



# Admissions Policy

## 2026-2027

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**'In the light of Christ we will shine together'**

**Jesus said: I am the light of the world. John 8.12**

**Live as children of light – for the fruit of light is all that is good and true and right. Ephesians 5.8-9**

**Our ambition is to serve our community by providing an excellent education, which is inclusive and distinctive within the context of Christian belief and practice, upholding our values in the daily life of the Academy and in our relationships with others.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. St Mary's is a Church of England Academy, and as such the Governing Body is responsible for determining the admission arrangements. This policy is revised every year in consultation with the Diocesan Board of Education and Suffolk County Council, and conforms to the requirements of the Education Act 2002 and School Admissions Code 2021.
- 1.2. In order that the Governing Body have sufficient information to correctly process an application for a faith place, parents are encouraged to complete the Supplementary Information Form (SIF). The completion of the SIF alone does not constitute a valid application.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1. We are an inclusive school with a strong Christian ethos. We are able to welcome children from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities. All applications will be treated on an individual basis and in a sensitive manner in accordance with the priorities laid down in this policy.
- 2.2. The only restriction we place on entry is that of number. If the number of children applying for entry exceeds the places available, we enforce the procedure set out below in order to determine whether a child is accepted or not. It is our wish to allow parents the right to have a place at the school of their choice. However, this is not always possible, due to the excess demand on the school places available.

## **3. HOW PARENTS CAN APPLY FOR THEIR CHILD TO BE ADMITTED TO OUR SCHOOL IN RECEPTION CLASS**

- 3.1. Applications should be made online at: <http://www.suffolk.go.uk/admissions>
- 3.2. Further details regarding Suffolk County Council admissions policy can be found at: <http://www.suffolk.go.uk/admissions>



- 3.3. The Local Authority publishes a composite admissions prospectus each year, which gives information about how parents can apply for a place of their choice. Parents have a right to express a preference for three schools of their choice and they should do so on the application form. Expressing a preference does not, in itself, guarantee a place at any school. The National closing date is 15th January. Applicants will be sent the offer of a place at a Primary School directly from the Local Authority Admissions Team on 16th April or next working day.
- 3.4. For admission to the 2026/2027 school year, and subsequent years, all children will be eligible for admission to St Mary's Church of England Academy full time in the September following their fourth birthday.
- 3.5. The Governing Body of St Mary's Church of England Academy are able to welcome 60 pupils into the Early Years Unit each year. They apply the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend this school. This policy conforms to the requirements of the Education Act 2002 and School Admissions Code 2021.
- 3.6. The Published Admission Number (PAN) for our school is 60, which is the number we can accommodate within a year group. Children are not admitted above the published number unless exceptional circumstances apply. This is kept under review and the governors will apply to change the number if circumstances allow.
- 3.7. Where parents are offered a place for their child in the Reception Year at St Mary's Church of England Academy, they may decide either to take up the offer full time in September, or take up the offer part-time or defer entry. If a parent wishes to defer entry to later in the year the place at this school will be held open until the child starts school. However, parents must take up the full-time place no later than the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, and must in any case take up the place before the end of the school year for which the original application was accepted. It would normally be expected that parents will take up the offer of a primary school place (be that full or part-time) at the beginning of a school term, unless there is agreement with the school that a place could be taken up at another time in the year.
- 3.8. It is expected that children will normally be educated within their chronological year group. However, when requested to do so by the parent, admission authorities will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned in line with the School Admissions Code 2021. This may apply when a parent wishes to delay their summer born (April to August) child entry to full-time education in the reception year group until the following school year when they become of statutory school age. If a request is refused for a child to be taught out of year there is no right of appeal, but there is a right to complain. Further information on this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-advice-for-admission-authorities>.
- 3.9. Parents should make a written request to the school including any relevant reasons. The governing body will make a decision on the request, taking into account the views of the Principal. The Academy

will write to the parent with the outcome including the reasons for the decision. If the request is refused, details of how to appeal will be given.

#### 4. OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

- 4.1. The Governing Body has a statutory duty to admit children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) which names the school.
- 4.2. Thereafter, places will be offered in the following priority order:
  - **Category A:** Looked after children (LAC) and all previously looked after children - 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, immediately following having been looked after (PLAC), including those children 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 - internationally adopted previously looked after children (IAPLAC).
  - **Category B:** Where the child has a sibling in the school, or a sibling has already been offered a place at the school, and where the sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap. The term 'sibling' includes: natural, half, step, and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent/carer; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling/s will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion.
  - **Category C:** Children eligible for one of the ten places available on faith grounds as outlined in appendix A.
  - **Category D:** Children who are ordinarily resident in the catchment area. Details of the catchment area can be obtained from the Suffolk County Council website: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/school-places/school-catchment-areas/#tab2>. Living within a school's catchment area is no longer an absolute guarantee that a place is available at your catchment school.
  - **Category E:** Distance.

#### NOTES:

- By 'ordinarily resident' we mean the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or a grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school; we consider this to be a fraudulent application. Where a child lives at two or more

addresses, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays).

