Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery Bushey

NURSERY ADMISSION POLICY 2025-2026

Learning and loving with Christ as our teacher

This document outlines the Nursery Admissions Policy for Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery which has been agreed by the Governing Body.

MISSION STATEMENT
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Let it be known to all who enter here that Christ is the reason for this school, the unseen but ever present teacher in all its classes, the model for its children, the inspiration for its staff.

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School was founded by the Church to provide education for Catholic children. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic applicants in accordance with criteria listed below.

The aim of the school is to provide a Catholic education for all its pupils. Therefore, 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 supported fully 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 Governing Body has sole responsibility for admission to this school and intends to admit 33 pupils (to the Nursery class) in the school year, which begins in September 2025. The school offers 33 places for 15 hours a week every morning term time only for 38 weeks per year (8.45am to 11.45am). In addition, the school offers 26 places for children who are attending mornings to stay for the afternoons (8.45am to 3.15pm) term time only for 38 weeks per year.

Applications are invited for September 2025 from families whose child attains 3 years of age between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025. Parents/carers of children born between 1 April to 31 August 2020 who, in the 2024-25 admission round decided to defer entry until this admission round, may apply.

Over recent years, the school has been oversubscribed with Catholic children, however, applications will be welcomed for children who are not Catholic. If there are fewer applications than places available, all applicants will be offered a place.

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery Bushey

NURSERY ADMISSION POLICY 2025-2026

Learning and loving with Christ as our teacher

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

Where the number of children put forward by applicants exceeds the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority.

1 **Baptised** Catholic 'looked after' children and baptised Catholic children who were 'looked after' children including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be 'looked after' because they were adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders **with a Certificate of Baptism.**[1]

2 **Baptised** Catholic children with a **Certificate of Catholic Practice and a Certificate of Baptism** with siblings within the school at the time of admission.

3 **Baptised** Catholic children with **a Certificate of Catholic Practice** and a **Certificate of Baptism** whose parent is a member of staff (this includes teaching & non-teaching staff and full time & part time staff) employed by Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and where either or both of the following conditions are met: (i) that member of staff has been employed for two or more years at the time the application is made; (ii) the Governors can demonstrate that the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacant position for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage. In addition to (i) and/or (ii) the child must live at the same permanent address as the member of staff.

4 Other **baptised** Catholic children with a **Certificate of Catholic Practice and a Certificate of Baptism** resident in the Parish of Sacred Heart & St. John the Evangelist, Bushey. A map outlining the Parish boundary is available on the school website, is displayed within school and copies are also available from the School Office.

5 Other **baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice.**

6 Other **baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Baptism.**

7 Other 'looked after' children and children including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England who ceased to be 'looked after' because they were adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders.

8 Children of catechumens **with evidence of participation in Catechumen Programme or members of an Eastern Christian Church with a Certificate of Baptism.**

9 Christian children of other denominations whose application is supported by a **letter from their minister** confirming membership of the faith community.

10 Children of other faith communities and whose application is supported by **a letter from their minister** confirming membership of the faith community.

11 Any other applicants.

a) [1] A "child looked after" is a child who is:in the care of a local authority, or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989)

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery Bushey

NURSERY ADMISSION POLICY 2025-2026

Learning and loving with Christ as our teacher

Where the offer of places to all the applicants **in any of the categories** listed above would lead to oversubscription, priority will be given in the following order:

- the Governing Body will give priority to an application where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other need of the child which can only be met at this school. Compelling, written, professional evidence from a doctor, social worker or priest must be supplied. A panel of Governors will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule; the evidence must relate specifically to Sacred Heart and will clearly demonstrate why it is the only school which can meet the child's needs;
- for categories 2-11 the attendance of a sibling at the school at the time of intended enrolment will increase priority of application within the category;
- next, for categories 3-11**,** children of staff at the school (as defined in the conditions stipulated in **category 3**) will be given priority within the category.

Multiple Births
The admission authority will admit over the school's PAN when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated a place at the school.

Tie Break
Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the sub-categories listed would still lead to oversubscription, the places up to the admissions number will be offered to those living nearest to the school. The distance is measured in a straight line. Where there is need for a tie-break when two different addresses measure the same distance from school, the tie-break will be random. If the addresses are in a block of flats, the lower door number will be deemed nearer as this will be on the lower floor and, therefore, closer to the school

The Nursery allocation process will be administered by Sacred Heart's Primary School. Distances will be calculated using Map Tool Distance Between Full UK Postcodes (freemaptools.com)

Continuing Interest Lists
In the event of an application for a place at the school being unsuccessful, you will need to phone all nearby nurseries to see which ones have spaces. You will be offered the opportunity to be placed on the school's continuing interest list in rank order. The continuing interest list will be maintained in the order of the oversubscription criteria, not in the order in which applications are received. On the day a place becomes available the school has to rank all, including in-year applicants, against the oversubscription criteria. This means that applicants, originally ranked in the normal admissions round, can move position on the continuing interest list. A child will remain on the school's continuing interest list until the

end of the academic year or until a vacancy has arisen and the offer of a place accepted or declined.

