ST VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ADMISSION POLICY 2026/27

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its governing body as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and instrument of government and seeks at all times to be a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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 be fully supported by all families in the school. We therefore hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved, and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school. This does not affect the right of an applicant who is not Catholic to apply for and be admitted to a place at the school in accordance with these admission arrangements.

The governing body is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round[1]. The admission authority has set the school's Published Admissions Number ("PAN") at 60 pupils to the reception year in the school year which begins in September 2026.

The admission authority will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's PAN.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (see note 1)

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school must be admitted. Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other children.

Oversubscription Criteria

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

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children. (see notes 2&3)
2. Catholic Children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who are resident in the parishes of St Joseph's, Stevenage New Town or The Church of the Transfiguration Stevenage Old Town for whom St Vincent de Paul School is the nearest Catholic school (see notes 3, 4 & 12).

[1] This is for admission to the school at the start of the school year in September and not for applications made in-year.

3. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice resident in any other parishes, for whom St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School is the nearest Catholic school (see notes 3, 4, & 12).
4. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)
5. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)
6. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 5&6)
7. Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. (see note 6)
8. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader. (see note 7)
9. Any other children.

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.

(i) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can most appropriately be met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made (see note 11).

(ii) The attendance of a brother or sister at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above (see note 9).

(iii) To children of members of staff who have been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of application and will continue to be employed at the school at the point of admission or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Tie Break

Priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distances are calculated using Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the Address Base Premium address point of the child's house to the address point of the school. Address Base Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.

In the event of distances being the same for two or more children where this would determine the last place to be allocated, random allocation will be carried out and supervised by a person independent of the school. All the names will be entered into a hat and the required number of names will be drawn out.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round[2], you must complete the Hertfordshire County Council online Common Application Form (www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions). You are also requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form attached to this policy if you wish to apply under oversubscription criteria 1 to 4 and 6 to 8. The Supplementary Information Form

[2] This is for admission to the school at the start of the school year in September and not for applications made in-year.

should be returned to the Admissions Secretary at the school address by 15th January 2026.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 16th April 2026 or the next working day, by the local authority on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

If you do not provide the information required in the SIF and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child may not be placed in criteria 1 to 4 or 6 to 8, and this may affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 15th January 2026.

Late Applications

Late applications will be administered in accordance with your home Local Authority Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. You are encouraged to ensure that your application is received on time.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1st April and 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to reception rather than year 1.

Any such request should be made in writing to the Admissions Secretary the same time as the admission application is made. The admission authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher, including the head teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

Continued Interest List In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a Continued Interest List. This Continued Interest list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and *not* in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Continued Interest List for admission will operate throughout the school year. The Continued Interest List will be held open until the last day of the summer term.

Inclusion in the school's Continued Interest List does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

In-Year Applications

An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the normal admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Application should be made to the school by contacting the Admissions Secretary. Further information is available on the school website:
http://www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk/os-admissions-in-year-applications.html

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied.

If there are no places available, the child will be added to the Continued Interest List (see above).

Fair Access Protocol

The school is committed to taking its fair share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the admission authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The admission authority has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the PAN (subject to the infant class size exceptions). which can also be before children on the Continued Interest List

Parents wishing to appeal should call the customer Service Centre on 03001234043 to request their registration details, log onto www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link ' log into the appeals system' 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.

Nursery

For children attending the school's nursery, application to the reception class of the school must be made in the normal way, to the home local authority. Attendance at the school's nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered at the school.

The admission authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where the child is already attending the school the place itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or the place was obtained by deception.

Appeals

Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link 'register an appeal'. Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the customer Service Centre on 03001234043 to request their registration details, log onto www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link ' log into the appeals system'. Appeal forms must be completed and returned by the 15 May 2026 (4pm).

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.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. An Education, Health and Care Plan is a plan made by the local authority under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special educational provision required for a child.

2. A 'looked after child' has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (e.g. children with foster parents) at the time of making an application to the school.

   A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because he or she was adopted,or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

3. 'Catholic' means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of baptism in a Catholic Church or a certificate of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy, it includes a looked after child living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

   For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the Church will be required. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism should contact their Parish Priest who, after consulting with the Diocese, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

4. '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.: https://education.rcdow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Certificate-of-Catholic-Practice-7-9-15-Final.pdf
5. 'Catechumen' means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.

6. 'Eastern Christian Church' includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.

7. '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 CYTÛN 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.

8. ‘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.

9. A ‘brother or sister’ includes:

    (i) all natural brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters, adopted brothers and sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address, and

    (ii) the child of a parent’s partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same home address as the child who is the subject of the application.

10. A ‘parent’ means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child and any person who has care of a child.

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

12. For the purposes of this policy, parish boundaries are as shown on the attached map and will be applied to the admission arrangements for 2026-2027.

    [Map attached]

13. A child’s **“home address”** refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form (“CAF”). Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the CAF, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.