- Separate evidence in writing from each parent or carer must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application. In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents/carers will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference. If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice to resolve the matter.
- If your child is moving to Suffolk we can offer him or her a school place before you have moved to the county, but you must give us written evidence that you are legally committed to the move. This could be a solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts, a signed letting/tenancy agreement or in the case of service families a letter from your commanding officer confirming your new address or, for returning UK Service/Crown Servant families, proof of the posting.

#### **4.3. Children from Overseas**

Children from overseas will be processed according to the current guidelines <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children#processing-applications-from-parents-moving-to-england>

##### **Children of UK service personnel and crown servants**

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, admission authorities must:

- a) be allocated a place in advance of the family arriving in the area (as long as one is available), provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date. Admission authorities must not refuse to process an application and must not refuse a place solely because the family do not yet have an intended address, or do not yet live in the area.
- b) use the address at which the child will live when applying their oversubscription criteria, as long as the parents provide some evidence of their intended address. Admission authorities must use a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria, where a parent requests this.
- c) not reserve blocks of places for these children.
- d) ensure that arrangements in their area support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. Arrangements must be appropriate for the area and be described in the local authority's composite prospectus.

- Travellers, Gypsy and Roma children who move into the catchment of the school will be regarded as ordinarily resident in that area when they apply for a school place.
- Twins, Triplets and other Multiple births - if the final place available at a school is offered to a twin, triplet or other multiple birth, and the remaining sibling/s would ordinarily be refused, the Governors will offer places to the remaining sibling/s at the same school. The law requires that this will apply even where this would mean that more than 30 pupils would be admitted to an infant class.

## **5. CHARGING**

- 5.1. Please note there is no charge or cost related to the admission of a child to school.

## **6. OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA / TIE BREAK**

- 6.1. Places may be given to children whose parents apply for a place in the school when a year group is below 60. If the admissions limit is reached when considering any of the above categories, the determining factor will be the distance from home to school. We will give priority to the applicants who live nearest to the school as measured by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight line distances are calculated electronically by the LA using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the coordinates of each property and provides the address point between which straight line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.
- 6.2. In the unlikely event of two or more applicants living the same distance and competing for a single place, lots will be drawn by a member of staff not involved in admissions to determine the successful applicant.

## **7. WAITING LISTS**

- 7.1. A waiting list will be maintained by the school of those unsuccessful in their initial application. Names are placed on the waiting list in the priority order set out in our admissions over subscription/tie break criteria. This list will be maintained until 31 December. The order of children on a waiting list does not remain static - as circumstances change a child's place on the waiting list can go up or down, for example due to withdrawals or additional applications. If you change your address while your child is on a waiting list you must let us know. Please be aware that this may change your child's position on the waiting list, particularly if you move into or out of the school's catchment area. Having your child's name on a waiting list will not affect your right to appeal for a school place in any of the schools you have applied for.
- 7.2. If a place becomes available, we will offer it to children on the waiting list for that school in priority order. We do not offer places on the basis of the date on which names were placed on the list. Where a school is oversubscribed, late applications will be placed on the waiting list in over-subscription priority. The order will be determined in accordance with the admissions oversubscription criteria, not the date on which the application is received.



## **8. ADMISSION APPEALS**

- 8.1. Applicants will be sent notice of the result of their application directly from the Local Authority on the National Offer day, 16th April.
- 8.2. If the Governing Body's decision is not to grant a place for your child, you have the right to appeal against their decision. Information and forms are available from the Suffolk County Council website at; <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/school-places/education-admission-appeals-and-permanent-exclusion-reviews/>
- 8.3. **Making another application for a place at the same school**
- 8.4. A parent can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school outside of the normal admissions round. However, if your application for a school place is refused, we will not determine a further application for a place in the same school in the same school year, unless there has been a significant change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school. Such circumstances might be a house move or a place becoming available at the school.
- 8.5. If there is no significant change in circumstances, you can make another application for the following school year. However, this will not normally be considered more than one term ahead of the date when you want your child to start at the school.

## **9. INFANT CLASS SIZE**

- 9.1. We teach infant children (aged five to seven) in classes that have a maximum number of 30 children unless permitted exceptions take the number above 30.

## **10. IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. Applications are not normally considered more than one term ahead of the date the place is required.
- 10.2. Parents wishing to transfer their children from one Suffolk school to another where there is no change of address should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the Head Teacher of their current school before applying to another school. (see also paragraph 10.8 below).
- 10.3. Parents who wish to make an in-year application for a place at this school should complete the ADM1 form available on our website <https://www.smpsac.org/admissions/> and return to us.
- 10.4. We will, on receipt of an in-year application, notify the Local Authority (LA) if the application has been unsuccessful to allow the LA to keep up-to-date figures on the availability of places in the area.
- 10.5. When a place becomes available in a year group that has been full, any applicant refused a place in the last 15 school days, and any applicant for whom an appeal has been lodged and is still to be heard, will be considered alongside any new applications. The place will be offered to the pupil ranked highest in accordance with our over subscription criteria.





