ADMISSIONS POLICY 2027-2028

Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Primary School

Approved by:	Governing Body	**Date:**	Autumn 2014
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OUR LADY OF THE VISITATION CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ADMISSIONS POLICY 2027-2028

Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Primary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, 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 school. All applicants are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for Reception at Our Lady of the Visitation is 60. The Governing Body has sole responsibility for admissions to this school and intends to admit 60 children in the school year which begins in September 2025. Applications are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 4th birthday between 1st September 2026 and 31st August 2027.

Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic applicants in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Westminster. Applications will be ranked using the criteria listed below.

In this policy *applicant* refers to the person making an application on behalf of a child; *candidate* refers to the child on whose behalf the application is being made.

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA
Where there are more applications than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority: -

1. Baptised Catholic 'looked after' children and baptised Catholic previously 'looked after' children, who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders.

2. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who have a sibling residing at the same address at the school at the time of admission.

3. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice resident in the Parish of Our Lady of the Visitation, Greenford. (A map of the Parish and a list of streets within the Parish is attached.)

4. Other Baptised Catholic children.

5. Other 'looked after' children and previously 'looked after' children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders.

6. Children of catechumens or members of an Eastern Christian Church.

7. Children of Christians of other denominations whose application is supported either by a certificate of baptism or by a letter from their Minister of Religion confirming membership.

8. Children of other faiths whose application is supported by a letter from their religious leader confirming membership.

9. Any other children.

EXCEPTIONAL NEED
The Governing Body will give top priority, after the appropriate category of looked-after children, to an application where compelling written evidence is provided at the time of application, from an appropriate professional such as a priest, hospital consultant or social worker, of an exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other **need of the child**, which can only be met at this school.

MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS
Where the final place is offered to a child who has other siblings applying for a place in the same school year, these siblings will also be admitted.

APPLICATIONS IN PREVIOUS YEARS
For the last 2 years, the governing body have been able to offer places to all applicants. Whilst the school welcomes applications from all categories, it is usually oversubscribed by Catholic candidates.

TIE BREAK
Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the sub-categories listed above would still lead to oversubscription, the places up to the admission number will be offered to those living nearest to the school as measured in a straight line from the applicant's home to the school. The measurement will be conducted by the Local Authority.

The distance from home to school is measured by straight-line, from a point in the property to a point in the school determined by the grid references for the centre of the school's postcode. The measuring system, Synergy, is an integral part of the admission software produced by Servelec Synergy. It uses Ordnance Survey maps and the LLPG (Local Land Property Gazetteer) and is accurate to 1 metre.

If distances for the final place are identical then random allocation will be carried out in the presence of an independent witness.

FAIR ACCESS
The school 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 admissions round, the Governing Body is

empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any local protocol that has been agreed by both the local authority and the Governing Body for the current school year. The Governing Body has this power even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE for 2027 – 2028

In order to make an application, you **must** complete a **Common Application Form (CAF)** from your local authority either online or on paper and return it to them.

You **should** also complete the **School's Supplementary Information Form (SIF).** Whilst this is not compulsory, the information on the SIF enables the Governing Body to assess your application fully against the School's criteria in the event of oversubscription. Please return the SIF (in person or by post) to the school, together with all other relevant paperwork required for your application.

If you do not complete both of the forms described above and return them by 15th January 2027, the Governing Body will be unable to consider your application against the oversubscription criteria and your child will be ranked under the lowest criterion. It is very unlikely that your child will be offered a place if a SIF is not supplied.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE

Applicants applying under criteria 2 and 3 must submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) by the closing date. The Certificate is available from the church where you normally worship. Parents should fill in the top part of the form with their details and then take it to their parish priest (or the priest at the parish where they normally worship) for signature. It is the parent's duty to ensure that the CCP is submitted to the school in good time. The priest will only give you the Certificate if he knows you.

You will need to get a separate Certificate signed for each Catholic school that requires one. The local authority will write to you on behalf of the Governing Body with the outcome of your application on or about 16th April 2027. This information will also be available on line for those who have submitted an e-application. Parents/carers should accept the place as soon as possible.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications received after the closing date will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed. If the school is oversubscribed it is very unlikely that late applicants will obtain a place.

NURSERY CHILDREN

Attendance at the nursery **does not** guarantee a place in reception.
Parents of children attending Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Nursery **must** make a fresh application for Reception.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

If you are unsuccessful you may ask us for the reasons for the refusal of a place.

