St. Mary's Church of England Primary School Fownhope

ADMISSIONS POLICY

What we nurture today, flourishes tomorrow

UPDATED OCTOBER 2024

A rich education is more than simply learning reading, writing and maths. It is about helping a child grow into their full potential as inquisitive, well balanced and cheerful adults. As a Christian school we nurture children to display the 'fruit of the Spirit', which is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). At St Mary's you will find children growing in mind, body and spirit as they form good relationships with each other, the staff and discover a faith which will sustain them in a rapidly changing world. As our motto has it: "what we nurture today flourishes tomorrow".

This document sets out the admission arrangements of St. Mary's Church of England Primary School with respect to admissions for the academic year 2026-2027. It will be reviewed in September 2025 for the academic year 2027-2028. 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. The document follows the criteria laid down by the Department of Education 'School Admissions Code', which can be read at
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2

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 (*Appendix 1*). Further information, including an interactive search facility, is available on the Herefordshire Council website at
www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200144/schools_and_education/251/primary_school_admissions

Process
1. Applications for admission to the school should be made using the Local Authority Common Application Form by the national closing date of 15th January.

2. The Local Authority will inform parents of the offer of a place on behalf of the Governing Body on the national offer date of 16th April or the next working day.

3. St. Mary's Church of England Primary School has an admission number of 20 pupils for entry into Reception. The school will accordingly admit at least 20 each year if sufficient applications are received. All applicants will be admitted if 20 or fewer apply. The school will admit any pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan naming the school. Priority will then be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below.

Although St. Mary's is a Church of England school, we do not offer places based on church attendance. We believe that our Christian ethos and vision is best displayed in creating an inclusive environment, where children and families of all faiths are welcomed and treated equally.

The governing body ranks applicants by the following criteria -

1. 'Looked after' children and 'previously looked after' children, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A 'looked after child' 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, in England. A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after (in England), but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order, as well as a child who appears to the Governing Body to have been in state care outside of England care (i.e. in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation or any other provider whose sole/main purpose is to benefit society), but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted.

2. Children living in the catchment area of the school (*see Appendix 1*).

3. Siblings of pupils attending the school at the time of application. 'Sibling' means a natural brother or sister, a half brother or sister, a legally adopted brother or sister or half-brother or sister, a step brother or sister, or other child living in the same household who, in any of these cases, will be living with them at the same address at the date of their entry to the school.

4. Children of staff who work at the school. Children of all staff will be considered where the parent has a permanent contract of employment. Their normal base of work must be at St. Mary's Church of England Primary School, Court Orchard, Fownhope, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 4PG and their employment contract must have been in place for two or more years at the time of the closing date for application for admission.

5. Children who attend St. Mary's Pre-School on the school site.

6. Children who live outside the school's catchment area. Proximity to the school with those living closest to the school having priority calculated by 'shortest available walking route to school.' 'Shortest available walking route to school' is determined by the LA using computer assisted OS maps and postcodes to ensure accurate measurement. The child's home address is 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.

Tie-breaker
Proximity to the school. This will be measured by the shortest walking distance by road or maintained footpath or other public rights of way from the pupil's home, to the main entrance point of the school using a GIS computerised mapping system. In the event that two or more children live at the same distance from the school (as can happen with families living in blocks of flats), random allocation, where supervised drawing of lots by an independent responsible person of good standing will be used to decide which child(ren) will be allocated the remaining place(s) (in accordance with 1.34 and 1.35 of the School Admissions Code).

Due to the flexible structure of classes at St. Mary's CE Primary School, it may be possible to 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 Key Stage 1 class will not exceed 30 at the beginning of an academic year.

Late applications
Applications received after the closing date and before the Admission Authority's admission meeting will be placed last in the criteria in which they fall unless the Admission Authority is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which reasonably prevented the application from being submitted on time. Supporting evidence must also be supplied by the closing date for applications, unless it is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which reasonably prevented it being submitted on time. In the absence of such supporting evidence, the allocation of places will be made on the basis of the application alone.

In-Year admissions
Parents can apply for a place at St. Mary's C of E Primary School any school at any time. An application is an in-year application if it is for the admission of a child to the relevant age group, but it is submitted on or after the first day of the first term of the admission year, or if it is for the admission of a child to an age group other than the relevant age group

Where the school is dealing with multiple in-year admissions and does not have sufficient places for every child who has applied for one, places will be allocated on the basis of the oversubscription criteria detailed in this policy. The school will maintain a clear, fair, and objective waiting list until at least 31st December of each school year of admission; each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria.

Admission of children outside their normal age group
Parents may request that their child is admitted to a year group outside their normal age range, for instance where the child is gifted or talented or where a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting on their schooling. All such requests will be considered on their merits and either agreed or refused on that basis. If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group.

The process for requesting such an admission is as follows: With the application, parents should request that the child is admitted to another year group (state which one), and the reasons for that request. Parents will submit any evidence in support of their case with the application, for instance from a medical practitioner, headteacher etc. Some of the evidence a parent might submit could include:-

- 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.

The school will consider each case on its merits, taking into account the individual circumstances of the request and the child's best interests. We will also ensure the parent is aware of whether the request for admission out of age group has been agreed before final offers are made, and the reason for any refusal. Requests for admission out of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time. An application from a child who would 'normally' be a year 8 child for a year 7 place will be considered alongside applications for year 7.

Waiting Lists
The school will operate a waiting list for each year group. Where in any year the school receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until the end of the first term after the beginning of the school year. This will be maintained by the admission authority and it will be open to any parent to ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application. Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves it.

Appeals Procedure
All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. Appellants should contact the Headteacher at St. Mary's Church of England Primary School at Court Orchard, Fownhope, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 4PG within 21 days of the date of the letter refusing your child a place at the school for information on how to appeal. Information on the timetable for the appeals process is on our website at https://www.stmarysschoolfownhope.co.uk

School age
A full-time school place in the Reception class is available for children from the September following their 4th birthday.

Deferred entry for infants
Parents offered a place for their child have a right to defer entry, or to take a place up part-time, until the start of the term beginning immediately after their child has reached compulsory school age of 4. However, places cannot be deferred until the next academic year.

Address definition
The address is the place where the child is permanently resident with his or her parent or parents or legal guardians. Evidence may be requested to show the address, for example: to which any child benefit is paid or at which the child is registered with a medical GP together with recent utilities bill, council tax bill or tenancy agreement. This evidence will be used when reaching a decision on the child's home address for admissions purposes (including where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility for each part of the week). Parents should not assume that a place will automatically be allocated to their child.

Enquiries
These should be addressed to the Headteacher at St. Mary's Church of England Primary School, Court Orchard, Fownhope, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 4PG.

This policy has been written in line with the DfE School Admissions Code (September 2021) which can be read at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code

In line with government guidelines this policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy was approved by the Governing Body on:	1st October 2024
Signature of Headteacher:	T. Milne
Signature of Chair of Governors:	J. Pothecary
Review Date:	September 2025