



St Thomas More Partnership of Schools

Admissions Policy

2017 - 2018

1. Rationale

St Thomas More Partnership of Schools is a Partnership of Catholic Schools which were originally constituted to provide an education to the children of Catholic families.

In developing a policy for admissions there are various things to consider: the place of siblings, of other Christian denominations, the place where families live. These priorities are shown in the oversubscription criteria of the schools.

The Partnership recognises that each school needs its own admissions policy in order to take into account local circumstances, however all the policies should be based on the same principles.

The principles outlined, in order, below, are not the oversubscription criteria which are found in the individual policies of the schools in the Partnership. Therefore there is no mention of Looked After Children as the status of these children is outlined in the Admissions Code and are therefore included in the appropriate place in individual school policies.

2. The Principles

The individual admissions policies of the schools in the Partnership are based on the following principles, in order of application in the Policies:

1. The Partnership is a group of schools that has been founded for the education of the children of Catholic families and as such are afforded the highest importance in the criteria.
2. Supporting families is a priority of the Partnership and so siblings, Catholic and non-Catholic are next in the oversubscription criteria.
3. The contribution that is made by practising Christians of other denominations to the ethos of the schools in the partnership is valued very highly. The children of practising Catholic families of other denominations therefore follow.
4. The wider community of Catholic families within the catchment area is also supported by giving priority to pupils in the feeder primary schools.
5. The Partnership serves a catchment area based on West Gateshead and extending up the Tyne Valley into Northumberland. Each school in the Partnership has a catchment area which is defined in terms of one or more parishes.
6. For the secondary school there is no preferment given to where pupils live, except for whether or not it is in the catchment area. The tie breaker is therefore random allocation. For the primary schools who serve a more local community the tie breaker is distance.

ST MATTHEWS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Highfield Lane,
Prudhoe, Northumberland,
NE42 6EY**



ADMISSION POLICY 2017 -2018

Admission Arrangements for St Matthews Catholic Primary School in September 2017

St Matthews Catholic Primary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families and seeks at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ.

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. 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.

1. The Admission Authority

- 1.1. St Matthews Catholic Primary School Prudhoe is a member of the St Thomas More Partnership of Schools.
- 1.2. The Admissions Authority for St Matthews is therefore the Board of Directors of St Thomas More Partnership of Schools who are responsible for determining the school's admissions arrangements.

2. Admission Into Reception September 2017

- 2.1. The School will admit **26** pupils into reception in September 2017.

3. Catchment Area

- 3.1. The catchment area for St Matthews Catholic Primary School Prudhoe is the parish of Our Lady and St Cuthberts Prudhoe.
- 3.2. A map showing the boundary of the parish is available on the school website and from the St Thomas More Partnership of Schools website.

4. Applications for a place in Reception

- 4.1. Applications procedures and timetables will follow the locally agreed co-ordinated scheme with Northumberland LA. Details on this scheme can be found on the Northumberland County Council website.

- 4.2. If there are more places than applicants then all applicants will be accepted.
- 4.3. If there are more applications than places available then the Governors will apply the oversubscription criteria as outlined in section 13 of this policy.
- 4.4. If there are more applicants than available places the School will treat all applications equally, regardless of the order of preference given by the parents. All the applications are placed in order using the oversubscription criteria. Allocation of places is then co-ordinated by the Local Authority.
- 4.5. Late applications can be made and will be handled as in the Co-ordinated Scheme.
- 4.6. The Governors reserve the right to declare an application null and void or to withdraw an offer of a place if any of the information submitted is false.
- 4.7. Parents will be notified on, or around, the 16th April 2017 whether or not their child has been offered a place at the school.
- 4.8. Applicants refused admission into reception are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the Chair of Governors at the school address.
- 4.9. Infant classes may not, by law, contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher (subject to the provisions in the School Admissions Code for 'excepted children'). Parents do have a right of appeal in accordance with the infant class size regulations if the school is oversubscribed and their child is refused a place.

5. Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

- 5.1. A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A request may be made for the date at which a child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, to be deferred to later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year. A child may take up a part-time place until the child reaches compulsory school age.
- 5.2. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school in writing, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

6. Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

- 6.1. A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill

health.

- 6.2. Any such request should be made in writing to the Head Teacher of the school. 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 who has 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.

