St John's CE Primary School - Nursery Admissions Policy 2025-26

The principal aims of the Admission Policy are to maintain the characteristics of a church foundation school whilst meeting the needs of the wider community. We promote social inclusion by welcoming all members of the community regardless of their faith or none, gender, disability or ethnic origin. We value diversity and the contribution that each individual and every group make to the school and wider community. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, which is committed to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the child within the framework of the national curriculum.

Our vision is to be an aspirational and supportive church school community, working together to wonder, trust and achieve. Striving to recognise life's rich opportunities, while developing talented lifelong learners, through respect, empathy, hope, trust and wonder.

This school is a fully inclusive school with an 'open door' policy and is committed to equal opportunities, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

We, at St. John's, as a Church of England School, aim to provide a happy, secure environment that reflects the principles of the Christian faith, thus helping to develop children's spiritual growth and moral understanding, within a sound educational framework.

By so doing we hope to:

- Develop children's self-esteem and self-worth.
- Develop each child's academic potential.
- Develop in each child curiosity and an enthusiasm to learn.

We believe in the strength of good home/school partnerships and are aware of the need to be sensitive to our community with its rich cultural diversity.

We provide a distinctively Christian, yet inclusive, environment in which each child is motivated to acquire skills for life and a love of learning. As a church school, we welcome applications from Christian families, and those of other faiths or none. We ask all parents applying for a place at our school to respect this ethos and its importance to the whole school community.
This policy has been prepared by the Governing Body. The Governing Body of the school, not Reading Local Authority (the LA), is responsible for deciding on Nursery admissions.

Applications

- It is the Governors' policy to admit children In either the September, January or April after the child's third birthday, dependent on space available within the Foundation Stage One (Nursery) area. Our maximum number by the end of the summer term (terms 5 and 6) is 52 part time places. The exact number admitted each term may vary and will be decided by the Governing Committee in the term before admittance.
- Attendance will be for 5 sessions per week – either every morning or every afternoon (15 hours total). We are not currently offering 30 hours per week.
- Length of stay – Places are offered from the beginning of the term following the child's third birthday and children may remain in the Nursery up until routine admission to school.
- Applications must be made on the application form available from the school and on the school's website. If applying under Criteria 3 or 4 a Church form should also be completed and submitted in the term prior to the expected admittance.
- Decisions on which children will be admitted to Foundation Stage 1 (Nursery) will be made by the Governing Body's Admissions committee.

Applications for entry to the Nursery at St John's CE Primary School: Parents (See Note 1) wishing to apply for Nursery should apply using the grid below:

For admission – **Autumn Terms apply by 15th May**
Spring Terms apply by 15th October
Summer Terms apply by 15th February

Parent/carers (1) will be given 14 days in which to accept an offer.

Late applications will be considered in the next round of admissions.

Successful applications and unsuccessful applications will be contacted and advised of that outcome. Unsuccessful applicants will remain on the waiting list for that term and may also apply for the following term, if the child is still eligible for a place and has not become school age.

Parent/carers may register their interest in the school for their child from the age of 2 years. They are welcome to visit the school during this period by prior arrangement. However, by registering their interest, this does not guarantee a child a place within the school.

In the term prior to entry, children will visit Foundation Stage 1 (normally on two occasions, but if more visits are needed this will be arranged. Transition meetings also take place.

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Over-subscription Criteria

The school does not operate on a 'catchment area' basis.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming St Johns (CE) Aided Primary School will always be offered places. If there is then greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. **Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after**, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted. (See Note 2)

The following criteria (2-5) will then apply, however priority within each criterion will be given to children, or parents with whom the child resides (normal home address (see note 4), with very exceptional medical or social reasons (see Note 3).

2. A child who normally lives in the same family normal home address (see Note 4) as his or her sibling (see Note 5), if that sibling is attending St John's Primary School (attendance at St John's Nursery does not qualify older siblings entry into school) at the time of the application and is expected still to be in attendance at the time of admission.

3. A child, one of whose parents/carers regularly worships at St John's and St Stephen's Church, Reading or Wycliffe Baptist Church, Kings Road, Reading. This will need to be supported by a pre-printed form stating church attendance, obtainable from the school and which will need to be returned to the school, after signature by the Vicar or Pastor. Regular worship is defined as 'on average attending St John's Church or Wycliffe Baptist Church on at least one occasion in each of the calendar months in the previous year preceding the application date'.

4. A child, one of whose parents/carers, regularly worships at a Christian church other than St John's & St Stephen's or Wycliffe Baptist Church that is a member of 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' or a member of the Evangelical Alliance. This will need to be supported by a pre-printed form, obtainable from the school, from the appropriate Minister of Religion. (This form must be returned to the school with an official letterhead from the church concerned, clarifying both the church and the clergy who has signed the form). Regular Worship is defined as 'on average attending the named church on at least one occasion in each of the calendar months in the previous year preceding the application date'. Aggregate attendance from parents, for those families who have moved areas or churches, will be accepted, with dates clearly detailed from all churches that the applicant's parents have attended. All churches attended must be members of 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' or a member of the Evangelical Alliance.