In Year Admissions

For In Year admissions please make your application direct to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School. You will need to complete the school's application form and return it to the school office to ensure your application is considered correctly in our oversubscription criteria. The school will write to you with the outcome of your application. Unsuccessful in year admissions applicants will be automatically placed on the continuing interest (waiting) 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. Continuing interest lists will be maintained for every year group until the summer term (date to be specified and confirmed to parents at the time of allocation). To remain on the CI (waiting) list after this time, parents must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form. When a place becomes available, the Governing Body will decide which applicant meets the oversubscription criteria best and an offer will be made.

For children currently attending the school's nursery, application to the Reception class of the school must be made in the normal way to the Local Authority. Attendance at the school's nursery does not guarantee a place in Reception in September 2026. Please see the Reception Admissions Policy on the school website.

Nursery Application Procedure and Timetable for 2025-26

In order to make an application, parents of all candidates must apply direct to the school using the school's own Nursery Application Form. This is available from the school office and can be downloaded from the school website www.sacredheart682.herts.sch.uk.

Parents of candidates applying under criteria 2, 3, 4, and 5 above should obtain a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) from the priest at the parish where the family normally worships. The Certificate of Catholic Practice can also be downloaded from the Diocese of Westminster's website (www.rcdow.org.uk/education/parents).

How to Apply

- A fully completed Nursery Application Form, Extended Hours Form, Certificate of Catholic Practice (where necessary), original Baptism Certificate (for photocopying) and proof of address must be returned to the school office as soon as possible to complete your application and must be received no later than the closing date for applications on Friday 7th February 2025.

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery Bushey

NURSERY ADMISSION POLICY 2025-2026

Learning and loving with Christ as our teacher

- All applications received will be processed during the week beginning Monday 10th February 2025 and our oversubscription admission criteria will be applied, if necessary.
- Parents will be advised by the school if they have been offered a place, or not, by email or letter (which will be posted 2nd class) week commencing Monday 3rd March 2025. Parents who wish to be notified by email should request this on the Nursery Application Form and provide the school with their email address. If no email address is provided, parents will be notified by letter only.

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School will adhere to the following timetable when dealing with admissions:

Deadline to apply to Sacred Heart School Nursery	**Friday 7th February 2025**
Offer letters, sent by school to parents/carers	**Week commencing Monday 3rd March 2025 (email/2nd class post)**
Deadline to accept place and return paperwork to Sacred Heart School Nursery	**Friday 14th March 2025**

The timetable for nursery admissions is advertised to parents each year. The timetable is also advertised within the school, and on the school website, at the appropriate time.

Any applications received after the deadline will be treated as a late application. Late applications will not be dealt with until all on-time applications have been considered.

Please contact the school office if you would like to make an appointment to view our school and Nursery. The Nursery application form can be downloaded from our school website, or a hard copy obtained from the school office.

The decision on admission rests with the Governors.

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery Bushey

NURSERY ADMISSION POLICY 2025-2026

Learning and loving with Christ as our teacher

NOTES (these notes form part of the **oversubscription criteria**)

'Child Arrangements' Order': an order under the terms of Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and which defines it as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

'Adopted': an adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted, having previously been in care and whose parent/carer can give proof of this.

'**Special Guardianship Order'**: 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).

'Parent/Carer': the adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child.

'Looked after Child': 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.

'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

The **Certificate of Catholic Practice form can be obtained** from the priest at the church normally attended or from the Diocese of Westminster website at: https://education.rcdow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Certificate-of-Catholic-Practice-7-9-15-Final.pdf

It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure that the completed and signed form is returned to the school by the closing date.

'Family': includes the adult or adults who have legal responsibility for the child.

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery Bushey

NURSERY ADMISSION POLICY 2025-2026

Learning and loving with Christ as our teacher

'Catholic': a member of Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This must be evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism in a Catholic Church or Certificate of Reception into full communion of the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy, this includes a looked after child in the process of adoption and living with a Catholic family, where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised were it not for his/her status as a looked after child.

'Sibling':

- brother or sister, to include adopted brothers and sisters, half, step or foster brothers and sisters;
- a looked after child or previously looked after and in every case living permanently in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of application.

A sibling link will not be recognised for a child 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. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older child will leave before the younger one starts.

'Catechumen': a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This would normally be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens.

'Christian children of other denominations': 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.

'Christian': All members of Churches Together in England and of Churches Together in Wales (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.

'Eastern Christian Church': includes Orthodox Churches and is normally evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.

'Children of other faith communities': children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'Christian children of other denominations' and which

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery Bushey

NURSERY ADMISSION POLICY 2025-2026

Learning and loving with Christ as our teacher

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.

Demonstrating 'exceptional social, medical, or pastoral need' for a child which can only be met at this school: The Governing Body will require written, compelling, professional evidence from a doctor, social worker or priest.

'Parish of The Sacred Heart of Jesus & St John the Evangelist': a map showing the boundaries of the parish of The Sacred Heart of Jesus & St John the Evangelist is available on the school website, is displayed within the school and is available from the School Office.

'At the time of application': means the closing date for applications.

'Permanent Home Address'
The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application

- "At the time of application" means the closing date for applications
- "Permanent" means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12* months and the child must be resident in the property at the time of application.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If a child's permanent residence is disputed, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes. If two applications are received, with different addresses and/or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.