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Admissions Policy

2023-2024

Monitoring

By	Review Period	Method
Governing Body	Annual	Meeting

Ownership: Admissions Officer

Revision History

Review	Changes	Next Review Date
September 2019 and February 2020	Changes to reflect alignment to Diocesan primary policy and feedback from consultation	September 2020
September 2020 and February 2021	Update to incorporate changes for in year admissions process	July 2021
July 2021	Changes to reflect the legislative changes for looked after and previously looked after children and timescales for in year admissions	November 2021
November 2021	Updated to detail the SEN Unit and process for students with an EHCP	November 2022

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Introduction

St Joseph's is a Catholic Academy in the centre of Swindon. It admits students between the ages of 11 and 16. The Academy Trust is the admissions authority. The term governing body is used throughout the policy to refer to the admissions authority. St Joseph's encourages all students to reach their full potential and strongly promotes faith and moral values.

The parent or carer is encouraged to contact St Joseph's for more information about the College before applying for a place.

Vision

Our College Vision statement states that:

Every student leaves us with the education and experiences to enable them to thrive academically and empower them to enrich their own lives, and those around them. Education at St Joseph's takes place in a fully inclusive environment where students learn to value diversity. Students are supported by their peers and inspired by committed staff. Our strong, proactive partnerships help us continually improve our school and sustain excellence.

This policy supports this vision by clearly stating the number of places available and how they are allocated if there are more applicants than places.

Year 7-11 Mainstream Admissions

The Published Admission Number for each year is 270. If fewer applications are received than places available, all applicants will be offered a place. If St Joseph's is oversubscribed with applications the places will be allocated using the oversubscription criteria given below. **Evidence to support the criteria 1 to 7 is required.**

St Joseph's works with the local authority, parents, applicants and other suitable agencies to support all children with EHCP's and accommodate within our College where St Joseph's has been named in the EHCP. We welcome parents and carers to approach the College to discuss these needs when considering a secondary school for their child. The governing body will work with our Special Educational needs team in this process.

Children who have an education health and care plan which names St Joseph's will be admitted before the oversubscription criteria is applied to other applicants.

Oversubscription criteria in order of priority

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. Looked after and previously looked after children who are a baptised Catholic
2. Baptised Catholic children who attend a designated feeder school at the time of consideration and who have a sibling who will be attending St Joseph's at the time of admission
3. Baptised Catholic children who attend a designated feeder school at the time of consideration
4. Baptised Catholic children who have a sibling who will be attending St Joseph's at the time of admission
5. Baptised Catholic Children
6. Looked after and previously looked after children
7. Children who are a Catechumen
8. Children who attend a designated feeder school
9. Children who do not fall into the criteria listed above.

See the interpretation section below for evidence required for criteria 1-7

Process of allocating places

Where there are more applications than places, the Governing Body will allocate places according to the oversubscription criteria provided above. Priority within criteria will be determined by random allocation i.e. drawing lots. Applicants will be allocated a number and these will be pulled out of a vessel randomly. Where one child of a multiple birth is drawn the other child or children will be deemed to have also been drawn. Only the allocated number of one of the children will be entered into the draw. This also applies where siblings who are not multi-birth but are applying for places in the same year group. This process will be supervised by an individual independent of St Joseph's. A minimum of three Governors will meet to allocate places. Notes of all meetings are taken by the Admissions Officer.

If parents with shared responsibility for a child are not able to agree on the application to a school then St Joseph's will seek agreement from the parents initially. If agreement is not forthcoming then parents may be asked to seek a specific issues order from the courts. St Joseph's will inform the local authority about this. Where a child has not been attending a school in the UK previously evidence of age will be requested. A short birth certificate, passport or national identity card is acceptable.

Children who hold a full British Citizen passport or children whose passport has been endorsed to show they have a right of abode in the country are entitled to apply for a place at a maintained school. The passport or visa should be made available for inspection before an offer of a school place can be made. Asylum Seekers should make available evidence of their right of abode as provided by the National Asylum Support Service.

Overseas nationals entering the UK who wish to apply for a state-funded school must check that they have a right of abode or the conditions of their visas otherwise permit them to access a state-funded school.

