



# Admissions Policy

2024 - 2025

St Mary's Catholic College, A Voluntary Aided Academy, is an 11-18 Co-educational Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. As a Catholic Voluntary Aided Academy the Holy Family Catholic Multi Academy Trust is the Admissions Authority.

All decisions relating to admission applications to this school will be taken by the Governing Body of this school.

St Mary's Catholic College was founded by the Shrewsbury Diocese 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 college is conducted by its Governing Body as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its articles of association and seeks at all times to be a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Catholic college, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. As a Catholic college, 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 college. 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 the admission arrangements.

The Local Authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round (excluding admission to year 12). The Governing Body has set its admission number at 210 pupils to year 7 September 2024.

### **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.

The following oversubscription criteria will be applied in order to allocate remaining places:

1. Children who are in the care of the Local Authority (Children Looked After) and previously Children Looked After (see note 2&3)
2. Baptised Catholic Children from our partner Catholic Primary schools: Ladymount, Our Lady of Pity, Sacred Heart, St Alban's, St Joseph's, SS Peter & Paul, Holy Cross, St Joseph's (Upton) and St Paul's; and our partner school Holy Spirit Catholic and Church of England Primary. (see note 3&4)
3. Baptised Catholic children from other Primary Schools. (see note 3)
4. Children from our partner Catholic Primary schools: Ladymount, Our Lady of Pity, Sacred Heart, St Alban's, St Joseph's, SS Peter & Paul, Holy Cross, St Joseph's (Upton) and St Paul's; and our partner school Holy Spirit Catholic and Church of England Primary.
5. Children from other Primary Schools whose parents seek a Catholic education.

Within each priority the Governors will always give preference to Roman Catholic children.

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

(i) The attendance of a sibling 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 (1) above.

(ii) The children of staff will be given increased priority 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 (1) above.

### **Tie Break**

Priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distance will be measured using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider a safe walking route, from the seed point of the child's home address to the nearest pedestrian gate of the College, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the College receiving the higher priority. 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.

If the school is named in a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan the Governing Body will admit the child to the College.

For 'In Year' applications received outside the normal admissions round, and if places are available, then children qualifying under the published criteria will be admitted. If there are places available, but more applicants than places, then the published over-subscription criteria will be applied. 'In Year' and late applications will be treated as per the admissions arrangements published by the Local Authority.

If an application for admission has been turned down by the Governing Body, parents can appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. This appeal must be sent in writing to the College within 20 College days of refusal. Parents must give reasons for appealing in writing, and the decision of the Appeals Panel is binding on the Governing Body.

### **Application Procedures and Timetable**

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form which is available from the local authority in which you live. You are also requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form.

The Supplementary Information Form should be returned to Hayley Rennie at St Mary's by as soon as possible after your application. You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 1st March 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 will not be placed in criteria 2, 3 or 4 and this is likely to 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 31st October

### **Late Applications**

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

### **Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group**

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside their normal age group, for example if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. Any such request should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the same time as the admission application is made. The Governing Body 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 headteacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the Governing Body will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

### **Waiting Lists**

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children are offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. 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 autumn term. The waiting list will be held open until the last day of the autumn term. Inclusion in the school's waiting 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 admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Enquiries may be made at the school office but applications must be made via the transfer form available on the Wirral Council website at [www.wirral.gov.uk/school](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/school) admissions or by calling 0151 606 2020 during office hours. Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied. You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

## **Fair Access Protocol**

The college 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 Governing Body is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The Governing Body has this power even where admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number. The Governing Body 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.

## **Sixth Form Admission Policy 2024/2025**

In addition to places available for students already in the College, the Governing Body will make available a further 30 places for external students. For both, entry to the Sixth Form is subject to the Entry Qualification for individual courses of study, as published annually in the Sixth Form Prospectus. If more applications are received from external candidates than the number specified then the criteria applied at Year 7 will be used to determine admissions.

## **NOTES**

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 'child looked after' 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 application to the school.

A 'previously child looked after' 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. Previously looked after children also includes those children 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.

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 child looked after who is part of a Catholic family where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised or received if it were not for their status as a child looked after (e.g. a child looked after in the process of adoption by a Catholic family). For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of 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 laws of the Church. 8

4. For the purposes of this admission policy, attendance at a feeder primary school includes those who were prevented from attending a feeder school due to oversubscription of Catholics and whose application to attend was unsuccessful, normally evidenced by a letter of rejection from the feeder primary school.

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, acknowledge 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 CYTŪN 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' at 7 above 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. 'brother or sister' includes: (i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or 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 for whom the school place is sought lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant.

10. This applies where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. 9

11.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.

12. In line with the 2014 School Admissions Code (para 1.16), Sixth Form applications from students who attain less than the minimum entry criteria (seven 9-4 GCSE passes), will be considered if there exist proven and exceptional medical and/or social needs where these needs can only be met by this school and requested courses meet the needs of the student. It is essential that applicants submit professional supporting evidence from, for example, a doctor, psychologist, social worker or other qualified professional setting out the particular reasons why St Nicholas is the most suitable school for those difficulties. This must satisfy the school that admission to St. Nicholas would best support the child's needs. 1

3. 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.