

# The Federation of St Bede's and St Bernadette Catholic Schools



**WE LEARN, WE PLAY, WE CARE, WE PRAY**

## **St Bede's Admissions Policy 2020-2021**

**Last review:** September 2019

**Next review:** July 2020

### **FEDERATION VISION**

Our vision is to provide all children with the best possible education, guided by the foundations of the Catholic faith, which develops their potential, prepares them for the future and inspires lifelong learning.



# The Federation of St Bede's and St Bernadette Catholic Schools

## Admissions Policy

### 2020/2021

St Bede's Catholic Infant and Nursery School and St Bernadette Catholic Junior School are voluntary aided schools in the Diocese of Southwark. They are in the trusteeship of the Diocese. The schools entered into a hard federation on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and are conducted by one joint Governing Body as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its Trust Deed and Instrument of Government, and seek at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ.

As Catholic schools, Catholic doctrine and practice permeates 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.

The schools exist primarily to serve the Catholic community. However, the Governing Bodies welcome applications, subject to the availability of places, from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

The Governing Board have responsibility for admissions to these schools and, having consulted with the local authority and other admissions authorities, intend to admit 60 pupils to the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes in the school year which begins in September 2018. The Governors may admit up to 39 children into the Nursery class in the academic year 2020 -2021 and up to 32 in each of the Junior classes, Years 3-6.

The school provides primarily for baptised Catholic children who reside in the parishes of St Bede's and St Simon and St Jude's.

- 1. The admissions criteria are the same for both the Nursery and Infant school. However separate applications are required and admission to the Nursery does not automatically guarantee a place in the Infant school.**

Applications for the Nursery will be prioritised according to the Admissions policy criteria. Places will be offered in September to children who have turned three by 30<sup>th</sup> September of that same year.

Applicants applying for a place in our Reception class will be required to complete a common application form available from the child's home local authority. This may be submitted either as a paper form or on-line as an e-form. The schools supplementary form should also be completed and returned to the school office.

- 2. St Bede's Catholic and Nursery school is a feeder school for St Bernadette Catholic Junior school (Pupils from St Bede's will be given priority). A Junior CAF must be completed for each child who wishes to transfer, in addition to the Schools' Supplementary Form.**



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## **Admissions criteria (Infant school)**

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

1. Looked after Catholic children or 'looked after' children in the care of Catholic families and previously looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.
2. Baptised Catholic children, whose parents are residents of St Bede's parish, St Simon and St Jude's parish or are enrolled in the catechumenate.
3. Other baptised Catholic children.
4. Other looked after children and other previously looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.
5. Children who are members of Eastern Christian Churches including Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church will be required.
6. Children of families who are members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) provided by a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
7. Any other children.

## **Oversubscription criteria (Infant)**

Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the categories listed above would lead to oversubscription, the following provisions will be applied:

1. Applications will be ranked in the order shown on the Supplementary Form, Highest priority to those who attend Mass weekly, then fortnightly etc. For categories 2 and 3 above, the strength of evidence of the family's Mass attendance on Sundays will increase the priority of an application within each category. This evidence must be provided by the parents and can be endorsed by a priest at the church where the family normally worships.
2. The attendance of a sibling at the Federation of St Bede's and St Bernadette schools at the time of admission will increase the priority of an application within each category.
3. The Governing Board may increase the priority of an application within a category where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which makes the school particularly suitable for the child in question.
4. Priority being given to those who live nearest to the school. The distance from home to school is measured as a straight line from the home to the main gate of the school using the measurement supplied by the local authority derived from their computerised mapping system.

## **Oversubscription criteria: (Nursery)**

1. Children who are 4 years old, the oldest being given first preference
2. The attendance of a sibling at the Federation of St Bede's and St Bernadette schools at the time of admission will increase the priority of an application. Evidence of the sibling relationship may be required.
3. Priority being given to children living nearest the school. The distance from home to school is measured as a straight line from home to the main gate of the school using the measurement supplied by the local authority derived from their computerised mapping system.

**Notes** These notes form part of the oversubscription criteria.



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'**Looked after children**' has the same meaning as in Section 22 of the Children's Act 1989, and means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them (e.g. children with foster parents). Please note that children in private fostering arrangements are not considered looked after children.

'**Catholics**' include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of baptism in a Catholic Church or a certificate of reception into 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 priest's reference 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).

Reference to other Christian denominations refers to other denominations that are full members of Churches Together in England.

'**Catechumen**' means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic church. This will normally be evidenced through the parish priest, for example with a letter confirming enrolment.

A sibling is defined as a full brother or sister or step brother or sister living at the same address, a child who is living as part of the family unit by reason of a Court Order or a child who has been placed with foster carers as a result of being 'looked after' by the local authority.

To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the Governing Body will normally require written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

## **Admissions Procedure**

To apply for a place at the school, you must complete and return two separate forms.

1. The **Common Application Form** available from the Local Authority where the child resides should be returned to them in paper form or online submission by the date stated on the application form.
2. The **Supplementary Information and Priest's Declaration Form** available from the school or LA website **should be completed and returned to the school**. Evidence of Baptism and a recent utility bill must accompany the Supplementary Form. Completion of a Supplementary Form is not mandatory; however, if one is not received the Governors will not be able to apply their admission criteria and the application will be considered under the 'any other applicants' category.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application by a common offer date specified by the local authority. This will initially be by letter from the local authority on behalf of the school. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher on your Common Application Form) you may ask the school for the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.



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## **Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan**

The admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or with an EHC Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements and EHC plans by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with a statement or EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

### **Waiting List**

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the schools may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list, which will be maintained for 3 years will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

It is possible that when a child is directed under the Local Authority's fair access protocol they will take precedence over those children already on the list.

### **In-year (casual) admissions**

Applications for a place at the schools in-year must be made using the common application form of the local authority (LA) where the child resides. This form must be returned to the same LA. The school's supplementary form should also be completed to enable the governors to rank the application in the event of there being more than one application for a place. The governors will use the same criteria to rank the application as that listed above. The offer of a place at the school will be made by the LA on behalf of the governors. In the event of the governors deciding that a place cannot be offered, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

### **Admission of children below compulsory school age**

The governors will provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year; parents may also request that their child attend part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

### **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents who are seeking a place for their child outside of their normal age group, e.g., the child has experienced problems such as ill health or the parents of a summer born child choosing not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

Governors will make decisions on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group, and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. They will also take



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into account the views of the school's head teacher. When informing a parent of the decision which year group the child should be admitted to, the governors will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

Where the governors agree to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school the local authority will process the application as part of the main admissions round, (unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible) and on the basis of the determined admission arrangements, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

### **Right of Appeal**

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with section 85(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and must set out the reason on which the appeal is made. Appeals should be made to the Admissions Appeals Clerk at the school address. Parents/Carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

Infant classes are restricted by the legislation to 30 children. Parents should be aware that an appeal against refusal of a place in an infant class may only succeed if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) The admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit: or*
- b) The admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or had not been correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied,*
- c) or the panel decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.*

**There is no right of appeal if an application for a place in the Nursery is not offered.**

### **Oriental Rite Churches in union with Rome**

Alexandria: Coptic, Ethiopian

Antioch: Malankrese (Sri Lanka), Maronite, Syrian

Armenian: Armenian

Chaldean (Syro-Oriental): Chaldean, Malabar

Constantinople (Byzantine): Albanian, Byelorussian, Bulgarian, Greek, Melchite, Italo-Albanian, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Slovakian, Ukrainian, Hungarian.

Source: Annuario Pontificio 2002 Riti nella chiesa pp979-982