Mainstream Year 7 applications

Students are admitted at the age of eleven without any reference to ability or aptitude. The academic year will start on 1 September 2023 although the child's first day may be different to this. The parent or carer **MUST** complete the common application form which is available from the local authority in which the child resides (this is known as the home local authority). This should be completed and returned to that local authority. **The Governing Body also requests that the parent or carer complete the supplementary form and provide evidence as detailed in the definitions section if applying on faith grounds.**

Both forms should be submitted by **31 October 2022** to be considered in the first round of allocations. If oversubscribed with applications the Governing Body will consider all on time applications against the oversubscription criteria given above and provide a ranked list to the Swindon local authority. The child's home local authority will then inform the parent or carer whether or not a place will be offered on 01 March 2023 for those who applied by the closing date.

If a parent or carer is applying on faith grounds then evidence of faith MUST be presented to St Joseph's by 31 December 2022 (midnight) to be considered in the first round of allocations in order for this evidence to be considered as part of the application. The supplementary form and evidence can be posted, handed into reception, or via the electronic link on the St Joseph's website.

Applications submitted after 31 October 2022 will be processed in accordance with the coordinated admission scheme of the child's home local authority.

SEN Unit Applications

St Joseph's Catholic College has a SEN Unit for 50 students with EHCPs and those students' admissions are dealt with under the SEND Code of Practice. They are not admitted under the admission arrangements described above. Parents who wish to consider the St. Joseph's SEN Unit for their child should contact the Local Authority in the first instance.

Requests for a place outside of the child's normal age group

The Governing Body will consider requests for places outside of the normal age group on a case by case basis on the best interests of the child. They will take into account the parent or carer's views as well as information about the child's academic, social and emotional development and where relevant their medical history. For this to be considered, the parent or carer should put their request in writing for the attention of the Admissions Officer at St Joseph's as soon as possible along with any additional relevant evidence. The Governing Body may seek the advice of relevant experts and educationalists. The parent should also complete a common application form from the Local Authority in which they live and if applying on Faith grounds are requested to complete a supplementary form and to provide proof of faith. If approval is agreed, the oversubscription criteria will be applied to all year 7 applicants.

In Year applications

The Governors Admission panel meet regularly to consider applications. A timetable of the proposed meetings is available on the College website or directly from the College. The Governing Body may also hold extraordinary meetings. They allocate places as soon as possible after they become available. We aim to inform parents whether or not their application has been successful within fifteen school days. The oversubscription criteria apply as detailed above.

How to apply for a place

Parents or Carers should complete the In Year common application form (transfer form). This can be done online via the St Joseph's website. Alternatively, a hard copy of the form can be downloaded from the website or requested from the College. Completed hard copy forms should be sent to St Joseph's Admissions officer at the St Joseph's address. If the application is on faith grounds then the supplementary form should also be completed either online or as a hard copy and provided to St Joseph's along with the relevant baptism certificate or other evidence of faith.

Applications will be considered by the Governors Admissions panel and decisions will be communicated in writing to the applying parent or carer by St Joseph's. Applications received by 12pm the day before a Governors Admission Panel meeting will be considered at that meeting. A timetable of the meetings are published on the College's website. St Joseph's will inform the Swindon Admissions team of the both the application and whether or a not a place has been allocated.

Supporting evidence

In order to establish which oversubscription criterion applies the following evidence is required:

A copy of the child's baptism certificate is required for all applications who wish to be considered in criteria 1-5 . See "interpretations" below for further information.

Where the child is looked after or previously looked after St Joseph's require evidence of this such as a certificate of adoption, a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order, if this has not been confirmed by the home local authority.

Waiting list

If an application is unsuccessful, the applicant will be placed on the waiting list for four calendar months from the date of the written communication detailing the refusal for in year applications.

For main allocation (new year 7) the applicant will stay on the waiting list for four calendar months from the start of the autumn term for applications for the key entry point to St Joseph's which is year 7. This will be up to 31 December 2023. If applicants attended designated feeder schools at the point of application then they will be included in that oversubscription criteria 2,3, or 8 until the 31 December 2023.

