



St Thomas More Partnership of Schools

Admissions Policy

2019-20

## **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 Christian 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 THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Croftdale Road  
Blaydon  
Tyne and Wear  
NE21 4BQ**



**ADMISSION POLICY 2019-20**



## **Admission Arrangements for St Thomas More School in September 2019-20**

St Thomas More Catholic School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its governing body as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and articles of association, 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 Thomas More Catholic School is a member of the St Thomas More Partnership of Schools.
- 1.2. The governing body is the Admissions Authority. The Admissions Authority for St Thomas More is therefore St Thomas More Partnership of Schools who are responsible for determining the school's admissions arrangements.

### **2. Catchment Area**

- 2.1. The catchment area is defined by the boundaries of the following parishes served by the feeder schools: St Anne's, Winlaton; St Joseph's Blaydon; St Agnes', Crawcrook; SS Mary and Thomas Aquinas, Stella; St Philip Neri, Dunston; Immaculate Heart of Mary, Loblely Hill; St Mary's, Wickham; St Joseph's, Highfield; Our Lady of Lourdes, Chopwell; Corpus Christi, Gateshead; Holy Rosary, Gateshead; Sacred Heart, Byermoor; Our Lady and St Cuthbert Prudhoe; St Mary, Hexham.
- 2.2. The catchment area contains the following feeder schools: St Joseph's, Blaydon; St Agnes', Crawcrook; SS Mary and Thomas Aquinas, Stella; St Philip Neri, Dunston; St Mary's, Wickham; St Joseph's, Highfield; Corpus Christi, Gateshead; Sacred Heart, Byermoor; St Matthew's, Prudhoe.

### **3. Published Admission Number**

- 3.1. The governing body has set its published admission number (PAN) at 235 pupils to Year seven in the school year which begins in September 2019.

### **4. Applications for entry into Year 7**

- 4.1. To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round (not in-year applications), a Common Application Form (CAF) must be completed. This is available from the local authority in which the child lives.
- 4.2. Applications procedures and timetables will follow the locally agreed co-ordinated scheme with Gateshead LA.
- 4.3. If there are more places than applicants then all applicants will be accepted.
- 4.4. If there are more applications than places available then the Governors will apply the oversubscription criteria as outlined in section 11 of this policy.
- 4.5. 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 coordinated by the Local Authority.
- 4.6. Late applications can be made and will be handled as in the Co-ordinated Scheme. Parents are advised to ensure that the application is submitted before the closing date.
- 4.7. 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.
- 4.8. Applicants refused admission to Year 7 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.

### **5. Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group**

- 5.1. 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.

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.

## **6. Fair Access Protocol**

- 6.1. 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 both the Diocese 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.

## **7. Waiting List**

- 7.1. If the school has reached its admission number a Waiting List will be maintained from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.
- 7.2. Any parent can request that their child be placed on the waiting list.
- 7.3. Children will be placed on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria.
- 7.4. The date of the application, and the date the child is placed on the list, will not be used in any selection process.
- 7.5. The school will continue to maintain the waiting list during the corresponding school year and outside the normal year of entry.
- 7.6. 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.
- 7.7. Inclusion on the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

## **8. Repeat Applications**

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. A material change in circumstance may be a change of address or a change in the baptismal status of the child.

## 9. In year applications

- 9.1. 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. Applications should be made to the school by contacting the Admissions Officer at the school. Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application in writing.
- 9.2. Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out below, will be applied.
- 9.3. If there are no places available, a request can be made that the child is added to the waiting list.
- 9.4. The parent has the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

## 10. Right of Appeal

- 10.1. 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.

## 11. Children with an Education, Health and Care plan or a statement of Special Educational Need

- 11.1. The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Educational Needs is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs 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.

## 12. Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority.



<b>Order of Priority</b>	<b>Oversubscription Criteria</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1	Looked after and previously looked after children.	See note 13.2
2	Catholic children from the feeder primary schools.	See notes 2.2 and 13.4
3	Catholic children who have an older brother or sister in the school at the time of admission.	See note 13.2 and 13.9
4	Practising Catholic children who live within the catchment area of the school.	See notes 2.1, 13.4 and 13.6
5	Other Catholic children who live within the catchment area of the school.	See notes 2.1 and 13.4
6	Other Catholic children.	See note 13.4
7	Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church	See notes 13.7 and 13.8
8	Other children who have an older brother or sister in the school at the time of admission.	See note 13.9
9	Children who are practising members of another Christian denomination and who live within the catchment area of the school.	See notes 2.1, 13.9 and 13.10
10	Children who have exceptional medical, social or pastoral needs supported by written evidence from a doctor, social worker, priest or other appropriate person.	See note 13.15
11	Other children in the feeder schools.	See note and 2.2
12	Children of a member of school staff who has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which application for admission to the school is made.	See note 13.13
13	All other children.	

