



## St John's CoE Primary School, Watford

### Determined Admission Arrangements for 2023/24

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## **Admissions Arrangements 2023 for St John's Church England Primary School, Watford**

### **Section 1 Introductory Statement**

St John's Church of England Primary School, Watford is a church school that is part of the Diocese of St Albans family of over a hundred schools. The school has a religious designation as a Church of England school.

The focus of the school is to serve the local community in Central Watford. It is a school that welcomes pupils from all families - of Christian faith, or of other faiths, or none. Our admissions policy reflects these aspirations.

St John's Church of England Primary School will provide 420 school places for young people aged 4-11 and the admissions arrangements for the Year Group Reception intake are set out below.

St John's Church of England Primary School is committed to straightforward, open, fair and transparent admissions arrangements. The school will act fully in accordance with the School Admissions Code, the School Admissions Appeals Code and admissions law as they apply to academies.

### **Section 2 PAN- Published Admissions Number**

St John's Church of England Primary School has an agreed Published Admissions Number of 60 for admission into year Reception.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) naming St John's Church of England Primary School will be admitted as a priority.

If 60 or less than 60 applications are received, all applicants will be admitted.

If more than 60 applications are received, the oversubscription criteria will be applied.

For twins/multiple births - where one child is admitted under any admission rule, the other twin or siblings will be admitted. Where this would take the school over the published admission number (PAN) of 60, they will be admitted as an exception to the infant class size rule.

### Section 3 Oversubscription Criteria

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) that names the school.

Following the allocation of places to pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), naming St John's Church of England Primary School, 50% of the remaining places will be allocated to 'Children of the Christian Faith' following the criteria a-e below and the rest will be allocated without reference to faith again following the criteria a-e below<sup>1</sup>. This banding will be applied during the normal round of admission i.e. for the initial allocation. If places become available during the subsequent rounds of continuing interests, the banding will continue to be applied until the 50% threshold for Children of the Christian Faith has been reached.

'Children of the Christian Faith' are defined by regular attendance of worship (at least twice a month for a period of one year prior to the application being submitted) at a Trinitarian Christian church. A Trinitarian church is one that believes that there is one God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Attendance of Messy Church is considered worship. This must be evidenced by the completion of the Supplementary Information Form (SIF), counter-signed by the priest/minister. The SIF must be returned directly to the school at the time the application is made and no later than the statutory deadline for on-time applications. 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 arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

If a SIF form is received after applications have been considered and ranked, it will be taken into account for any subsequent round of continuing interest.

For those applying for a community place, there is no requirement to complete the Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

The oversubscription criteria are:

- a. Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England<sup>2</sup>, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.
- b. Children with a social or medical reason where it can be demonstrated that only this school can meet the needs of the child. Applications under this criterion must be supported by written evidence from a professional such as a doctor or social worker involved in the case. A panel of Governors will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule.
- c. Siblings of children on roll who will still be attending the school in the academic year of admission. Siblings include half-siblings, step-siblings, adopted or foster brothers or sisters,

<sup>1</sup> For some examples of how this will work in practice, please see Appendix 1 (at the end of this document).

<sup>2</sup> Examples of the evidence which can be submitted can be found in this Guidance [Admissions priority for children adopted from state care outside of England](#)

living in the same family unit at the time when the child is due to start in the school.

- d. Children with a parent who is a current employee<sup>3</sup> of the school with either 2 years service at the time of the application for admission or who has been employed to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage<sup>4</sup>. Parent is defined as a natural parent, legal guardian or resident step-parent with whom the child lives with at the same address for the majority of the time.
  
- e. Other children, with priority being given to those living closest to the school. This will be the straight line distance from the child's permanent home address<sup>5</sup> to the school site. The same computerised mapping system that Hertfordshire County Council use when calculating distance from home to school for school admissions will be applied.<sup>6</sup> Should the child live at more than one address, their home address will be considered as the address where they spend the majority of the time. If the child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a joint application naming one address.

#### **Section 4 Tie-Break**

If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, a tiebreak shall be used by applying the next oversubscription criteria to those children. Where two children with an equal claim on a place at the school, the tie break shall be random allocation. This will be undertaken by someone independent of the school by drawing lots.

