



# ST THOMAS A BECKET R C SCHOOL

## Admissions Policy and Procedures

# 2021 / 2022

DATE OF LAST REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2020

AGREED BY GOVERNORS: SEPTEMBER 2020

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2021

**St Thomas a Becket Roman Catholic Primary School** is a voluntary aided school in the Diocese of Southwark. It is in the trusteeship of the Diocese Southwark. 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 Jesus Christ. The school exists primarily to serve the Catholic community and Catholic children always have priority of admission. However, the Governing Body welcomes all applications, particularly from those of other denominations and faiths who support the religious ethos of the school.

Having consulted with the Local Authority and other admission authorities, the Governors intend to admit into the Reception class, in September 2021, up to a total of 60 pupils without reference to ability or aptitude.

Where the number of applications exceeds 60, the Governors will offer places using the following criteria in the order stated:

1. Looked After Catholic Children or Looked After Children in the care of Catholic families (inclusive of children who have been previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangement order, or special guardianship order). 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 (see the definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
2. Baptised Roman Catholic children. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
3. Other Looked After Children (inclusive of children who have been previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangement order, or special guardianship order). 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 (see the definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
4. Children who are members of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Evidence of Baptism will be required.
5. Children of parent/carers who are committed members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England. Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) provided by a priest or minister of a designated place of worship will be required.
6. Children of other faiths. Evidence of religious commitment provided by a priest, minister or religious leader of a designated place of worship will be required.
7. Any other children.

The following order of priorities will be applied when applications within any of the above categories exceed the places available and it is necessary to decide between applications:

- i. Children with a sibling living at the same address attending the school at the time of the child's admission. Sibling means a full/half/step brother or sister.
- ii. Social and medical needs which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong and relevant evidence must be provided by an appropriate professional authority (e.g. qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, social worker or priest). The decision will be based on the evidence provided. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the most suitable school, and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school.
- iii. Distance from home to school is measured as a straight line from the centre of the home address to the centre of the school site. In the event that two or more applicants have equal right to a place under any of the above criteria, priority will be given to those who live nearest to the school. Should two applicants live an equal distance from the school, including instances where more than one applicant lives in a multi-occupancy building, the offer of a place will be decided by random allocation. Where a child has not received any early years provision and is nearing reception class age, the school may prioritise this child over a younger child.

The home address is where the child lives as the only or principal residence. If your child resides equally between both parents, we consider the principal home address as being the address at which your child is registered whilst attending early years provision, with a GP and, if applicable, the address of the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit or Child Tax Credits for your child. Where the last remaining place is to be allocated and two or more children are deemed to live at the same distance from the school, the last remaining place will be decided by the drawing of lots.

Additional children may be admitted under very exceptional circumstances. This will be in instances where children are twins and children from multiple births when one of the children is the 60th child admitted.

### **Admissions procedure**

In addition to the online or paper Common Application Form (CAF) supplied by the home Local Authority, **the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) available from the school, must be completed and sent to St Thomas a Becket Roman Catholic Primary School, no later than the closing date published by Royal Greenwich**, the maintaining Local Authority, for applicants wishing to be considered under the faith criteria. Those

applicants who do not complete the SIF will be considered under criterion 7. You are advised to make two copies of the forms. You should retain one copy and pass the second copy to the school. The original copy must be seen by the school. Offers of places will be sent to parents on the common offer date as notified by the home Local Authority.

### **In-year Admissions**

The school manages its own in-year applications for admission to primary school. Application forms for in-year admissions are available from the school office. Forms should be completed and returned to the school office along with copies of the baptismal certificate (if available). The Governors will use the same criteria to rank the application as that listed above. Families will be contacted directly by the school to arrange for the child to visit the school. St Thomas a Becket participates in the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol. Children admitted via the Fair Access Protocol take priority over those children on the school's waiting list and those pending appeal.

### **Appeals**

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with section 85(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and must set out the reasons on which the appeal is made. Appeals should be made to the Admissions Appeal Clerk at the school address. Parents/Carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

Infant classes are restricted by the legislation to 30 children. Parents should be aware that an appeal against refusal of a place in an infant class may only succeed if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit;
- or
- b) the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or had not been correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied;
- or
- c) the panel decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

### **Admission of children below compulsory school age**

The governors will provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year; parents may also request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

For information about requests for children to be educated outside of their chronological year group, please refer to Royal Borough of Greenwich's 'Primary Schools in Royal Greenwich' booklet.

### **Waiting List**

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list, which will be maintained indefinitely, will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place. It is possible that when a child is directed under the local authority's fair access protocol they will take precedence over those children already on the list.

### **Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan**

The admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or with an EHC Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements and EHC plans by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with a statement or an EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

### **Late Applications**

Any late applications will be considered by the Governors' Admissions Committee, in the event of there being any available places using the above criteria. If all places have been filled, parents/carers will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents/carers from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.