



We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together

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MAIN SCHOOL POLICY 2017 - 2018

We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together

St. Vincent de Paul School is a Catholic foundation intended for the education of Catholic children. The admission of pupils rests with the Board of Governors whose criteria for admissions are set out below. The first and most important criterion for the school is to determine that the child comes from a Catholic family. 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 is 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 Governors intend to admit sixty children (Published Admission Number PAN) at the reception stage in each school year. Applicants should be aware that for the past 2 years we have filled places by category 6.

The offer of a place in the Nursery does not ensure a place in Main School. Parents of children attending St Vincent de Paul nursery must make a fresh application for reception.

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.

Oversubscription Criteria

1. Catholic 'looked after children'¹ and Catholic children who have been adopted² (or made subject to 'Child Arrangements Orders'³), or 'special guardianship orders'⁴.
 2. Children, from a 'family'⁶ with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice'⁵, who are baptised 'Catholics'⁷ and who have 'siblings'⁸ in our school at the time of admission.
 3. Children, from a family with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice', who are baptised Catholics, 'resident'⁹ in St. Joseph's Parish¹⁰, Stevenage New Town or The Church of the Transfiguration Stevenage Old Town.
 4. Children, from a family with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice', who are baptised Catholics, resident in any other parishes and for whom St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School is their nearest Catholic Primary School.
 5. Children, from a family with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice', who are baptised Catholics and for whom St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School is not their nearest Catholic Primary School.
 6. Other Baptised Catholic children.
 7. Other 'looked after children and children who have been adopted (or made subject to Child Arrangements orders or special guardianship orders'.
 8. Families who are undergoing a Catholic Baptismal preparation course leading to Baptism before the child begins school, and this is verified in writing by a Catholic priest or members of the 'Eastern Christian Church'¹¹ as defined in Diocesan Guidance whose membership is confirmed in writing by their priest.
 9. Christians¹² and this is verified in writing by their Minister.
 10. Other Christian children.
 11. Children of other faiths.
 12. Any other children.
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Exceptional Need

The Governing Body will give top priority, after the appropriate category of looked-after children, to an application where compelling evidence is provided at the time of application, from an appropriate professional such as a doctor, priest or social worker, of an exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other need of the child, which can only be met at this school.

Other Priorities

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

Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the criteria listed above would lead to oversubscription the following provisions in each criterion will be applied.

- (a) Children who have a sibling already attending the school at the time of admission.
- (b) Proximity of the child's home to the school as provided by Hertfordshire County Council.
- (c) Where one child of twins/triplets/siblings for the same academic year has been offered a place and the other(s) have not the additional sibling will be offered a place, even though this would mean the class size is over the admission number.
- (d) Two families in the same block of flats or the distance given based on the HCC guidelines is the same and there is only one remaining place, then the offer of the place will be decided by random allocation. This will take place in the presence of an independent witness.

¹ **'looked after child'** is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the time of the application and who the local authority has confirmed will still be looked after at the time of admission into school.

² **'Adopted'**. An adopted child is a child whose parents can give proof of adoption following being looked-after.

³ **'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 qualify in this category.

⁴ **'Special Guardianship Order'**. A special guardianship order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.14A which defines it as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s). A child who is 'looked-after' up until the making of this order will qualify in this category.

⁵ **'Certificate of Catholic Practice'** means a certificate given by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family practises) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

⁶ **'Family'** normally includes the Catholic or Catholics who have legal responsibility for the child.

⁷ **'Catholic'** means a member of the Church in full Communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will be evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism in a Catholic Church or a Certificate of Reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

⁸ **'Sibling'** means the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, or child of the parent or partner, and in every case living in the same house from Monday to Friday.

⁹ **'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.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this policy, parish boundaries are as shown on the attached map. Distance of the child's home to the school will be measured in line with Hertfordshire County Council Guidelines.

¹¹ **'The Eastern Christian Churches'** (other than the Eastern Catholic Churches) include the Orthodox Churches as well as those Eastern Churches resulting from divisions following the early Church Councils." (Paragraph A18 Joint Guidance on Admissions revised February 2007).

¹² **'Christian'** for the purposes of this policy, means a member of one of the Churches affiliated to 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland'.