- 10.6. All applications will be processed by the school within 5 school days and the decision communicated in writing. An emailed decision will always be confirmed by letter. Acceptance of offers can be made by email or letter, but in all cases, must be made within two weeks of the offer date.
- 10.7. If the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the Governors will use their published oversubscription criteria to determine the offer of places. Any unsuccessful applicant has the right to appeal the decision to an independent panel and details of how to do this will be included in the decision letter.
- 10.8. Where an applicant is offered a school place following an in-year application, and the offer is accepted, arrangements should be made for the child to start school as soon as possible, particularly where the child is out of school.
- 10.9. Children out of Year group. It is expected that children will normally be educated within their chronological year group. However, admission authorities will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned in line with the School Admissions Code 2021. You ~~have the right to~~ ~~can make a~~ request for your child to be educated out of year group, in writing, including where relevant, any supporting reasons. St Mary's Academy Trust will make a decision on the request, taking into account the views of the ~~parents~~Principal. The Academy will write to you with the outcome including the reasons for the decision. If a request is refused for a child to be taught out of year there is no right of appeal, but there is a right to complain. Further information on this can be found at
- 10.10. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-advice-for-admission-authorities>. Even if the request is agreed there is no guarantee there will be a place available.
- 10.11. Waiting lists are held for in-year applications.

## 11. POLICY REVIEW AND CONSULTATION

- 11.1. This Policy is reviewed annually. Consultation takes place with the Diocesan authorities and the Local Authority in line with the School Admissions Code.

## APPENDIX A

Applications for Category C places are allocated using the following criteria given in priority order:

1. Children who live in the area covered by the Church of England parishes Forest Heath Team Ministry (Benefice) as detailed in note i) below, whose parent is active in the worshipping life of

- one of the churches in the Forest Heath Team Ministry (Benefice) as detailed in note i) below and have worshipped at least monthly over a period of 1 year ending on the date of application\*.
2. Children who live in the area covered by the Church of England parishes with Forest Heath Team Ministry (Benefice) as detailed in note i) below, whose parent is active in the worshipping life of another Christian Church and have worshipped at least monthly over a period of 1 year ending on the date of application\* (see note ii).
  3. Children who have transferred into the area covered by the Church of England parishes within the Forest Heath Team Ministry (Benefice) as detailed in note i) below, and can clearly demonstrate a religious commitment similar to that outlined in the above categories.
  4. Children who belong to another religious faith, whose parents would like them to attend St Mary's Church of England Academy because of its religious traditions.

\* In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

For all applications to a faith place Church of England Schools in Suffolk parents are advised to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF). Completion will enable governors to have as full a set of information as possible. The SIF is used in conjunction with the Suffolk Common Application Form (CAF); it is optional and is, in itself, NOT a valid application. These forms together with a copy of this Admissions Policy and The Schools in Suffolk booklet will be available on-line to all parents at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions) and <https://www.smpsac.org/admissions/>.

#### Notes:

i) The Parishes of the Church of England Forest Heath Team Ministry (Benefice) concerned are as follows:

St Mary's Mildenhall	St Mary's Barton Mills
St John's Beck Row	St Laurence & St Peter Eriswell
All Saints Worlington	St James' Icklingham
St Andrew's Freckenham	Red Lodge Community Church
St Peter's West Row	St Ethelbert Herringswell.

ii) For the purposes of the Admissions Policy a Christian Church is a Church which is a participating member of 'Churches together in Britain and Northern Ireland'.



## APPENDIX B

### Supplementary Information Form for applications to St Mary's Church of England Academy

- This is not an application form. Applications for a school place must be made by using the Suffolk County Council online facility or by completing a paper application form.
- This form may be completed if ANY of your preferences are for St Mary's Church of England Academy – it is not compulsory to complete this form in order to make a valid application, but the information it contains may assist the Governors (as the Admissions Authority) in applying their oversubscription criteria.
- Please refer to the details of the schools admissions criteria before you apply.

N.B. Forms which are altered or which contain incorrect information (eg address, date of birth, etc) will be considered invalid and this may prejudice your application.

**Full Name of Child:**.....

**Date of Birth:**.....

**Current Permanent Address:**.....

**Contact Telephone Number:**.....

***If you wish your application to be considered under Category C of the oversubscription criteria please complete this form as fully as possible.***

**What is the denomination/faith of the Church you attend?**

- ☐ Church of England
- ☐ Church with membership of Churches together in Britain and Northern Ireland
- ☐ Other Faith (please specify).....

In which Church of England parish do you live?.....

Which Church do you attend?.....

Have you worshipped at least monthly over the past 12 months? \*.....

\* In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

If you have changed churches during the past year, please provide details of your previous Parish Priest/Vicar/Minister: .....

**To be completed by your Parish Priest/Vicar/Minister: (If there is currently no minister in post a senior church officer may sign).** I can confirm, to the best of my knowledge, that the above information is accurate.

Signed:..... Dated:.....

Name:..... Position:.....

Address.....

The information collected on this form may be passed to schools or to other Local Authorities as part of the admissions procedure. The information will be passed to the school to which the child concerned is finally allocated, where it will form part of the pupil database maintained by that school. Any personal information you provide will be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM to: **St Mary's Church of England Academy, Trinity Avenue, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7LR**