These reasons will be related to the oversubscription criteria listed in the policy and you will have the right of appeal to an independent panel. Should you wish to appeal please contact the school as soon as possible for an appeal form on which you must list your reasons for making an appeal.

Appeals should be submitted to the school in writing (date to be confirmed).

WAITING LIST

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful candidates will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list.

This list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out in the policy and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list.

Names will be removed from the list on 31st August 2028, unless applicants request in writing to remain on the list.

PUPILS WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHC)

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. (This used to be called a Statement of Special Educational Needs). Details of this separate procedure are set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. If your child has an EHC plan you must contact your local authority SEN officer. Children with this school named in their EHC Plan will be admitted.

CHANGE OF DETAILS

If any of the details on either of your forms changes between the date of application and the receipt of the letter of offer or refusal, you **must** inform the School and the local authority immediately. If misleading information is given or allowed to remain on either of your forms, the Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the place, even if the child has already started at the School.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

Applications for In-Year admissions are made directly to the school.

- If a place is available and there is no waiting list the child will be admitted. If there is a waiting list, then applications will be ranked by the Governing Body in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.
- If a place cannot be offered at this time then you may ask us for the reasons and you will be informed of your right of appeal.
- You will be offered the opportunity of being placed on a waiting list.
- This waiting list will be maintained by the Governing Body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which the applications are received.
- Names are removed from the list at the end of each academic year.
- When a place becomes available the Governing Body will re-rank the list and make an offer to the person at the top of the list.

- The local authority will be informed of the offer as soon as it has been accepted.

RECEPTION YEAR DEFERRED ENTRY

Applicants may defer entry to school up until compulsory school age, i.e. the first day of term following the child's fifth birthday. Application is made in the usual way and then deferral is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term as applicable. Applicants may also request that their child attend part-time until compulsory school age is reached. Entry may not be deferred beyond compulsory school age or beyond the year for which the application has been made. Therefore applicants whose children have birthdays in the summer term may only defer until the 1st April 2028.

SUMMER BORN CHILDREN

If a parent wishes his/her summer born child to start school in Reception in the September following his/her 5th birthday, i.e. a child born between 1st April-31st August being admitted to Reception at 5 years of age, they should make the school aware of this by writing a letter to the Chair of Governors at the time of application. Parents must then submit an application in the normal way. This application will be treated in the same way as all other applications and there is no guarantee that an offer will be made. Please note that applications must be made for the year in which parents wish the child to start in Reception as applications cannot be held over.

CHILDREN EDUCATED OUTSIDE THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL AGE GROUP (except summer born children)

Parents may apply for their child to be educated outside his/her chronological age group i.e. a year behind or a year ahead. Applications should be made to the Chair of Governors at the time of application and any supporting evidence should be submitted at the same time. Governors will consider each case on its own merits and permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

NOTES (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

'Looked after child' has the same meaning as in S.22 of the Children Act 1989, and means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them (e.g. children with foster parents at the time of making an application to the school).

'Adopted'. An adopted child is any child who has been formally adopted, having previously been in care and whose parent/ guardian can give proof of this.

'Child Arrangements Order'. A Child Arrangements order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.8 settling the arrangements to

be made as to the person with whom the child is to live. Children 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualify in this category.

'Special Guardianship Order'. A special guardianship order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.14A appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s). A child 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualifies in this category.

'Parent' means the adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child**.**

'Sibling' means brother or sister, to include adopted brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters or step brothers and sisters. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older child(ren) will leave before the younger one starts. Siblings must reside at the same address.

'Catholic' means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will be evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism in a Catholic church or a Certificate of Reception into the full communion with the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy this includes a looked after child in the process of adoption and living with a Catholic family, where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised were it not for his/her status as a looked after child. For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception in the Catholic 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 law of the Church.

'Certificate of Catholic Practice' means a certificate issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of the child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests.

'Catechumen' means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens.

"Children of other Christian denominations" means: children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledging 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 of CYTÛN 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.

"Children of other faiths" means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' 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.

'**Eastern Christian Church**' includes Orthodox Churches, and is evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.

'Christian' for the purposes of this policy, means a member of one of the Churches affiliated to 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland'.

'Resident' – A child is deemed to be resident at a particular address when he/she resides there for more than 50% of the school week.

Parish Boundaries – for the purposes of this Policy, parish boundaries are as shown on the attached map.

'Distance from school' means distance as measured by a straight line, from the front door of the child's residential address (including flats) to a point at the school. If distances are identical, the Governing Body will draw lots in the presence of an independent witness.