The waiting list may change as applications are received, applicants are offered places, applicants provide evidence of religious affiliation and/or other information, or if the applicants have been on the waiting list for four months. After four months applicants will be removed from the waiting list and will need to re-apply for a place using the in year application form or notify the College in writing that they wish to remain on the waiting list.

The waiting list is considered at each meeting by the Governors Admission panel. Any vacant places will be filled in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Each added child to the list will require the list to be ranked again in line with the above published oversubscription criteria.

Inclusion in the College's waiting list does not mean a place will become available.

This waiting 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. Waiting lists for admission will operate throughout the school year and applicants will be placed on the list for four months from the date of the letter notifying them of the decision made by the admissions panel unless the College are notified that the applicant does not wish to remain on the list. Each time a place is awarded the list will be ranked according to the information available.

Appeal

If a child is not offered a place, the parent or carer have the right to appeal to an independent panel. Further detail on the appeal process is provided in the appeal timetable available on the St Joseph's website or directly from the College. There are timescales for the appeal process which must be adhered to. Further detail on how to appeal will be given in the letter from the Governing Body once the application has been considered. Queries should be directed to the Admissions officer.

Fair Access Protocol

St Joseph's complies with the Swindon local authority fair access protocol which is a process where more difficult to place children are placed in schools. This means that St Joseph's may give priority to a hard to place child over the applicants on the waiting list or exceeding the capacity for each year group

Interpretation

Baptised Catholic – this means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally be evidence by a certificate of baptism in a Catholic Church or a certificate of being received into the Church or First Holy Communion certificate or letter from a Priest or Deacon of the parish confirming their child is entered on the Parish Baptismal Register or a statement

from a Priest or Deacon of the parish confirming that the person has been baptised or received into the Catholic church. Details of which churches are in communion with Rome is available on the St Joseph's website and via the Admissions Officer and may be updated from time to time. Whilst a copy of a certificate may be provided, the Governors may request sight of the original. For the purposes of this policy, 'Catholic' includes a looked after child living with a family where at least one of the parents is confirmed as being Catholic. Parents applying for a Catholic child are requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form.

Catechumen – this 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.

Criteria – if there are more applications than places available applications will be ranked at the time of consideration of the application in accordance with the oversubscription criteria according to the information and evidence available to the Governing Body at that time.

Education, Health and Care plan- for some children with special educational needs, an Educational Health and Care plan is a document drawn up by the local authority under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special educational provision required for a child.

Feeder school - St Joseph's designated Catholic feeder schools in Swindon are: Holy Rood Catholic Primary, Holy Cross Catholic Primary, Holy Family Catholic Primary, St Catherine's Catholic Primary and St Mary's Catholic Primary. For main year 7 intake application being considered after the first round of allocation these feeder schools will be taken into account for the application of the oversubscription criteria until 31 August 2023. If a child attended a feeder school in year 6 is placed on the waiting list the feeder school will be taken into account by the Governing Body until 31 December of that year.

Looked after children - Children who are in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local council in the exercise of their social service functions as defined by Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation "a looked after child" is a child in public care at the time of the application to St Joseph's.

Multi-birth children – Where one child of a multiple birth qualifies for a place, the other child (ren) will also be offered a place, even if St Joseph's has to exceed the Published Admission Number. This also applies where siblings who are not multi-birth but are applying for places in the same year group.

Parent/carer - This is defined as a person with parental responsibility (PR) or legal residency of the child. This could include a person who is not a parent but who has a court order giving parental responsibility to them.

Shared responsibility - where two adults have shared responsibility for a child they should agree before submitting an application which school they are applying for. In cases of dispute or where there are two applications St Joseph's will ask the parents to agree on the school applied for or if that is not possible St Joseph's may ask the parent to seek a specific issues order through the courts to gain the authority to make the application.

Previously looked after Children – Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order) including those who appear to the

governing body to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted) immediately following having been looked after. For children previously looked after

- this includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders)
- child arrangement orders are defined as section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangement orders replaced residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangement order.
- in accordance with section 14A of the Children Act 1989, a Special Guardianship order or defined as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Sibling – this means children who share at least one natural parent or carer, or are a step brother or step sister to each other, or are an adopted or fostered brother or sister to each other.