

*This document is a statement of the policy of St. Mary's CE Primary School, Fownhope with respect to Admissions. It has been updated and amended in the light of new legislative requirements during 2007 and was approved by the Governing Body on 1st December 2009. For the year 2011/12. This policy will be amended to include any further statutory changes.*

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Aided School in the Diocese of Hereford. The provided school for a child is the one regarded by the Local Authority as serving the area in which he or she resides (often referred to as the Catchment Area). The school catchment area is shown on the coloured map accompanying this document.

As St. Mary's Primary is a Voluntary Aided School, it means that the Governing Body is the Admissions Authority, and must publish a policy setting out all the arrangements for admissions. The Governing Body works with the Local Authority and the Diocese in adhering to their statutory arrangements and criteria.

This policy has been made in accordance with the Sex Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act, the Human Rights Act 1995 and 2006 and the Equality Act 2006. The implementation of this policy will be administered fairly and impartially. The decision to admit, or otherwise, is the sole responsibility of the Governing Body.

The information following is correct for the academic year 2009/2010 onwards, but might be altered for future years. All applications are made by parents or carers for their child or children.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

Every school has a limit set for admissions during the year in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988. This is called the planned admissions number (PAN). For St. Mary's CE Primary School a limit of 15 places has been set for the Reception group.

St. Mary's CE Primary School has mostly mixed-year classes therefore classes may accommodate children over PAN if this would not adversely affect the provision for children in the class or in the school as a whole. A KS1 class will not exceed 30 at the beginning of an academic year.

The Local Authority operates a timetabled co-ordinated admissions procedure for all primary schools in line with Government legislation. The LA co-ordinates the admissions process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published in their Admissions Booklet for that year – however, it is still the Governing Body for this school which will allocate the available places in line with this policy.

The parents of each child approaching school age and living in the catchment area will receive an admissions pack from the Local Authority which will contain information about the admission process and the forms that are required to be completed. The information booklet will help you complete the application form and will provide the dates for notification to parents of admission decisions and the closing date for accepting places or for lodging any appeals.

An application from a family with a child who has a statement of special educational needs that names St. Mary's CE School will be accepted in line with the statutory requirements to do so.

The governing body ranks applicants by the following criteria -

1. **Looked After** children/children in care
2. Children whose parents make an application on grounds of **faith** supported by the appropriate Vicar/Rector/Minister of a Church in the Diocese. Faith in this context is defined as being an adherent to the doctrine of the Christian Trinity.
3. Pupils whose home address is **within** the catchment area of the school as defined by the LA and who have **sibling/s in school** at the time of entry.
4. Children whose main address is **within** catchment as defined by the map provided by the LA Admissions section
5. Children with **sibling/s** who are in school at the time of the application
6. Children with **sibling/s** who previously attended St. Mary's
7. Children who attend Pre-school **Playgroup** on the school site
8. Children who live **outside** catchment, ranked by distance /the shortest available walking route to school

## OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

If there are too many applications for places, the Governors will decide which children would be offered places at St. Mary's C E Primary School according to the following admissions criteria, taken in order.

1. **Looked After** children/children in care
2. Children whose parents make an application on grounds of **faith** supported by the appropriate Vicar/Rector/Minister of a Church in the Diocese. Faith in this context is defined as being an adherent to the doctrine of the Christian Trinity.
3. Pupils whose home address is **within** the catchment area of the school as defined by the LA and who have **sibling/s in school** at the time of entry.
4. Children whose main address is **within** catchment as defined by the map provided by the LA Admissions section
5. Children with **sibling/s** who are in school at the time of the application
6. Children with **sibling/s** who previously attended St. Mary's
7. Children who attend Pre-school **Playgroup** on the school site
8. Children who live **outside** catchment, ranked by distance /the shortest available walking route to school

Please note that

- 'Church' is taken as meaning an organised body subscribing to the doctrine of the Trinity, which is either a member of the local Christian Council / Council of Churches or affiliated to 'Christians together in England'.
- 'shortest available walking route to school' is determined by the LA using computer assisted OS maps and post codes to ensure accurate measurement. This measurement will simply be used to differentiate between candidates who fulfil these criteria in the event of oversubscription, rather than being a requirement under the criteria itself.
- 'Parents' include all those who have a parental responsibility for a child as set out in the Children Act 1989. Where responsibility is shared, the person receiving Child Benefit is deemed to be the parent responsible for completing application forms and whose address will be used for admission purposes.

