Primary Schools Admissions Policy 2025-26

1. Introduction

This policy applies to admissions to primary schools within the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership ("the Trust") from 1 September 2025. It has been agreed by the Trust Board, as the admissions authority, after due consultation including with the Archdiocese Education Commission and the relevant local authority. The schools included are:

Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Maidstone
More Park Catholic Primary School, West Malling
Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Hythe
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Tunbridge Wells
St Benedict's Catholic Primary School, Chatham
St Edwards Catholic Primary School, Sheerness
St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Margate
St John's Catholic Primary School, Gravesend
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Aylesham
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Broadstairs
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Northfleet
St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Tonbridge
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Deal
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Whitstable
St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Sittingbourne
St Richard's Catholic Primary School, Dover
St Simon of England Catholic Primary School, Ashford
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Ashford
St Thomas' Catholic Primary School, Sevenoaks
Stella Maris Catholic Primary School, Folkestone

These schools are part of the Archdiocese of Southwark. Their mission is to provide a Catholic education for all Catholic children in their area and for any other child whose parent or carer wishes their child to have such an education.

2. Planned Admission Numbers

The Trust plans to offer the following number of places in year R in each school:

Local Authority	School	Planned Admission Number
Kent	Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Maidstone	30
Kent	More Park Catholic Primary School, West Malling	30
Kent	Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School	30
Kent	Stella Maris Catholic Primary School, Folkestone	30
Kent	St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Hythe	30
Kent	St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Tunbridge Wells	30
Medway	St Benedict's Catholic Primary School, Chatham	30
Kent	St Edwards Catholic Primary School, Sheerness	30
Kent	St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Margate	30
Kent	St John's Catholic Primary School, Gravesend	120
Kent	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Aylesham	30
Kent	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Broadstairs	30
Kent	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Northfleet	30
Kent	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Tonbridge	45
Kent	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Deal	30
Kent	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Whitstable	30
Kent	St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Sittingbourne	30
Kent	St Richard's Catholic Primary School, Dover	30
Kent	St Simon of England Catholic Primary School, Ashford	30
Kent	St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Ashford	30
Kent	St Thomas' Catholic Primary School, Sevenoaks	30

3. Oversubscription criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

The admission of pupils with an EHC Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of EHC plans by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names one of the schools will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

In the event that any of the schools receive more applications than the planned admission number, places will be offered in rank order set through the following criteria:

1. Looked after Catholic children or looked after children in the care of Catholic families, previously looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who become the subject of a residence or guardianship order, and Catholic children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A copy of the baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church must accompany the Supplementary Information Form (SIF). *See notes 1 and 2.*

2. Baptised Catholic children. A copy of the baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church must accompany the Supplementary Information Form (SIF). *See note 2.*

3. Other looked after children, previously looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order, and children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. *See note 1*

4. Children who will have siblings at the school at the date of entry. *See note 3*

5. Children of staff. See *note 4*

6. Children enrolled in the catechumenate and children whose families are members of other Christian denominations. *See note 5*

7. Children of other faiths. *See note 6*

8. Other children.

The following order of priorities will be applied when applications within any of the above categories exceed the places available and it is necessary to decide between applications within each category.

i. Priority will first be given to children with a sibling (see note 3) in the school at the time of admission
ii. **For Category 2 above for <u>St Joseph's Primary, Northfleet ONLY</u>:** If the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, priority will first be given to those applicants in possession of a Certificate of Practice. A Certificate of Practice is a form signed by the Parish Priest to state that a child wishing to apply for entry to a Catholic School is a practicing Catholic. The Certificate of Practice form is provided as part of the Supplementary Information Form. If the family has moved very recently, the Certificate of Practice can be signed by a priest at their previous church(es).
iii. **For Category 6 and 7 above:** If the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, priority will be given to those applicants who have shown commitment to their faith for at least three years. This evidence must be provided by completion of the

Supplementary Information Form by the child's parents/carers, endorsed by a minister or faith leader of the faith community where the family normally attends. If the family has moved very recently, the form can be signed by a minister or faith leader at their previous place of worship.

