

Policy Document

Policy Statement on Admissions



St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Nursery Admissions Policy 2021 -22

Applicable to school places to be taken up in the 2021-22 Academic Year

St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery is affiliated with the Partnership Trust which constitutes the statutory Admission Authority for the school. All admission decisions are delegated to an Admissions Committee comprising of three school governors.

These Admission Arrangements have been compiled in accordance with the requirements of the 2014 School Admissions Code and the 2012 School Admission Appeals Code issued by the Department of Education, and with the law relating to admissions.

These Admission Arrangements apply for all admission applications received in connection with the 2021/22 school year: Starting school in September 2021 (the 'normal' admissions round) and 'In-Year' applications to join the school during the year.

Objections relating to the statutory compliance of these admission arrangements and/or the fairness and equality of local policy/practice should initially be raised with the School Office but may be lodged with the Education Funding Agency where the matter is not resolved locally.

The following information should be read in conjunction with Bath & North East Somerset's Coordinated Admission Scheme.

How to make an application for a child to start school for the first time in the Reception year

St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery is part of the Bath and North East Somerset's (B&NES) Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. All applications for admission for a Reception place must be submitted to your home Local Authority (LA) by the published closing date (15 January 2021). B&NES will forward all applications for St Mary's to the school and the Admission Committee of the Governing Body will rank all applications against the school's admission criteria should they be oversubscribed. The ranked list will then be returned to the Local Authority under the co-ordinated admissions scheme and they will make a single offer of a place on the published offer date on 16 April 2021.

Published Admissions Number

St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery has a Published Admission Number of 30 which means it will admit up to 30 children into Reception each year.

Special Educational Needs

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice requires the Admission Authority to admit any children with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or with a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery. Children with an Educational Health and Care Plan will be dealt with through the SEND Code of Practice and their placement is determined through the statutory assessment process or an annual review of their statement. All schools are consulted before being named on a pupil's Statement or Educational Health and Care and schools have the opportunity to draw attention to any difficulties arising from oversubscribed year groups. If a school is named on a Statement or Educational Health and Care Plan this will take priority over the Admissions Criteria, although, wherever possible the place will be offered within the Admission Number for the school. Parents/carers who wish to transfer their child from a setting named in the Education Health and Care Plan must seek approval to do so via the Local Authority that issued the plan before applying for an In-Year transfer.

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Admissions Criteria

In the event of over-subscription (i.e. more applicants than available places) applications will be ranked in accordance with the following criteria, given in order of priority. To be considered under the following criteria parents must have named the school as a preference.

Priority A

Children in Public care (Looked after Children) or a child who was previously Looked After but immediately after being Looked After became subject to an adoption, child arrangement order, or special guardianship order.

Priority B

[The 3 categories in this criterion will be given equal consideration].

- Children who live within a 1.5 mile radius* and for whom there will be a sibling in attendance on the admission date at the school.
- Children who live within a 1.5 mile radius* and for whom there will be a sibling in attendance at Paulton Junior School on the admission date at the school .
- Children who live outside a 1.5 mile radius* of the school but it is their closest School and for whom there will be a sibling in attendance on the admission date at the preferred school. (Siblings are defined as children who are brother or sister; half brother or sister; adopted brother or sister; step brother or sister; the child of the parent/carer's partner; and in every case the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address.

Priority C

Children who live closest to the school, as measured in a direct line.

Oversubscription Criteria

When applications within the above categories exceed the number of places available, priority will be given to children who live nearest the school;

If it is necessary to use a tie breaker to distinguish between two or more applications, a distance criterion will be used. Priority would be given to those children living nearest the school as measured in a straight line from the address point of the child's home address to the address point of the school as defined by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) using the Local Authority's Geographic Information System (GIS) computerised mapping system.

The GIS system used within this LA would not be able to calculate a staircase measurement in the case of multi-level dwellings. If the distance between two children's homes and the school is exactly the same, then a random allocation would be used for any such cases.

This will be undertaken in the school building by a person entirely independent of the Admissions Committee and with no current connection to the school.

Multiple Births

In the event of a school being oversubscribed where the applicant for the final qualifying place(s) available within the admission number is the parent/carer of twins, triplets or other multiple births the school will breach the admission number to allow these children to be offered places. In the case of schools where there would normally

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be Infant Class Size issues such children will remain as an 'excepted pupil' to the class size limit for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the normal class size limit of 30.

