

# ST MARY & ST JOSEPH'S R C PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ADMISSION POLICY 2026

St Mary and St Joseph's RC is a Catholic Primary School in the trusteeship of the Salford Diocese. It is maintained by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and is a Voluntary Aided School. The Governing Body is the Admissions Authority and is responsible for taking decisions on applications for admissions. The co-ordination of admissions arrangements is undertaken by the Local Authority.

For the School's year commencing September 2026, the governing body board has determined that the number of children to be admitted to the 2026-2027 year group will be 30.

The school's role is to participate in the mission of the Catholic Church by providing a curriculum, including Catholic religious education and worship, which will help children to grow in their understanding of the Good News and in the practice of their faith. The school will help the children develop fully as human beings and prepare them to undertake their responsibilities as Catholics in society. The school requires all parents applying for a place here to understand and respect this ethos and its importance to the school community. This does not affect the rights of parents who are not of the Catholic faith to apply for a place here.

Admissions to the school will be determined by the governing body. Parents must apply to their home local authority by completing a Common Application form or applying online. Blackburn with Darwen's online form is available via the website <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-admissions>.

If there are fewer than **30** applications, all applicants will be offered places. All children whose Educational Health and Care (EHC) plan names the school must be admitted. If there are more applications than the number of places available, the following oversubscription criteria will be applied:

1. A Baptised Roman Catholic looked after children, Baptised Roman Catholic previously Looked after Children and Looked after Children adopted from overseas. (see note a, b and c)
2. Baptised Roman Catholic children with a sibling attending the school at the time of application and admission (see notes c and d)
3. Baptised Roman Catholic children resident in the parish of the Holy Family (see notes e)
4. Looked after children and previously Looked after Children and Looked after Children adopted from overseas. (see note a, b and c)
5. Other Baptised Catholic children (see note c)
6. Other children with a sibling attending the school at the time of application and admission (see note d).
7. All remaining applicants – those whose Home Address is nearest the school having priority. Distances are measured as the crow flies, from home to the school gate, using the computerised mapping package offered by the Local Authority. (see note f)

## Tie-Break

In the event of there being more applications within any category than places available, home to school distance (as set out in category 7) will be used as the tiebreaker. If after measuring distances it is still not possible to decide on the child/ren to be offered admission (for example two children living in the same block of flats or in the same house) the Local Authority will then use random allocation (which is carried out automatically by the local authority's computerised system) to decide which of the children can be offered a place.

### **NOTES.**

- a) 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 (under section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989. A previously Looked After Child is one who was looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to child arrangements order or special guardianship order at the time of making an application to the school.
- b) An 'adoption order' is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians). 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 organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society."
- c) Baptised Catholic Child means;
  - Baptised Catholic child means; holding a certificate of Baptism signed by a priest of the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church;
  - Holding a certificate of reception of baptised Christians into the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church.

For a child to be considered as a Catholic evidence of a Catholic Baptism or reception into the Catholic Church is required. Written evidence of reception into the Catholic Church can be obtained by referring to the Register of Receptions, or in some cases a sub-section of the Baptismal Registers of the Church in which the Rite of Reception took place. The evidence can be submitted via the online application form or directly to school by the closing date of the applications. If, for example, a child has been baptised in the Church of England and the parents are subsequently admitted to the Catholic Church through the RCIA programme, the child must also be admitted to the Church by the Rite of Reception.

The governing board will require written evidence in the form of a Certificate of Reception before applications for school places can be considered for categories of 'Baptised Catholics'. A Certificate of Reception is to include full name, date of birth, date of reception and parent(s) name(s). The certificate must also show that it is copied from the records kept by the place of reception.

Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism for a good reason, may still be considered as baptised Catholics but only after they have been referred to the parish priest who, after consulting with the **Director of Education or officers of the DDFE (Diocesan Department for**

**Education )** 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.

d) 'Sibling' is defined in these arrangements as full, half or stepbrothers and sisters, adopted and foster brothers and sisters who are living at the same address and are part of the same family unit. This does not include cousins or other family relationships.

e) Parents should check carefully whether they are resident within the parish boundary of the Holy Family. A map showing the parish boundaries is available on the schools website.

f) Home Address is considered to be the address where the child normally lives. Where care is split and a child moves between two address, the household in receipt of the child benefit would normally be the address used but the admission authority body reserves the right to request other evidence as fit the individual circumstances. Applicants should not state the address of another relative or person who has daily care of the child.