7. Summer Born Children

- 7.1. The parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to the reception class in the September following their fifth birthday and that that the child will remain in this cohort as they progress through school.
- 7.2. Parents who want to make this request should make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time. The application to the local authority should include this request and in addition it should be made in writing to the Head Teacher of the school. The local authority will liaise with the governing body who 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, who has 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.
- 7.3. Parents will be informed of the outcome of the request before primary national offer day.
- 7.4. If the request is agreed by the governing body, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If the request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.
- 7.5. Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.
- 7.6. One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

8. Fair Access Protocol



8.1. 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 admission 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 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.

9. Waiting List

9.1. If the school has reached its admission number a Waiting List will be maintained from 1st May 2017.

9.2. Any parent can request that their child be placed on the waiting list.

9.3. Children will be placed on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria.

9.4. The date of application to be placed on the list will not be used in any selection process.

9.5. The school will continue to maintain the waiting list during the corresponding school year and outside the normal year of entry.

9.6. Pupils who are allocated a place at the school under the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over all those on the waiting list.

10. Repeat Applications

10.1. Repeat applications for entry into a particular year group in the same academic year will not be considered unless there is a material change in the circumstances of the child or parent. An application may be made for a subsequent academic year.

10.2. A material change in circumstance may be a change of address or a change in the baptismal status of the child.

11. In year applications



- 11.1. 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. For information on making an in-year application, parents should contact the local authority admissions team at School Admissions, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF on 01670 624889 or by email at schooladmissions@northumberland.gov.uk. Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application in writing.
- 11.2. Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria will be applied.
- 11.3. If there are no places available, a request can be made that the child is added to the waiting list (see above).

12. Right of Appeal

- 12.1. Where a parent has been notified that a place is not available for a child, every effort will be made by the local authority to help the parent to find a place in a suitable alternative school. Parents who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the Chair of Governors at the school address.

13. Oversubscription Criteria

- 13.1. **Children with an Education, Health and Care plan or a statement of Special Educational Need:** Children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or a statement of Special Educational Need where the school is named as the most appropriate educational setting for the child will be admitted.

| Order of Priority | Oversubscription Criteria | How verified |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Looked after children and previously looked after children. | LA records |
| 2 | Catholic children whose home address is within the catchment area served by the school. | Baptismal Certificate of the child. |
| 3 | Catholic children whose home address is outside of the catchment area served by the school. | Baptismal Certificate of the child. |
| 4 | Children who have an older brother or sister in the school at the time of admission. | Information held by the School. |

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| 5 | Children who are practising members of another Christian denomination and whose home address is within the catchment area served by the school. | The School will seek verification from the Vicar/Minister. |
| 6 | Children who are practising members of another Christian denomination and whose home address is outside the catchment area served by the school. | The School will seek verification from the Vicar/Minister. |
| 7 | All other children. | |

14. Additional Notes

- 14.1. 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. A Statement of Special Educational Needs is a statement made by the local authority under section 324 of the Education Act 1996, specifying the special educational provision for a child.
- 14.2. 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): An **adoption order** is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A **child arrangements order** is an order outlining the arrangements as to the person with whom the child will live under the provisions of section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. A **special guardianship order** is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians. A **previously looked after child** is a child who immediately moved on from that status after becoming subject to an adoption, child arrangement order or special guardianship order.
- 14.3. Definition of Catholic: 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 of the Catholic Church. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception should contact their parish priest who, after consulting with the Diocese, will decide how the question of baptism or reception is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.
- 14.4. Definition of practising members of other Christian denominations: children who are members of a Church or religious community that practises Trinitarian baptism recognised by the Catholic Church. Applicants must provide a baptismal certificate or where child baptism is not practised, a letter confirming their church membership

and practise from their minister or faith leader.

14.5. Definition of Sibling: Sibling means a child who lives as a brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, or the child of a parent's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It also includes natural brothers or sisters where the child for whom the school place is sought is not living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.

14.6. Where there are places available for some but not all applicants within a particular criterion, distance from home to school will be the deciding factor, with preference given to those whose home address is nearest to the school, when measured in a straight line (i.e. as the crow flies) from the front door of the child's home address (including flats) to the main entrance of the school (using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system).

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 in a public place and supervised by a person independent of the school.

14.7. Home Address is the parental address which will be used in applying the admission criteria. This means that, when stating your choice of school, you should give the parental/guardian address at the time of application.