#### **Section 5 Late Applications**

All applications received after the closing date as advertised by Hertfordshire County Council (usually the 15<sup>th</sup> January) will be considered to be late applications. Late applicants will be considered after those received on time. If, following consideration of all applicants, the school is oversubscribed, the child will automatically be placed on the continuing interest lists for the school. Parents can opt out of continuing interest.

#### **Section 6 Deferred entry**

Parents offered a place in reception for their child have a right to defer the date their child is admitted, or to take the place up part-time, until the child reaches compulsory school age or until the final term of the school year, whichever comes first. Children reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.

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<sup>3</sup> Current employee includes all persons employed directly by the school, whether full time or part time and includes both teachers and support staff.

<sup>4</sup> For the 2023/24 admissions arrangements we have determined that current skills shortages apply to the following posts - Teachers, Caretaker and School Business Manager.

<sup>5</sup> Please see the Appendix 2 for the full definition

<sup>6</sup> Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system is used for all home to school measurement. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.

Summer born children (born between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August) – St John's believes that each child is unique. Teaching staff will adjust and differentiate the curriculum to cater for all abilities within a year group and meet the individual needs of each child. If, however, a parent considers it to be in their child's best interests to start school in the term following their fifth birthday when they reach compulsory school age, they can make an application for a Reception place for the September after the child's fifth birthday. Parents should discuss this with the school as soon as possible and must follow the process for the admission of children outside their normal age group detailed in Section 7.

## **Section 7 Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group**

Where a parent wishes their child to start school in a year group outside their normal age range, they may request this and should discuss it with the school as soon as possible.

Parents should provide reasons and since decisions will be made based on available information, parents may wish to provide professionally supported evidence (if such evidence is available) to explain why their child's needs cannot be met in the chronological year group.

Requests will be considered by the school's Admissions Committee on a case by case basis. Each request and supporting evidence will be carefully considered on its individual merits and the educational, social and developmental reasons will be taken into account to arrive at a decision in the best interests of the child

Applying by the age appropriate deadlines will mean that in the event the request is refused, the child can still be considered for a place in their correct age group, if a place is available.

Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make an application, providing a copy of the decision as part of the application. Please note that the decision to agree the request to make an application outside a child's normal age group does not guarantee that a place will be available.

Parents do not have the right of an appeal against a decision not to accept a request to admit outside of their year group.

## **Section 8 Waiting Lists**

If the school is oversubscribed, names of all unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

When a place becomes available at our school, the child at the top of the waiting list will be offered a place at our school, with the expectation that they will be able to take up the place within 2 school weeks of the offer being made.

Waiting lists will be kept for all year groups within the school from the start of each academic year until the end (September to July). Each list will operate in accordance with the oversubscription criteria a-e defined in section 3. For the waiting list, no grouping is applied i.e. there is no distinction between Children of the Christian Faith and Community places. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list. To remain on the waiting list after this time, parents must confirm that they are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form for the new academic year.

## Section 9 In Year Applications

An In Year Application is any application for a school place that is received after completion of the normal admission process for a place in Reception, or for a school place in Years 1-6.

The normal admission process for a place in Reception refers to both the initial allocation of places and the subsequent rounds of continuing interest. Between April 2023 and August 2023, for those applying for a place in Reception in September 2023, this is coordinated by the County Council through their online system. To continue on the waiting list from September 2023 onwards, you will then need to make an In Year application directly to the school.

In Year applications should be made directly to the school. Available places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria a-e defined in section 3. If there are no spaces available, applicants can request to be placed on the waiting list (see section 8).

We will co-operate in keeping with the local authority's Fair Access Protocol for children who are hard to place. The school will admit children under the Fair Access Protocol before those on continuing interest and, if necessary, above PAN.

The In Year application form can be downloaded from the school's website <https://watfordstjohns.org/admissions/> or obtained from the school office.

## Section 10 Appeals

If a parent is dissatisfied with the school's decision not to admit their child(ren), they have the right to appeal to an independent appeals panel against that decision. The determination of the panel will be made in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code and will be binding on all parties.