iv. Nearness of children's homes to school

- **Kent schools**: We use the distance between the child's permanent home address (defined in KCC's annual admissions prospectus) and the school, measured in a straight line using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) address point. Distances are measured from a point defined as within the child's home to a point defined as within the school as specified by NLPG. The same address point on the school site is used for everybody. When we apply the distance criterion for the school, these straight-line measurements are used to determine how close each applicant's address is to the school. Where applications are made from properties or abodes that are not registered to the NLPG, including new build properties, KCC may be required to use planning sites or other relevant co-ordinates. In exceptional circumstances where alternative co-ordinates are not available, measurements will be determined by a KCC Senior Admissions Officer and confirmed by the KCC Head of Service. In the unlikely event that there are two or more applications of equal eligibility for the last available place at the school a random selection will be applied. This process will be independently verified.

- **Medway schools**: Distances and routes calculated will represent the shortest available walking route to school from the child's home address using roads and paths that are known to the graphical information software (GIS) utilised by Medway School Services.
  The start point: The centre point of the nearest road or footpath known to the GIS system to the seed point of the child's home (as defined by Ordnance Survey). This may not always be the postal address road, in circumstances where an alternative road or footpath is nearer to the seed point of the property. Where a child's home is situated on a new road the distance calculation will begin from the nearest available known road plotted in the GIS. New property developments may be subject to this.

  The end point: This will be either a pre-defined point within the school site or the centre point of the road adjacent the school site. The same end point is used for all distance calculations to the school concerned.

  ***Routes/Footpaths*:** The distance calculated is the shortest available route known to the Medway GIS (using the centre point of the streets and other available routes). Not all footpaths, cut-throughs, shortcuts and new roads are known to the GIS system. Where a route is not known to the GIS system an alternative route will be used.

3.1 Notes

Note 1

Looked after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school are:

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) at the time of making an application to a school.

A **previously looked after child** means such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after 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.

A child is regarded as having been **in state care outside of England** if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organization, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Note 2

Catholic children includes members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome. A baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Catholic Church must be provided with the Supplementary Information Form.

Note 3

Siblings are defined as natural and adopted brothers and sisters, and children who live as a brother and sister in the same house, including stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.

Note 4

Children of staff applies in either or both of the following circumstances:

- 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,
- Where the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

Note 5

Catechumens refer to a person who is preparing to become a Catholic usually by way of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and children of catechetical age. Younger children may be initiated through an adapted version sometimes referred to as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC). Evidence should be provided by a parish priest (or equivalent) and should state when the preparation started and when baptism or reception into the Catholic church will take place. The date of baptism or reception must be set and be prior to the date of admission.

Other Christian denominations are denominations that are members of Churches Together in England or the Evangelical Alliance. Evidence of Baptism/ dedication or evidence of membership required on the supplementary information form.

Note 6

Children of other faiths means children who are members of other world faith-based communities. Evidence of Baptism/ dedication or evidence of membership required on the supplementary information form.

Note 7

Family means the child together with at least one parent or guardian attending Mass or the relevant form of worship.

Note 8

Home refers to the permanent home address at which the child lives for the majority of his/her time It is considered to be a residential property that is the child's only or main residence and not an address at which your child might sometimes stay or sleep due to your own domestic or special arrangements. The address must be the pupil's home address on the day you completed the application form and which is either:

- owned by the child's parent, parents or guardian, or
- leased to or rented by the child's parent, parents or guardian under a lease or written rental agreement.

Proof of address will be requested at the time of acceptance of a place.

4. Supplementary Information Form

In addition to applying online through a local authority website or on a paper Reception Common Application Form (RCAF) all applicants must complete a Supplementary Information Form (available on the school websites or from each school's Admissions Officer), and send this to the

Admissions Officer at the school by no later than 15 January 2025. Not doing so may lead to your child being placed in a lower priority category than they should.

For Catholic, Other Christian or Other Faith children, a copy of a baptismal certificate/dedication or evidence of membership must accompany the Supplementary Information Form.