- 'The Home Address' will be the address used for correspondence related to where 'Child Benefit' is paid. In cases where there is doubt of the home address, or where a child lives between two homes (split families) or other relevant circumstances, proof of the home address must be provided to the school to confirm the address on the application form. Home address will be the address that complies with the above at the closing date for applications set by the Local Authority.
- 'sibling' is defined as:
  - A full or half brother or sister
  - A step brother or step sister
  - An adoptive brother or sister
  - Children or parents who are married or cohabiting, where the parents and children live together in the same family household.

The closing date for applications, set by the LA, is in January preceding the relevant academic year. Subsequent to this date the Governors will allocate places in accordance with the admission policy. If a place is refused, then under the 1996 Education Act, a parent has the right of appeal, for which application should be made in writing to the Diocesan Director of Education, The Diocesan Office, The Palace, Hereford HR4 9BL.

## **IN YEAR APPLICATIONS**

Within the school's admission limits of 15 pupils per year group, the allocation of places which become available during the year will be made on the basis of the Oversubscription Criteria but bearing in mind that there are mixed age classes and it may be possible to be flexible if a particular year group only has very few children.

## **ADMISSION DECISION**

Reception parents will be notified of the Governors' decision on the date published in the Local Authority's Booklet.

If you are offered a place at St. Mary's CE Primary School, you will be given more information and your child will be invited to visit the school during the latter part of the summer term. There is a welcome and induction programme for new parents and children.

## **WAITING LIST**

Currently this school does not have a waiting list.

## **APPEALS**

Currently, and in recent years there have been no appeals made regarding admission arrangements – but the procedure and process is outlined in the Local Authority’s Booklet ‘Information for Parents – Admissions and Transfer to Schools’.

### **Addendum: Church Places Criteria**

The following extract adapted from the National Society’s admissions advice is and additional explanation that the DBE (Diocesan Board of Education) would like highlighted to Governors and prospective parents of how Church places are defined and determined:

National context: On 14<sup>th</sup> March 2006, the Archbishop of Canterbury asked the Church to find ‘some simple objective criteria, applicable across the country, for admissions; and to avoid misunderstanding, some clear public commitment in the whole sector to guarantee places for local children and for children of other faith backgrounds’. The Hereford Diocesan Board of Education has responded by recommending the following criteria and understanding which have been adopted by this school’s Governing Body.

### ***Christian commitment – ‘faith priority’ places***

- (i) ***Baptism*** is the basic criterion for the identification of the children of practising Christian families. ***Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child*** could also be taken into account for those Christians who do not practise infant Baptism. However, that will not normally be enough on its own, if over-subscribed schools are going to be able to distinguish those most clearly admissible on faith grounds. There needs also to be some evidence on the basis that they are of the faith of the school
- (ii) We operate, therefore, a three-tier stratification for faith-based places:
  - *known to the church*
  - *attached to the church and*
  - *at the heart of the church*

- (iii) Applicants for a faith priority place will be asked to identify themselves as being: known to the church; or attached to the church; or at the heart of the church. The period in question will normally be the past two years. Applicants new to the area would need to provide evidence from a previous church or churches
- (iv) An applicant '**known to the church**' will not be a frequent but probably an occasional worshipper, someone who is perhaps known through a family connection, or one or more of whose family would be involved in some church activity, such as a uniformed or other church organisation
- (v) An applicant '**attached to the church**' will be a regular but not frequent worshipper, by which is meant (for example) one who usually attends a monthly family or church parade service or is regularly involved in a weekday church activity including an element of worship
- (vi) An applicant '**at the heart of the church**' will be a regular worshipper. This might normally mean one who worships usually twice a month. To accommodate difficult patterns of work and family relationships account will be taken of week-day worship. **The worshipper could be the child** for whom application is made or one or both parents

#### **Application form and church reference**

- (vii) Applicants for faith priority places will need an application form (available from the Governors) to give evidence of their Christian (or other faith) commitment
- (viii) Christian applicants should give evidence that the child for whom a place is sought has been baptised or had a service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child. A copy of a certificate of Baptism or of a service of Thanksgiving should be included if possible with the application
- (ix) There needs to be confirmation through a worship community reference of applicants' claims, where they are applying on a faith priority basis. This reference will simply confirm or reject the objective facts as proposed by the family: this family is known to the church; this family is attached to the church; this family is at the heart of the church
- (x) Once the reference is available to the governing body of the school it becomes objective evidence for the admissions committee in forming their judgement on the application. The same will apply in the case of any subsequent appeal or adjudication.