At transfer time parents wishing to appeal who applied online should log into their online application and click on the link 'register an appeal'. For those who did not apply online please contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request an appeal pack.

For In Year applications, we will write to you with the outcome of your application within 15 school days. If you have been unsuccessful, the county council will write to you with registration details to enable you to log in and appeal online at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals).

St John's Church of England Primary School will use the independent appeals service provided by the local authority. Independent Appeals Panels are appointed in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

## Section 11 Application Process

Applications for St John's Church of England Primary School should be made through Hertfordshire County Council's co-ordinated scheme of admissions.

The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the home Local Authority (LA) is 15th January 2023. Parents/carers of children living in Hertfordshire can make an online application

via the Hertfordshire County Council website [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions) or contact the council's Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 for a paper application form. Parents should return the application form direct to the County Council. Parents/carers of children not living in Hertfordshire must make an application to their local authority. If you are making an application for a child who is currently living overseas, please read Appendix 4.

Should the school receive more applications than places, it will be necessary to apply the oversubscription criteria as detailed in section 3.

If you would like your child to be considered under the "Children of the Christian Faith" category, you will need to complete the school's Supplementary Information Form (SIF), have it counter-signed by your minister/priest and submit this direct to the school at the same time that you submit your application to HCC and before the deadline of 15th January 2023.

SIF's will be available through the school's website, HCC's website, or can be obtained by contacting the school office. Failure to submit a counter-signed SIF will mean that you cannot be considered under the "Children of the Christian Faith" category (although your application will still be considered in relation to those places allocated without reference to faith).

National Allocations day is 17th April 2023.

Inaccurate or false information made on the application could result in the place being withdrawn. Please see Appendix 3 for further information.

## Appendix 1

### Examples of how the Oversubscription Criteria works in practice.

#### **Example 1: The school receives 60 applications for 60 places**

All children will be offered a place at the school.

#### **Example 2: The school receives 61 applicants for 60 places – 15 applications are for the "Children of the Christian faith" priority group and 46 are for the "Community" priority group.**

It is necessary to apply the oversubscription criteria. 50% of places are allocated to "Children of the Christian Faith", which would be 30 places.

However, there have only been 15 applications for the "Children of the Christian Faith" category, so all 15 of those children would be offered a place. The remaining 45 places at the school would be allocated according to the oversubscription criteria a-d (without reference to faith).

**Example 3: The school receives 62 applications for 60 places – 2 children have an EHCP naming St John’s, 34 applications are for the “Children of the Christian faith” priority group and 26 are for the “Community” priority group.**

It is necessary to apply the oversubscription criteria. There have been two applications for a child with an Educational, Health and Care plan (EHCP) naming St John’s.

So with 60 available places, the children with the EHCPs are admitted, leaving 58 available places. 50% of places are allocated to “Children of the Christian Faith” which is 29 places, to be allocated according to the oversubscription criteria a-e.

The applications of the 5 children who are not offered a place within the “Children of the Christian Faith” category, are then added to the other 26, which are then allocated according to the oversubscription criteria a-e (without reference to faith).

## Appendix 2

### Definition of Permanent Home Address

The address provided must be the child’s current permanent address at the time of application

- At the time of application means the closing date for applications
- ‘Permanent’ means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months<sup>7</sup> and the child must be resident in the property at the time of application.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If a child’s permanent residence is disputed, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admissions allocation purposes. If two applications are received, with different addresses and/or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

It is for a child’s home Local Authority to determine address. If two applications, with different addresses are received from the same Local Authority, it will be for that Local Authority to determine permanent address. If two applications are received from two different Local Authorities, the above process will be used.

If two differing applications are received for the same child from the same address, e.g. containing different preferences, parents/carers will be invited to submit a joint application or

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<sup>7</sup> If, because of the nature of the agreement, it is not possible to provide a 12 month tenancy agreement, alternative proof of address will be requested and verified as necessary with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service.



provide court documentation to evidence the preferences that should be used for the admission process. Until the preference issue is reconciled neither application will be processed.