Applications for twins, triplets or other multiple births will be considered as individual applications. In the event of the school being oversubscribed the authority will breach the admission number to allow these children to be offered places where either:

- A child from a multiple birth has qualified for the last available place within the admission number but the other child(ren) from that multiple birth have not qualified for a place.
- A child from a multiple birth has had a place named at that school as part of their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) during the normal admissions round but the other child(ren) from that multiple birth have not qualified for a place.

In the case of schools where there would be Infant Class Size issues such children will remain as an 'excepted pupil' to the class size limit for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the normal class size limit of 30.

Home Address & Families moving into the area

The child's normal permanent home address where he or she lives with his or her parents or legal guardians for more than 2.5 school days per week will be used to decide where the child lives. Temporary addresses cannot be used to obtain school places. If parents or carers plan to move, documentary evidence will be required and in order for address changes to be taken into account in the first round of allocations made on 16 April 2021 the appropriate documentary evidence should be sent to the LA and received by the closing date of 15 January 2021. However, if details of a change of address that will occur after the closing date (and before the start of term 1) is received with the appropriate documentary evidence by 30 January 2021 i.e. before the LA has sent details of applications to other councils, it will be considered in the first round of applications. **In all cases, it is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure the LA as received the documentary evidence.**

Examples of evidence that may be acceptable to determine a child's address are: -

- A solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts and completion date for a property which is being purchased or a property which is being sold.
- A copy of a signed rental agreement or a solicitor's letter if moving to a council or rented property and proof of your sale or Notice to Quit on your current/previous property.
- A copy of a council tax bill or utility bill such as water, gas or electricity in your name for your newly owned or rented property together with proof of your sale or Notice to Quit on your current/previous property.
- Child benefit paperwork if in receipt.
- If you are moving in with a relative a letter from them will be required confirming the date you will be moving in together with a copy utility bill showing their name and address. A solicitor's letter will also be required confirming that completion of contracts has taken place on your sale or Notice to Quit on your current/previous property.
- In the case of children of UK Service Personnel or Crown Servants returning from overseas, with a confirmed posting to the area an official letter declaring the relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address should be provided.

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The Admissions Authority reserves the right to investigate home addresses and may ask applicants to supply further evidence of the home address. This may include Council Tax, Electoral Roll, Utility Bills, GP registration, and Child Benefit records. An application or place allocated on the basis of fraudulent information may be withdrawn.

Deferred entry to Reception

While a child is below compulsory school age, the parent/carer may choose to defer his/her child's entry to school until later in the school year. However, he/she cannot defer beyond the point at which the child reaches statutory school age or beyond the start of the last term in the school year (the school operates on the basis of a six term year).

Admission of children outside their normal age group

The Admissions Committee will consider applications for delayed or accelerated entry in cases where parents would like their child to be admitted to a year group either side of their chronological age group. The reasons for the request must be fully explained and included with the application form.

A parent of a 'summer born' child entitled to start school in September 2021, may choose to delay his/her entry to school until September 2022, where the parent(s) considers this arrangement to be in the best educational interests of the child. The parent(s) may request to apply for reception in September 2022 rather than Year 1. However, there is a risk attached to deciding this approach, which the parent must be clear about. Although the Governing Body may agree to a new application being submitted for a Reception place in September 2022, there can be no indication given as to whether a place will be available until the 2022 'normal' admissions round is complete. The following process will apply.

The parent must submit an application to the home local authority during the 2021 'normal' admission round, making it clear in the text box on the application form that he/she wishes to request to delay the child's entry until September 2022. Where the intention is for the child to start within the 2022 reception cohort, this must be clearly stated on the form. The Governing Body/Trust will formally note the parent(s) instruction and will consider the request. If a request to delay is approved, parents/carers will have their application withdrawn and effectively, the child will no longer be part of the 2021 'normal' admission round. Parents will then need to make a new application as part of the main admissions round for the following year in September 2022.

Where the Governing Body/Trust indicates willingness to accept an application from a child placed out of year group, this will not guarantee a place at the preferred school as any application will have to be made with the admissions round for the year in which the child is starting school and considered against the published admission criteria.