### 13. Notes

- 13.1. 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.
- 13.2. A **looked after child** 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 looked after child** 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.
- 13.3. The parish boundaries are available for viewing in school, on the school's website ([www.stthomasmore.org.uk](http://www.stthomasmore.org.uk)).
- 13.4. **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. For the purposes of this policy, it includes a looked after child 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 looked after child (e.g. a looked after child in the process of adoption by a Catholic family).
- For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the Church will be required. 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. The school will require to see the baptismal certificate of all children claiming to be Catholic, please include a copy of the Baptismal Certificate with your application.
- 13.5. For your child to receive priority because of a brother or sister in the sixth form of the school, the brother or sister must have been at the school at the start of Year 11.
- 13.6. **For a Catholic child to be considered “practising” they will:** Have been baptised and be currently fulfilling the obligation to attend Sunday mass, which will be verified by the named priest through the Certificate of Catholic Practice. This is 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 a 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. This can be found at [www.edurcdhn.org.uk](http://www.edurcdhn.org.uk)

- 13.7. **Catechumen** means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. For the purposes of admissions this refers to the child on whose behalf the application is being made. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.
- 13.8. **Eastern Christian Church** includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception should contact the Diocese who 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.
- 13.9. **Definition of other Christian denominations:** 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.

Applicants must provide a baptismal certificate or where child baptism is not practised, a letter confirming their church membership from their minister or faith leader.

- 13.10. **For a child to be considered “practising members of another Christian denomination” they will:** have been initiated into that church; the school will need to see documentary evidence of baptism/initiation; be verified by the named minister of religion as being a currently practicing member of the church.
- 13.11. **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, half brothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters whether or not they are living at the same address; and the child of a parent’s partner where that child lives for a least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant. 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.
- 13.12. **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. The address of childminders or other family members who may share in the care of the child must not be used as the home address. For categories where the child must live within the catchment area, verification of address will be required.
- 13.13. A **member of staff** includes all school staff who are under the direct employment of the trustees of St Thomas More Partnership of Schools.
- 13.14. For categories 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 parents will be requested to give the following information on the supplementary form:
- Names of any older brothers/sisters in the School
  - Baptismal status
  - Whether your child, and at least one parent, are practising Catholics or practising members of another Christian denomination.
  - The Name, Address and telephone number of the priest/vicar/minister who will be able to confirm attendance at church
  - Copies of Baptismal certificates or other evidence of reception should be included with your supplementary form.
- 13.15. **Social, medical or pastoral need:** To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the governing body will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

### 13. Tie Breaker

- 13.1. In the event of the School reaching capacity within categories 1-11, the School will use random allocation to determine the order of applications within a category. This will be carried out in a public place and supervised by a person independent of the school.

### 14. Admission into the Sixth Form

- 14.1. Planned Admission Number - Year 12

The school will admit 20 pupils into Year 12, September 2019.

The projected number of pupils for admission into Year 12 in September 2019 is 175. This is made up of an estimated number of 155 pupils moving into Year 12 from St Thomas More School and 20 external applications from pupils in other schools.

- 14.2. The minimum entry requirement for admission into Year 12 is dependent on the course of study that a student wishes follow. In general, the minimum requirement for a GCE AS/A2 course is 6+ grades A\*-B at GCSE or equivalent. For a student to study at GCE AS/A2 a subject that they studied at GCSE they must have achieved at least a grade B in that subject at GCSE where the subject requires previous study.
- 14.3. For a 12 unit vocational course the minimum entry requirement is 6+ grades A\*-C GCSE or equivalent with a merit in a suitable Subject.
- 14.4. Details of the specific entry requirements and courses available may be obtained from the School.
- 14.5. Applicants refused admission to the Sixth Form are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel.
- 14.6. For a student to continue a course of study in Year 13 they must pass the course in Year 12 at a suitable level. Details of this can be obtained from the school.
- 14.7. Oversubscription Criteria for external students

Order of Priority	Oversubscription Criteria	How verified
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1	Looked after and previously looked after students.	See note 13.2
2	Catholic students	See note 13.4
3	Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church	See notes 13.7 and 13.8
4	Students from other Christian denominations	See note 13.9
5	All other students	

## 15. Notes

### 15.1. Tie Breaker

In the event of the School reaching capacity within categories 1-4, the School will use random allocation to determine the order of applications within a category. This will be supervised by a person independent of the school.

15.2. **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. The school will require to see the baptismal certificate of all children claiming to be Roman Catholic, please include a copy of the Baptismal Certificate with your application.

15.3. **Definition of other Christian denominations:** 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 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.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the local authority's admission guidance for parents.**