5. Application Procedure for entry to Year R through KCC Co-Ordinated System

If you are applying for a place at a school in Kent - All applications for entry to year R will be processed through the Kent County Council Co-Ordinated System see: **www.kent.gov.uk/primaryadmissions**

If you are applying for a place at a school in Medway – All applications for entry to year R will be processed through the Medway Council Co-Ordinated System see:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200137/schools_and_learning/1059/applying_for_a_primary_school_place

See the table in Section 2 which sets out the relevant local authority for each school.

6. In Year or Casual Applications

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plans name the school will be admitted.

Applications made too late for the local authority co-ordinated system, in-year applications for year R and applications for entry to years 1-6 must be made on the In Year Casual Application Form (IYCAF) available on school websites.

The same policy and procedure (apart from the timetable) applies to these applications. This form must be sent to the school's Admissions Officer with a Supplementary Information Form. They will be considered under the same policy set out above. If there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Parents will be notified of the outcome of an in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

7. Appeals

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful, may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with sections 88 and 94 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and must set out the reasons on which the appeal is made. Appeals should be sent to the Admissions Officer at the school address. Appellants have the right to make written and oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

8. Waiting List

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The criteria listed in Section 3 will be used to rank children on the waiting list. The school's waiting list will be re-ranked, in line with the published oversubscription criteria, every time a child is added. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

All schools participate in the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol to allocate places to vulnerable and other children in accordance with the School Admissions Code. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the published admission number for the relevant year group and may mean that a child directed to the school by the Local Authority will take precedence over those children already on the waiting list.

The waiting lists for Year R will remain operational until at least the end of December 2025.

9. Requests for admission outside the normal age group ('summer born' children)

Parents of 'summer born' children (ie. whose fourth birthdays fall between 1 April and 31 August), may request not only that their admission is deferred until the following September, but also that their child is then admitted into Reception, not into the child's normal Year 1 age group. In deciding whether to agree to any such request, the Headteacher will consider the child's best interests and will follow the provisions of the School Admissions Code and any Department for Education guidance; it will take into account the parents' views and any supporting evidence provided, but it is for the Headteacher to decide in light of their knowledge and experience of the education of very young children whether to accept or decline the request. Parents of a summer born child who wish to defer the start of school until the child reaches compulsory school age and to request admission to Reception instead of to Year 1 should apply at the usual time BUT should include with the Supplementary Information Form a written request for admission out of the normal age group, explaining why it would be in the child's interests to be admitted to Reception rather than Year 1 and include copies of any relevant and appropriate professional evidence (eg from a Speech and Language Therapist or Educational Psychologist). The school will consider the request as soon as possible and will inform the parents of its decision before primary national offer day. If their request is agreed, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If their request is refused, the parents 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 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday. Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year. The application will be treated in the same way as usual applications and will be subject to the Oversubscription Criteria for that year ie a place in the following year cannot be guaranteed.

10. Entry to years other than anticipated

If an application is made for admission other than to the child's expected year group, the Headteacher will decide if this is educationally the best option for the child; the application will then be considered against the number on roll for that year group using the standard policy. The expectation is that children will be admitted in the year with their peers of the same age. Only in exceptional circumstances will this not apply, and this is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

11. Admission of children below compulsory school age

Where a child below compulsory school age is offered a place at the school, they will be entitled to attend the school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents may defer their child's entry to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year the offer was made for.

Where the parents wish, children may attend part-time (3 days per week) until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

12. Challenging behaviour

A child will not be refused admission on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. There may be certain cases where admission is refused where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

Where an in-year application for a year group that is not the normal point of entry is received and the school does not wish to admit the child because it has good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour, admission may be refused. In such cases the school will refer

the child to the Fair Access Protocol. A refusal on the grounds of challenging behaviour will only be made if the school has a particularly high proportion of either children with challenging behaviour or previously permanently excluded pupils on roll compared to other local schools and it considers that admitting another child with challenging behaviour would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Admission will not be refused on the grounds of challenging behaviour to looked after children, previously looked after children and children with EHC plans listing the school.

13. Fair Access Protocol

The Trust participates in the local authority Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.