



Our Mission Statement,
***"learning to grow in knowledge, faith and love through friendship with Jesus and Mary"***
underpins all that we do at St Bernadette School

# ADMISSIONS POLICY 2021-22

St. Bernadette Catholic Primary 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 always 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 Instrument of Government 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 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.

The governing body is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to the school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round. The governing body has set its Published Admissions Number (PAN) at 30 children for the school year which begins in September 2020. Applications for Reception are welcome from families whose child reaches his/her 4th birthday between 1st September 2020 and 31st August 2021.

The governing body will admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last ranked within the school's PAN.

**Pupils with an Education, Health & 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. The admission of children with an EHC Plan will reduce the number of places available to other children (see note 1).

**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:

1. Catholic 'looked after' children and previously 'looked after' children (see notes 2-5);
2. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice (see notes 6 and 7);
3. Other baptised Catholic children for whom St. Bernadette is the nearest Catholic school (see note 6 & 8);
4. Other baptised Catholic children (see note 6);
5. Other 'looked after' children and previously 'looked after' children (see notes 2-5);
6. Children of catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church (see notes 8 & 9);
7. Any other children.

***Within each of the categories listed above, the provisions below will be applied in the following order:***

i. The Governing Body will give top priority, within a category, to an application where compelling evidence is provided at the time of application, from an appropriate professional such as a doctor, priest or social worker, of an exceptional social, medical, pastoral or other need ***of the child***, which can only be met at this school.

ii. The attendance of a brother/sister at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within a category, so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made, after children in (i) above.

**Applications in previous years**

Whilst the school welcomes applications from all categories, the majority of places are historically filled by Catholic children.

**Tie break**

Where the offer of places to the applicants in any of the categories listed above would exceed the number of places available, the places up to the admission number will be offered to those living nearest to the school. The school uses a straight line distance measurement system provided by HCC: 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

In the event where two different addresses are the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be closest to the ground and therefore closer. If there are two identical distances of separate applicants, the tiebreak will be random allocation. Every child entered onto the HCC admissions database has an individual random number assigned between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. When there is a need for a final tie break the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority.

## Application Procedure for 2022/23

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you **must** complete an online application form from your local authority (paper forms are also available on request.) If you are applying under criteria 2, 3, 4 or 6 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 2021**, the Governing Body will be obliged to consider your application using only the documents available. If you don't return the SIF on time your child may receive a lower ranking because of this and not be offered a place.

The local authority will despatch the allocations on behalf of the school governors on the 16th April 2021. This information will also be available on line for those who have submitted an online application. Parents should accept or decline the place as soon as possible. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child was offered a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above and you will have right of appeal to an independent appeal 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 by Friday 29th May 2021.

Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal". Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details and log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system".

All the published information, as well as the Application Form for a place in Reception is found at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions. The closing date for applications is 15th January 2021.

## 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.

## Reception Year Deferred Entry

A child is entitled to a full-time school place in the September following his/her 4th birthday. 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 the deferral until January or April is requested. The place will then be held until the first day of the spring or summer term as applicable. 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 2022. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school as soon as possible if they wish to defer until the spring or summer term.

## Part-time attendance

Applicants may also request that their child attend part-time until compulsory school age is reached. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school as soon as possible if they wish to 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 his/her normal age group e.g. 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 – 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of his/her normal age group, starting reception at 5 years of age. Any such request should be made in writing to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. The governing body will make its decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child, taking into account school organisation issues and the views of the parents and any

professionals involved. **Parents must have received the agreement of the governing body before any admission application for delayed entry is made**. If permission is received then the parents will make their admission application for the year in which they wish their child to start school. **Applications cannot be held over from one academic year to the next.** If permission is refused then parents must make their admission application at the normal time.

## Waiting Lists

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 above and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Waiting lists for admission will operate throughout the school year and will be held open until 31st July 2022 unless applicants request in writing to remain on the list. **Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.**

## In-Year Applications

An application for admission can be made for any child at any time outside the normal admissions round. Applications should be made directly to the school by contacting the school office. 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 as set out above. 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 to an independent panel and your child will be placed on the waiting list.

## 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.

## Nursery Children

For children currently 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 nursery **does not** guarantee a place in Reception.

## 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.

NOTES (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. **An Education, Health and Care Plan** is a plan made by the local authority under S.37 of the Children and Families Act2014, specifying the educational provision required for a child.

2. **A 'Looked after child'** has the same meaning as in S.22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (e.g. children with foster parents at the time of making an application to the school.) 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, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order[1] or a special guardianship order[2].

3. **'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.

4. **'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.

5. **'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.

6. **'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 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.

7. **'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 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 www.rcdow.org.uk

8. **'Nearest Catholic School'** HCC will measure to the following schools to determine which is the nearest Catholic school – St Bernadette, St Adrians, St John Fisher, St Albans & St Stephen and St Theresa's. Distances are measured by straight line 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 each school. If your child is baptised Catholic (without a CCP) and St Bernadette is the nearest Catholic school to your home address, your child will be considered under criteria 3.

9. **'Catechumen'** means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens for a child aged 7 or over. For a child under 7 years of age it will be the certificate of the parent.

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

11. '**Brother' or 'Sister'** includes:

    iii. All natural brothers and sisters, half-brother and sisters, adopted brothers and sisters, stepbrothers and sisters, foster brothers and sisters, children looked after or previously looked after, whether or not they are living at the same address, and

    iv. 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.

12. **A 'Parent'** means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for the child or any adult with legal responsibility for the child**.**

13. **'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.