For the transfer application rounds, if initial differing applications (one or both) were received 'on-time', an amended joint application will also be considered 'on-time' if received before the 'late deadline'. If the amended joint application is received after the late date, it will be treated as 'late'. The late deadlines for the 2023/24 transfer application process are 1st February for reception applications. If these dates change, amendments will be published on the admission webpages at the start of the 2023/24 application process in September 2022.

### Appendix 3

#### Fraudulent applications

Our school will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided.

We will take action in the following circumstances:

- When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school;
- When a child lives at a different address to the applicant;
- When the applicant does not have parental responsibility;
- When a family move shortly after the closing date of applications when one or more of the following applies:
  - The family has moved to a property from which their application was less likely to be successful; The family has returned to an existing property;
  - The family lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than a year) over the application period;
  - Official/public records show an alternative address at the time of the application
- When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application.

Parents/carers will need to show that they have relinquished residency ties with their previous property and they, and their child(ren) are permanently residing at the address given on the application form.

#### **Address Visits**

Where suspicions lie as to the validity of an address, school staff may make unannounced visits to the applicant's claimed address or any other address suspected to be the normal permanent residence of the child's primary carer or the address where the child resides for the majority of the week. The aim of these visits is to verify that the address information provided on the

application form is accurate. All visits will be made by two members of school staff.

If an address appears to be unoccupied at the time of a visit, a letter will be left confirming that an attempted visit took place. This letter will ask the occupant to contact the school within 24 hours to confirm receipt of the letter and details of the occupant. It is reasonable to expect that an applicant living at the address stated on the application form can respond within 24 hours. If contact takes longer than 24 hours, the applicant will be asked to explain why and provide evidence why they did not respond within the specified time.

If, following the initial investigation or any further investigation, the school concludes that, on the balance of probability, a fraudulent address has been used on an application, correspondence will be sent to the applicant confirming this decision. This will outline the factors taken into account in making the decision as well as the action which will be taken with the application. It will also set out which address will be considered to be the child's permanent home address for the purpose of their application for admission to school.

#### Appendix 4

##### Applications from children from overseas.

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) in England have a right of access to education. However, where a child is in England for a short period only, for example less than half a term, it may be reasonable to refuse admission to a school.

An application for a school place will only be accepted for such children currently overseas if, for In Year applications, proof is provided that the child will be resident in Hertfordshire within two weeks. In Year allocations are made on the assumption that the child will accept the school place and be on roll within that timescale.

Applications will not normally be accepted from, nor places allocated to, an overseas address. The exception to this (for both In Year and transfer processes) is for children of UK service personnel and crown servants (and from military families who are residents of countries with a Memorandum of Understanding with the UK). In these cases, we will allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a HCC Unit postal address or quartering area address, for consideration of the application against oversubscription criteria.

Applications will also be considered, and places offered in advance for these families, if the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date but does not provide a quartering or unit address because the family will be residing in private accommodation. In these cases, if the family does not already have a permanent private address in Hertfordshire, the military base or alternative "work" address in Hertfordshire will be used for allocation purposes. If the family already has an established alternative private address, that address will be used for admission purposes as long as the parents provide evidence of the

address and that the child will be living there.

We will also consider accepting applications from children whose family can evidence intent to return to and/or permanently reside in Hertfordshire prior to the start of the new academic year. These applications, if accepted, will be processed from the overseas address until sufficient evidence is received to show the child is permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Evidence must be submitted at the time of application.

Evidence submitted after the date for late applications (1 February 2023 for the Under 11s process) cannot be taken into account before National Allocation Day. Decisions on these applications will be made by the school's Admissions Committee and communicated with parents within 6 weeks of the closing date for applications.

If an applicant owns a property in Hertfordshire but is not living in it, perhaps because they are working abroad at the time of application, the Hertfordshire address will **not** be accepted for the purposes of admission until the child is resident at that address.

Other children, than those mentioned above, from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. An application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until they are permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Proof of residency such as an endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application, in addition to proof of Hertfordshire address, for example a council tax bill or 12 month rental agreement.