Aggregate attendance at St John's and St Stephen's Church or Wycliffe Baptist Church (if attendance at these churches is less than 12 months) will also be considered under this criterion.

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church [or, in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship] has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these [admissions] arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church [or in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship] or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

For the Nursery Admissions policy 2025 – 2026 the Governors of St John's CE Primary School, will continue to use two church-based criteria.

The Governors believe that the number(s) of children admitted under these criteria is not detrimental to the local community in terms of gaining access to the school under other criteria. By maintaining criteria 3 and 4, the governors wish to support the church-going community of families within the named parishes. This support will act as a proportionate safeguard for those families who wish to have a Christian emphasis in school ethos and teaching which is reflective of their own faith, whilst recognising that the school welcomes all faiths and none.

These criteria will be reviewed each year, to ensure that the school does not disproportionately admit under these criteria to the detriment of the local (non-church going) community).

5 Other children. See also Note 4

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance (see Note 6) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 5 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.

If parents are moving house, the school will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces personnel and crown servants are exempt). If you are returning from elsewhere, to live in a home that you own, we will require evidence to show that you have returned. We will also ask for evidence that any previous house owned has been sold or is being sold. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

PLEASE NOTE: Attendance at St John's Nursery does not, therefore, guarantee a place at St John's Primary School, as the Nursery Admissions are subject to a separate Admissions Policy.

Deferring the Place
If parents/carers do not wish to take up the place offered for that term they cannot hold that place. They will need to re-apply for admission for the following term.

Withdrawing a place
If intentionally incorrect information is on the application form, a place can be withdrawn.

Multiple births
In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both children.

Fair Access
The school participates in Reading Borough Council's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

Notes

Note 1 "Parent" is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

a) any person who has 'parental responsibility' (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or

b) any person who has care of the child or young person.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school for advice.

Note 2 By a "looked-after child" we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted, subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A 'child arrangements order' is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A 'special guardianship order' is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). Evidence that a child from outside England was previously in state care will be required to come within this criterion. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Note 3 When applying under exceptional medical or social needs, you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring St John's CE Primary School. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, heath visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child's or your own case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

Note 4 By normal home address, we mean the child's home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

• any legal documentation confirming residence

• the pattern of the residence

• the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place

• confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents

• where the child is registered with his/her GP

• any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, please contact the school.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

There are special arrangements for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting or crown servants returning from overseas. If the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares the relocation date, and if there is a place available, it will be offered even though there is not an intended address or the family is not yet living in the area.

Note 5 By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer'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 is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 6 The straight line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school.

Appeals

There is no statutory right of appeal for a Foundation Stage One (Nursery) place, and any complaints should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office.

Please contact the school office, for further information:

St John's CE Primary School, 121-147 Orts Road, Reading, Berks RG1 3JN Tel: 0118 9375540

Email: admin@stjohns.reading.sch.uk Web site: www.stjohns.reading.sch.uk

ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
121-147 Orts Road, Reading, Berks RG1 3JN

CONFIRMATION OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Supplementary Information
This form is only required where a parent is seeking admission for a child on the ground that the parent is a regular worshipper. Regular worship being defined as on average attending St John's & St Stephen's Church or Wycliffe Baptist Church or another church that is a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, on at least one occasion in each of the calendar months in the previous calendar year preceding the application date.

After completion by the priest or minister, it should be returned to the school, not the Local Authority. In cases where attendance at a previous church is to be considered, please ask the priest or minister at the previous church to verify attendance at that church, at least once per month on average and indicate the period of such attendance.

If aggregate attendance applies, please arrange for a 'Confirmation of Church Attendance' form to be completed for each church attended, with the dates attended clearly indicated.

For completion by the parent

Name of Child ..... Date of Birth .....

Name of parent or guardian ....

Address of parent/guardian: .....

Church attended.....

Address of church.....

I confirm that I have attended the above church on average at least once a month in each of the calendar months in the previous calendar year preceding the application date.

Signature of parent: ..... Date:.....

To the priest/minister/pastor

Please could you confirm that the information given above is correct to the best of your knowledge. Please arrange for this form to be returned to the school by the Parent or Carer making the application.

I confirm that the above parent attended my church at least once a month during the past year and that attendances were at set open Sunday, weekend or weekday services of worship and excluded weddings, funerals and christenings (except for the child's own christening).

☐ I confirm that my Church is a member of 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' as can be found on the link: https://ctbi.org.uk

☐ I confirm that my Church is a member of the Evangelical Alliance as can be found on the link: https://www.eauk.org/

Signed ..... Title/Position .....

Date.....

It is essential that this form is completed and returned to the School Governors, c/o The School Office, St John's CE Primary School, Orts Road, Reading RG1 3JN, if the application for admission to St John's CE Primary School is to be considered under Church attendance. NB This form must be returned to the school with an official letterhead from the church concerned, clarifying both the church and the clergy who signed the form.