



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

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## **NURSERY ADMISSION POLICY 2026-2027**

(Children born between 01/09/2022 – 31/8/2023)

*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.

In this policy applicant refers to the person making an application on behalf of a child.

The Governors intend to offer 26 morning and 26 afternoon places. Pupils may apply for a 15 hours or 30 hours place. All nursery aged children are entitled to 15 hours free nursery provision. St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School offers this on a Monday to Friday basis, term time only 8.45am-11.45am or 12.30pm-3.30pm.

Parents may be eligible to an additional 15 hours free nursery provision but will need to apply for an eligibility code. Please see the following Website to check conditions of eligibility [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents). If a 30 hour place is offered, parents will need to provide the eligibility code information or pay for the additional 15 hours per week. Parents must reapply each term for their eligibility code.

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.

If more than 26 full-time or 52 part-time applications are made for nursery the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below, regardless of hours required.

### **Oversubscription Criteria**

1. Catholic 'looked after children'<sup>1</sup> with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' and Catholic children with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted<sup>2</sup> (or made subject to 'Child Arrangements Orders'<sup>3</sup>), or 'special guardianship orders'<sup>4</sup>. Places are allocated to children in public care according to chapter 7, section 2 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.
2. Children, from a 'family'<sup>5</sup> with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice'<sup>6</sup>, who are baptised 'Catholics'<sup>7</sup> and who have 'siblings'<sup>8</sup> in our main<sup>9</sup> school at the time of admission.
3. Children, from a family with a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice', who are baptised Catholics, 'resident'<sup>10</sup> in St. Joseph's Parish<sup>11</sup>, 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 an '*Eastern Christian Church*<sup>12</sup> as defined in Diocesan Guidance who can provide a certificate of baptism or reception.
9. Children of other Christian demominations<sup>15</sup> with either a certificate of baptism or a letter from their minister confirming membership of the faith community.
10. Children of other faiths<sup>16</sup>, whose membership of the faith community is confirmed by a letter from their faith leader.
11. Any other children.

### **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, social worker or a professional from the current educational setting, of an exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other need of the child, which can only be met at this school. (see Appendix 1)

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.

### **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) Distance of the child's home to the school as measured in line with Hertfordshire County Council guidelines
- (c) 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.

### **Definitions**

<sup>1</sup> '**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. These children will be prioritised under rule 1.

*Highest priority will also be given to children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.*

*Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Rule 1 if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School".*

A "child looked after" is a child who is:

- a) in the care of a local authority, or
- b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989)

*All children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under rule 1 (This definition has been amended in accordance with paragraph 1.7 (footnote 17) of the School Admissions Code that came into force on 19 December 2014).*

*Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified by law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order and the application would be prioritised under Rule 1.*



Children who were not "looked after" **immediately** before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, **will not** be prioritised under rule 1. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under rule 2.

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

<sup>3</sup> **'Child Arrangements Order'**. Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

<sup>4</sup> **'Special Guardianship Order'**. Under 14A of The Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

<sup>5</sup> **'Family'** normally includes the Catholic or Catholics who have legal responsibility for the child.

<sup>6</sup> **'Certificate of Catholic Practice'** Means a certificate issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of the child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/governors/admissions/>

<sup>7</sup> **'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 with the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this Policy this includes a looked-after child who is part of a Catholic family and in the process of adoption, where a priest's letter demonstrates that the child would have been baptised or received were it not for their status as a looked-after child.

<sup>8</sup> **'Sibling'** The sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carers or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after<sup>13</sup> and in every case living permanently<sup>14</sup> in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application. If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

<sup>9</sup> **'Main School'** Classes from reception to year 6 (excludes Nursery)

<sup>10</sup> **'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.

<sup>11</sup> **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.

<sup>12</sup> **"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).

<sup>13</sup> Children previously looked after are those children adopted or with a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. This definition was amended following a determination by the OSA (Office of the Schools adjudicator) in August 2014.

<sup>14</sup> A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement.

<sup>15</sup> **"Children of other Christian denominations"** means: children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledging 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 no 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 of 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.

<sup>16</sup> **"Children of other faiths"** means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' 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.



## **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.

## **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. 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. 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. When a place becomes available the governing body will decide who is at the top of the list so an offer can be made.

## **Procedures**

- 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). A copy of the School Supplementary Information Form can be obtained directly from the school or via the school web site at [www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk](http://www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk)
- If you do not complete the form by the closing date, the governing body will be unable to consider your application 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 school on behalf of the governors
- Baptism certificates must be produced at the time of application along with necessary supporting documents
- 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 you deliberately give fraudulent information, the governors will withdraw the offer of a place.

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| <b>The offer of a place in the Nursery does not ensure a place in main school.</b> |
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## **Appendix 1**

Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school

Applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted.



All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However in a few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school.

Few applications under this section are agreed.

All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

- a. Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or
- b. Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs.
- c. If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.
- d. For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate.

Applications under this section can only be considered when supported by a recent letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example a doctor, psychologist or police officer. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child.

A panel of governors will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements of this rule.