Where a parent delays a child's entry until 2022 and then decides that he/she should join year 1 rather than reception, he/she will need to make an In-Year application within six school weeks of the place being required.

Late applications for Reception places

Local authorities must coordinate 'normal round' reception applications until 31 August 2021, for children starting school in September 2021. However, if an application is submitted to the home local authority after the application deadline of 23.59 hours on 15 January 2021, it will be considered as a 'late' application and will not be administered until all on time applications have been processed, at which point there may no longer be a place available at the school.

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Any late applicants should complete their home LA's common application form and return it to their home LA as soon as possible. In line with agreed co-ordinated admission procedures the school will be informed of any late applications received.

In Year Admissions (i.e. all applications for existing year groups)

All In-Year applications must be made directly to the school using the application form which is available to download from the school website or as a paper copy from the School Office. If no form is submitted the Governing Body/Trust will not be able to process the application.

All applications will be considered by the Admissions Committee and applicants will be sent a written decision by post within 20 school days of receipt of the In-Year application form, or receipt of any subsequent information (submitted to support the application) where this is deemed necessary in order to determine the admission decision. If an application is refused, the decision letter will set out the reasons for refusal and explain how to appeal against the Admissions Committee decision.

If a place is offered, the applicant will be asked to confirm acceptance in writing within ten school days of receipt, following which the place will remain available for 28 school days from the date of the decision letter. If the child concerned is not attending school after this time frame, the Admissions Committee will write to the original applicant with a view to withdrawing the offer.

The Governing Body/Trust supports fair access to school for all children. If a suitable place cannot be secured using the normal admission arrangements, and the child meets the Council's Fair Access criteria, a school place will be identified for the child by the Area Placement Panel in accordance with Bath and North East Somerset's Fair Access Protocol. The Fair Access Protocol does not override the right of Parents/Carers to state a preference for a school place.

Where there are more applications at any one time than there are places available, priority will be determined by applying the Admissions criteria set out above.

Right of Appeal

Parents who are unsuccessful in their application for a place at the school have the right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Further information concerning how to appeal will be explained in the decision letter. The appeal form is also published on the school website and must be completed and returned to the school office within 30 days of the admission decision being issued. The admission authority will make appropriate arrangements for an appeal hearing to take place in accordance with the Appeal Timetable which is also published on the school website. The Independent Appeal Panel's decision is legally binding for all parties concerned.

Where there is concern that the appeal process has not been properly administered in accordance with the 2012 School Admission Appeals Code, a complaint may be raised with the Education and Skills Funding Agency for further consideration.

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-funding-agency

Waiting List

Parents/Carers who make a formal appeal will have their child's name kept on a waiting list for any places which may become available at their preferred school. They may also ask for their child to remain on the waiting list without making a formal appeal. Any places which do become available will be reallocated using the Admissions Criteria, taking into account those parents who have asked to remain on the waiting list or who have lodged a formal appeal together with any late applications received.

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However, children who are the subject of a direction by a local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

Every effort will be made to contact applicants on the waiting list using the last contact details provided by the applicant, but, where a response to an offer has not been received within 10 school days, the offer will be withdrawn and the available place offered to the next child on the waiting list to qualify for the available place.

Multiple Applications

Where parents share parental responsibility for a child but live separately, if two applications are received from the child's parents the LA/Governing Body/Trust will ask them to determine which application it should consider, and which application should be withdrawn. This is because the LA/Governing Body/Trust will offer only one school place to a child at any one time. If parents cannot agree they should resolve the issue through the court system for example to obtain a 'Specific Issues Order' which specifies which parent has responsibility to make decisions on school preferences. However, in the absence of any Order the application received from the parent who receives Child Benefit for the child will be the only one considered. Parents may be asked to provide supporting documentation confirming receipt of child benefit. Where the parents/carers are not entitled to Child Benefit the LA will ask for proof of the child's home address as held by the doctor's surgery at the point of application. Bath & North East Somerset Council cannot become involved in disputes between parents/carers.

Monitoring and Review

St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery and The Partnership Trust will review these Admission Arrangements on an annual basis and where changes are proposed to policy or practice will conduct a public consultation in line with statutory requirement.

November 2020