Pupils with an Educational 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. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the EHC plan code of practice. If your child has an EHC you must contact your local authority SEN officer. Children with this school named in their EHC Plan will be admitted.

Fair Access Protocols

The school is committed to taking its fair share of vulnerable children who are hard to place, in accordance with locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal round of admissions, the governing body is empowered to give absolute priority (admitted before children on the continued interest list) to a child where admission is requested under any local protocol which carries the agreement of both the governing body and the diocese for the current admission year. The governing body has this power even when admitting such a child would exceed the normal admission number.

Continuing Interest List

A Continuing Interest List will be maintained by the governing body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which the applications are received. Names are kept on the list for at least one year. The school will then contact families and ask if they wish to remain on the Continuing Interest List.

Appeals

You can appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place at St Vincent De Paul Catholic Primary School. You will need to complete an appeal form, which you can get from the school. Appeal forms must be completed and returned by 26th May 2017. At transfer time parents wishing to appeal who applied on line should log into their online application and click on the link 'Register an Appeal'. For those who did not apply on line, please contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request an Appeal Pack.

Your appeal will be heard by an independent appeals panel. If you are appealing against the decision not to offer your child a place you should still accept the offer of a place at the alternative school you have been offered. This will mean that, if your appeal is not successful, you will still have a school place for your child.

Distance

Distances are measured along a straight line between a child's address and the relevant school(s). A computerised mapping system is used, accurate to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of the 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.

In year applications

Applications for In-Year admissions are made directly to the school using the school's application form. The LA will also provide parents with an In-Year application form upon request. Where there is no Continuing Interest List 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 admissions policy and oversubscription criteria. 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 list will be maintained by the governing body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which the applications are received. Names are kept for at least one year. When a place becomes available the governing body will decide who is at the top of the list so an offer can be made. Parents wishing to appeal should contact the school directly in the first instance.

Deferred Entry

Applicants may defer entry to school up until statutory school age ie, the first day of term following the child's fifth birthday. Application is made in the usual way and then the deferment is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term. Applicants may also request that their child attend part-time until statutory school age is reached. Entry may not be deferred beyond statutory school age or beyond the year of application, therefore applicants whose children have birthdays in the summer term may only defer until the 1st April 2018.

Summer Born Children

Parents may apply for summer born children, i.e. a child born between 1st April – 31st August to start Reception in the September following their 5th birthday. The request should be submitted in writing to the Chair of Governors by 15th January 2017 and an application made in the usual way. The application will be ranked with all other applications and there is no guarantee that an offer will be made

Children educated outside their chronological age group (except Reception applications for 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 all 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.

Procedures

- Applications are invited for September 2017 from families whose child attains 4 years of age between 01/09/2016 and 31/08/2017. If parents/carers have not received a letter from Herts County Council (HCC) they should contact the Customer Service Centre (CSC) on, tel: 0300 123 4043 or access the website: www.hertsdirect.org/admissions.
 - In line with the Hertfordshire County Council admissions procedure, all parents/carers seeking a place for their child, whether they are Catholic or not, are requested to complete and return to the school a Supplementary Information Form (i.e. school application form) **as well as completing the Hertfordshire County Council online application form**. A copy of the Supplementary Information Form can be obtained directly from the school or via the school web site at www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk. Both forms must be completed and returned by January 15th 2017. If you do not complete and return both the forms described above by the closing date, the governing body will be unable to consider your application fully and your child is unlikely to get a place at the school. If an application is received after the closing date, it will be considered as a late application and will be dealt with after consideration of all on time applications, so you will be much less likely to gain a place at the school. Notification letters will be sent out by the LA on behalf of the governors on April 18th 2017. Baptism certificates must be produced at the time of application along with necessary supporting statements.
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- Before applying, parents are warmly welcome to arrange a visit to see the school at work.
 - Early application does not confer any higher or additional priority.
 - 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 you deliberately give fraudulent information, the governors will withdraw the offer of a place.

 - Unsuccessful candidates will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a continued interest list. This list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out in the policy.

 - **Certificate of Catholic Practice**
Applicants applying under criteria [2-5] must submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) by the closing date. This form (which used to be called a priest's reference form) is available from the school or from the diocesan website. Parents should fill in the top part of the form with their details and then take the form to their parish priest (or the priest at the parish where they normally worship) for signature. 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 Catholic family.
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