### **Admissions Process**

All applications will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 15th January 2025. Applications received after this date will be **treated as a late application** and will not be considered until **after** the main allocation of places has taken place.

Parents will be informed of the governors' decision on or after 16th April 2026 (National Offer Day for primary school applications).

If an application for admission has been turned down by the Governing Board, parents may appeal to an independent appeals panel. Parents must be allowed at least twenty school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to submit that appeal. Appeal forms should be completed and returned to the school by 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026 for appeals in June 2026. Parents must give reasons for appealing in writing and the decision of the appeals panel is binding on the governors.

The governing board reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a school place where false evidence is received in relation to the application. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information. The applications will be considered afresh, and a right of appeal offered if the child is refused a place.

### **Multiple Births**

It is the duty of governors to comply with regulations on class size limits for children aged between rising five and seven. The governing board may exceed the regulations for twins and children from multiple births where one of the children is the 30th child admitted. This also applies to in-year applicants who are looked after/previously looked after children, children of UK service personnel or children who move into the area for whom there is no other school available within a reasonable distance.

## **Waiting List**

A waiting list for children who have not been offered a place will be kept and will be ranked according to the admission criteria. The waiting list will operate until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. The waiting list does not consider the date the application was received or the length of time a child's name has been on the waiting list. This means that a child's position on the list may change if another applicant is refused a place and their child has higher priority in the admissions criteria.

## **Non-routine admissions**

It sometimes happens that a child needs to change school other than at the "normal" time; such admissions are known as non-routine or in-year admissions. Parents wishing their child to attend this school should submit an "In Year Application Form" to the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Admission Team. If there is a place in the appropriate class, then your child will be admitted. If there is no place, then the governing body will have to refuse the application but information will be provided about how to appeal against this refusal.

If your family is moving house, your application and appeal will be considered as being made from your old address until you provide suitable evidence of a permanent change of address, e.g. exchange of contracts on your house purchase or the signed tenancy agreement and rent book for your new address.

Please note that you cannot re-apply for a place at a school within the same school year unless there has been relevant, significant and material change in the family circumstances.

## **Deferred Entry**

If your child is due to start school during the next academic year, it is important that you apply for a place for September. If your child's fifth birthday is between the months of September and December, then, if you wish it, admission may be deferred until January; If your child's fifth birthday is in January or later, the admission may be deferred until the summer term, though it is likely to be in your child's interest to start no later than January. You may request that your child attends school part-time until he/she reaches compulsory school age.

## **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents/carer(s) may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if a child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Parents of a 'summer born child' (i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August) may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

Parents may request that their child attend school part-time until he/she reaches his/her fifth birthday.

## Children who are already of school age

Parent(s)/carer(s) must submit their written request for admission out of the normal age group to the Governing Body. If their request is agreed and a place is available in the requested year group, the child will be admitted.

### Children seeking admission to reception in the September after their fifth birthday

Parent(s)/carer(s) will need to submit a normal Common Application Form (CAF) to the Local Authority (in writing or online) for admission into the normal age group at the same time as they submit a written request to the Governing Body for their child to be admitted out of the normal age group.

**Please note:** This Governing Body will not honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parent(s)/carer(s), therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference school.

The Governing Body will make a decision on the request before the Primary national offer date if at all possible.

If the request is agreed, the parent(s)/carer(s) must make a new application for the next main admission round the following year, and their current application for the normal age group should be withdrawn before a place is offered.

If their request for admission outside the normal age group is refused, parent(s)/carer(s) must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group that they receive from the Local Authority, or to refuse it and make an in-year application to the Governing Body for admission to year one for the September following their child's fifth birthday.

### Making the decision

Parent(s)/carer(s) seeking admission of their child outside their normal age group must send their written request to the Governing Body. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/ carer(s) to provide the Governing Body with all relevant information relating to this request, including the parent(s)/carer(s) views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; medical history and views of a medical professional (where relevant); whether the child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely; and whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group.

The Governing Body is required to take into account the views of the Head Teacher on the application as well as the information from the parent(s)/carer(s). The Governing Body will make their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each individual case, and in the best interests of the child concerned.

The Governing Body will then inform the parent/carer of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to and will provide the reasons for their decision.

Parent(s)/carer(s) have a statutory right to appeal to an independent admission appeal panel against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. As the purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, the right of appeal does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred year group. However, they may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside their normal age group.