where the member of staff has been employed by the School for two years or more at the time at which the application to school is made, and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.
   Note: for the purposes of this policy a 'child' is defined as a biological or legally adopted child of the staff member making the application.

4. **Children who have a sibling (brother or sister) in Years 7 to 12 at the School at the time of application**. The School uses HCCs published definition for this criterion, as set out in Note A at the end of this document.

   Note: The School will admit over PAN where to not do this would mean twins or multiple births could not be admitted together.

5. **Regular worship at a Christian Church**
   Parents/Carers or children who regularly worship at an Anglican Church or another Christian denomination and whose attendance is verified by their minister. Regular worship means the child or at least one of the child's parents attends public worship at least once a month and has attended for at least the past two years at the closing date for applications. A Christian Church is a recognised Anglican Church or another Christian denomination which is a member of Churches Together in Britain & Ireland, the Evangelical Alliance or Affinity.

6. **Membership of a mainstream non-Christian faith**
   Children or parents/carers whose membership of a non-Christian faith community for at least the last two years immediately prior to the closing date for applications is confirmed by their faith leader. [see covering letter]

7. **Church Primary School**
   Children who attend a Church of England or Roman Catholic Primary School. The child must be on the roll of the Church Primary School at the closing date for receipt of applications.

8. **Children whose home address is within the ecclesiastical parish boundaries of:**
   - St Mary the Virgin, Cheshunt
   - St Clements, Turnford

- St James, Goffs Oak; or
- Christ Church, Waltham Cross

The boundary identifying map can be found using www.achurchnearyou.com/parishfinder.php and entering your postcode.

9. **Other applicants.**

Should there be over-subscription within any one over-subscription category, then the priority ranking in that category will be the distance from the School to the child's home address (refer to Note C). 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.

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, then the tie break will be random. Every child entered onto the HCC admission database has an individual number assigned, between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. Where there is a need for a final tie-break the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority.
refer to note B

If you need help to complete the application form, please contact the Admissions Officer on 01992 629124.

Advice is also available for general help concerning admissions from the Local Authority. Contact can be made using the telephone numbers given on their website.

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.

Primary Transfer Round Appeals

Parents have a right of appeal against non-admission to the school to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. The Appeals process is managed by Hertfordshire County Council on behalf of the governors.

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".

In-Year Admissions and appeals

The School's in-year admission arrangements will work within the remit of Hertfordshire's agreed scheme of in-year coordination.

Parents can make an online In year application via the Hertfordshire County Council website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or contact the Customer Service centre on 0300 123 4043 for a paper application form. Parents should return the application direct to the County Council.

The Hertfordshire County Council Admissions Team will advise the school of the application. 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 log in and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals

Note A: Hertfordshire County Council published definitions for "sibling"
A sibling is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or 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 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.

 # 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 or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement. If an applicant lives at more than one address, the sibling must also reside at the same address for the majority of the school week. The sibling's address will be verified by the school.

Note B : Hertfordshire County Council published definition for "children looked after"
Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are those who were looked after but ceased to be so because of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order# or a special guardianship order##.

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

A "child looked after" is a child who is:
a) in the care of a local authority in England, or
b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services 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 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 child arrangements 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 outside England and subsequently adopted will be prioritized under rule 1 if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School".

 # 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.

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.

Children previously looked after outside England 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 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 … 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

Note C: home address

The address provided on the application form 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 at the time of application, 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, 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.*

It is for the Governing Body (as the admission authority) to determine the address to be used for admission purposes.

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 address equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If the child's living arrangements change after you apply and they now spend the majority of the school week living at a different address, you must provide evidence of the new permanent address.

Addresses will be verified as necessary with Hertfordshire County Council's Shared Anti-Fraud Service.

Applications made as part of the main Year 7 admissions round and in-year applications are processed by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) on behalf of the Governing Body in accordance with HCC's published coordinated admission scheme.

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, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

If HCC receives two different applications 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 year 7 admission round, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received by HCC "on time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before 2nd December ("the late deadline"). If the amended application is received after 2nd December, it will be treated as "late".