



SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, CONGLETON

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2025-2026

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, Congleton is a Voluntary Academy and a member of the Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Academy Trust in the trusteeship of the Diocese of Shrewsbury, and 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 Our Lord 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 expect 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.

The Academy Trust is the Admissions Authority and has delegated full responsibility to the Local Governing Body to govern admissions and to take all decisions on applications for admissions. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round. The Local Governing Body will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's Published Admission Number (PAN).

For the school's year commencing September 2025 and subsequent years, the Local Governing Body has decided that the number of children to be admitted to the Reception class (PAN) will be 30.

The admission of pupils with a **Statement of Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (see note 1)** is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan, where the school is named in the Statement or Plan, 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.

Oversubscription Criteria

If there are 30 or fewer applications, all applicants will be offered places. **If there are more than 30 applications**, after the admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan where the school is named in the Statement or Plan, remaining places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

1. Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children (see note 2)
2. Baptised Catholic children resident in the parish of St. Mary's, Congleton (see note 3)
3. Other baptised Catholic children (see note 3)
4. Any other children.

Within each of the categories 2, 3 and 4 listed above, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:



- (i) Children who will have a brother or sister at the school at the time of admission (see note 4).
- (ii) Children of staff (see note 6)
- (iii) Children attending Saint Mary's Catholic Nursery

Tie Break

If it is not possible to offer places for all applications within any criterion above, priority will be given to those living nearest to the school measured using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG), which measures straight line distances in miles from the school's coordinate point to the place of residence's coordinate point. 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 and supervised by a person independent of the school. All the names will be entered into a hat and the required number of names will be drawn out.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. 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. 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.
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) 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, at the time of making application to the school.

Previously looked after children are 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). All references to previously looked after children in this code mean such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after children and 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. Oversubscription criteria must then be applied to all other applicants in the order set out in the arrangements

3. 'Catholic' means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally 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 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.

4. 'brother or sister' includes:
 - (i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and



- (ii) the child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant.
5. A 'parent' means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child, and any person who has care of a child.
 6. This applies where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live (the 'home local authority'). You are also requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) attached to this policy if you wish to apply under oversubscription criteria 2 or 3. The Supplementary Information Form is available on the school website or from the local authority [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/admissions] and should be returned with all supporting documentation to Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, Belgrave Avenue, Congleton CW12 1HT by **15th January 2026**.

If you do not provide the information required in the SIF and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child will not be placed in criteria 2 or 3, and this is likely to affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 16th April or the next working day, by the local authority on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher), you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 15th January 2026.

Late Applications

Applications received after the closing date of 15th January 2026 will be **treated as a late application** and will not be considered until **after** the main allocation of places has taken place. Late applications will be administered in accordance with your home Local Authority Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. You are encouraged to ensure that your application is received on time.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

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

Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group



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. In addition, the parents of a summer-born child, i.e. a child born between 1st April and 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to Reception rather than Year 1.

Any such request should be made in writing to the Headteacher, Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, Belgrave Avenue, Congleton CW12 1HT at the same time as the admission application is made. The Local 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 Headteacher, including the Headteacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the Local Governing Body will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

Admission Appeals and Infant Class Size Legislation (ICSL)

Apart from some very limited exceptions, no infant class may contain more than 30 pupils being taught by a single school teacher. Any admissions which would increase an infant class to more than 30 pupils to one school teacher would result in a breach of Infant Class Size Legislation and would require 'qualifying measures' to be taken to comply with this legislation. Qualifying measures that could be taken include:

- Organising an extra class;
- Appointing an additional teacher;
- Providing/building an additional classroom;
- Introducing or extending mixed age group teaching, e.g. grouping year one and year two children together in classes of 30 or less.

When the Local Governing Body can show to an appeals panel that any further admissions would require qualifying measures, an appeal can only be upheld (i.e. resulting in a place offered) if the appeals panel decide either that:

- the child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been properly implemented; or
- the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had not been contrary to mandatory provisions in the School Admissions Code and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; and/or
- the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and **not** in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Each new child added to the waiting list will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria listed above. This means that a child's position on the list may change if another applicant who has higher priority in the oversubscription criteria joins the waiting list. The waiting list will be held open until 31st December in the year of application. **Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.**

In Year Applications



An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the normal admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Application should be made to the school by contacting the Headteacher, Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, Belgrave Avenue, Congleton CW12 1HT or by telephoning 01260 274690.

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied.

If there are no places available, a waiting list for 'In Year' applications will not be kept.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Fair Access Protocol

The school participates in Cheshire East Local Authority Fair Access Protocol. 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 Local Governing Body is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The Local Governing Body has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number (subject to the infant class size exceptions).

Nursery

For children attending the school's nursery, application to the reception class of the school must be made in the normal way, to the home local authority. Attendance at the school's nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered at the school.

The Local Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where a child is already attending the school, the place itself where it is satisfied that the offer or place was obtained by deception.