

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY



Love of God
Love of one another
Love of our world
Love of learning



NURSERY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR 2025/2026

Sacred Heart School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic children, in accordance with the oversubscription criteria below. Where places are available, applications for non-Catholic children will also be considered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its Governing Body 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.

Numbers to Admit:

Children are entitled to 15 hours of free early years' provision although some families may be entitled to 30 free hours (eligibility can be checked through the Department of Education.) The school admits children without reference to ability or aptitude. The number of intended 15-hour part-time admissions for Nursery is 52: if all part time places are not taken up, 30-hour full-time places will be offered. Where families take up a 30-hour full time place, but only have entitlement of 15 free hours, fees will be payable.

The Governing Body has sole responsibility for Admissions to the Nursery Classes and intends to make 52 part-time admissions to the Nursery Class which begins in **September 2025** with subsequent admissions in the spring and summer terms.

If the number of applications outnumbers the admission limit, applications are allocated in accordance with the Oversubscription Criteria and therefore not all applications are successful.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs (see note 1 below)

The admission of pupils with a Statement or Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with a Statement of Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school must be admitted. Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other children.

The Governing Body has agreed the following admission arrangements:

- Children will be ordered according to age and places offered to the oldest children in the admission criteria noted below.
- School terms are defined as 1st September to 31st December, 1st January to mid-April and mid-April to 31st August. Therefore, for example, if our nursery was oversubscribed, a child born in the Sept-Dec period would have priority over a younger child born in the Jan-Mar period. Two children born in the same school term would be prioritised according to our oversubscription criteria.
- Admissions to the Nursery are intended to be part-time, consisting of five sessions a week. Full-time places, consisting of ten sessions a week, will be offered if all part-time places are not taken up. Full-time offers will be issued giving priority to the oldest children in the admissions criteria: a child born in the Sept-Dec period will be given priority over a younger child born in Jan-Mar.
- Children can be admitted to the Nursery for a maximum of five terms. Part-time places will offer admission to five sessions per week from the beginning of the term after their third birthday. Full-time places will offer admission to ten sessions per week from the beginning of the term after their third birthday.

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- A three year old is eligible to join Nursery class at the beginning of the term after their **third** birthday. For this purpose only, terms are deemed to start on the 1st January, mid-April and 1st September each year.
- There will be a mix of three and four year olds in the Nursery class for the available 52 part-time places (26 full-time equivalents).
- The morning and afternoon sessions will be approximately the same length and no less than 3 hours in duration. (8.45am – 11.45am and 12.30pm – 3.30pm) Full-time places will run between 8.45am – 3.30pm, with a lunch break between 11.45am – 12.30pm (which is not part of the government-funded hours).

Term of Admittance:

Children become eligible for funding the term after their third birthday according to the cut off dates below:

Date of birth of child	Term in which child is eligible to be considered for entry to the nursery	Application deadline
Between 1 st April and 31 st August	1 st September (Autumn Term)	Friday prior to May half term break
Between 1 st September and 31 st December	1 st January (Spring Term)	Friday prior to October half term break
Between 1 st January and the 31 st March	Mid-April (Summer Term)	Friday prior to February half term break

These are nationally prescribed dates.

Application Procedures and Timetable

Parents may ask at any time for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list. At the time of application parents must complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) which can be obtained from the School.

The SIF form must be returned to Sacred Heart School by the application deadline given above.

The SIF form is not an application form but provides the Governors with information in order to place applications in priority order according to the school's oversubscription criteria. Where there are more applications than places, all applications received by the deadline will be considered using the oversubscription criteria only. The date of application will not be taken into account when allocating places.

The standard number of children admitted each year is 52 and the Governors intend to admit this number.

For the purposes of this policy, the parish catchment area for the school extends from Eastern Avenue and along the north boundary to Thorpe Hall Avenue. The southern boundary follows along the B1016 including Thorpe Esplanade, Eastern Esplanade and onto Marine Parade and Pier Hill. It continues along the west boundary along High Street and Victoria Avenue to East Street on the B1015.

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All admissions are determined by the Governing Body, who reserves the right to protect the denominational character of the school and to consider each application in line with the admissions criteria below.

Part-time places will be allocated into either morning or afternoon Nursery sessions. It is not currently possible to offer a mix of mornings and afternoons. The decision whether to offer a morning or an afternoon place lies with the Headteacher.

Sacred Heart have agreed with the Local Authority that if parents wish their child to attend Sacred Heart Nursery they will be expected to attend **all five sessions of a part-time place and all ten sessions of a full-time place at this setting.**

Parents, who are entitled to 15 hours of government-funded early years provision, are made aware that if their child attends a maintained school setting for five sessions per week, payments for any additional sessions (for example, in a private independent or voluntary setting) for their child will have to be met by parents.

Parents who are offered a place for their child and decide to defer entry will be placed back on the waiting list and their application considered alongside other applications at the next round of admissions.

Applications for places in Nursery class will be considered by the Headteacher, the Office Manager and the Early Years Leader. There is an obligation for the Headteacher to liaise with other bodies (e.g. local authority, health, social care, pre-school) as appropriate.

All information given by the parent/carer will be regarded as confidential but will be made available to those considering the application.

All applications for Nursery held by the school will be considered in the week after the half term before entry.

Following considerations of applications, parents will be informed as soon as possible after the end of the second week after half term, of the term before entry to the provision.

It will be made clear by information provided to parents that attendance at the Nursery does not guarantee a place at the main school. Applications for the main school are detailed in the Primary School Admissions Policy and no priority is given to children who have attended Nursery.

Unsuccessful Applicants

Unsuccessful applicants will be advised of their right to appeal to the Governing Body's Admissions Committee. In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful candidates will be offered the opportunity to be placed on the waiting list.

Mid-year Applications/ Waiting List

Parents can complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) and hand it to the office, for their child to be put on the Waiting List. The Waiting List will hold names of the children wishing to attend the Nursery, but for whom there is no place available.

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The Waiting List will be maintained by the school and in order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which applicants are received or added to the list. When a space becomes available, the school will refer to the Waiting List and then also to the Admissions Criteria and the place will be offered to the child in the highest category.

Oversubscription Criteria

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

1. Catholic looked after children and previously looked after children. **(see notes 2 & 3 below)**
2. Catholic children who are resident in the parish of Sacred Heart and John Fisher (only within the boundary of the former parish of Sacred Heart). **(see notes 3 & 10 below)**
3. Catholic children who are resident in the parishes of St. Helen's, Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Teresa's for whom Sacred Heart School is the nearest Catholic school. **(see notes 3 & 10 below)**
4. Other Catholic children. **(see note 3 below)**
5. Other looked after and previously looked after children. **(see note 2 below)**
6. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. **(see notes 4 & 5 below)**
7. Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. **(see note 6 below)**
8. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader. **(see note 7 below)**
9. Any other children.

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provision will be applied.

The attendance of a brother or sister at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. **(see note 8 below)**

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. A Statement of Special Educational Needs is a statement made by the local authority under section 324 of the Education Act 1996, specifying the special educational provision for a child. An Education, Health and Care Plan is a plan made by the local authority under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special educational provision required for a child.
2. A 'looked after child (LAC)' has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (e.g. children with foster parents) at the time of making applications to the school.

A 'previously looked after child (PLAC)' is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

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The admission into school for children previously in care but outside of England will be ranked in the same category as LAC/PLAC for all schools. A child who was previously in care but outside of England is a child who appears to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

3. '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, it includes a looked after child who is part of a Catholic family where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised or received if it were not for their status as a looked after child (e.g. a looked after child in the process of adoption by a Catholic family).

For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the 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 law of the Church].

4. 'catechumen' means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order catechumens.
5. 'Eastern Christian Church' includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.
6. '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 not 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 CYTŪN 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.

7. 'children of other faiths' means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 6 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.

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8. 'brother or sister' includes:
 - i. all brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address, and
 - ii. the child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant
9. A 'parent' means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child, and any person who has care of a child.
10. For the purposes of this policy, the parish catchment area for the school extends from Eastern Avenue and along the north boundary to Thorpe Hall Avenue. The southern boundary follows along the B1016 including Thorpe Esplanade, Eastern Esplanade and onto Marine Parade and Pier Hill. It continues along the west boundary along High Street and Victoria Avenue to East Street on the B1015.

This Policy is subject to annual review.

Last reviewed: **January 2024**