



Nursery Admissions Policy 2023 - 2024

St. Thomas More School is a Catholic Primary School founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for Catholic children. 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 is fully supported by all families in the school. All applicants are therefore expected to give their full support for the aims and the ethos of the school. Responsibility for the admission of pupils rests with the Board of Governors. 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 Jesus Christ.

*Applications are invited for September 2022 from families whose child attains 3 years of age between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023. The final date for applications is **Friday 24th March 2023**.*

The governors intend to admit up to the school's Published Admission Number of 30 pupils into the Nursery in each school year. Offers are made to parents via email from the school on **Friday 21st April 2023**. Where there are more applications for places than the total of 30 places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

Oversubscription Criteria

Should the school be oversubscribed, the following criteria will apply in order of priority:

1. Catholic 'looked after' children and Catholic children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders, immediately after having been looked after.
2. Baptised Catholic children, with a Certificate of Catholic Practice, who have a sibling at the school at the time of admission.
3. All other baptised children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice.
4. Baptised Catholic children.
5. Other 'looked after' children and children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders, immediately after having been looked after.
6. Other children with a sibling at St Thomas More School, where the sibling will still be in attendance at the time of admission.
7. Members of an Eastern Christian Church.
8. Children of another faith/tradition who provide evidence of membership of their faith.
9. Any other applicants.

Exceptional Need

The Governing Body will give top priority, after the appropriate category of looked-after children, 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.

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

The admission of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. 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 Nursery named in their EHC plan, will be admitted to the Nursery.

The attendance of a sibling at the school at the time of admission will increase priority of an applicant under each category.

Tie Break

In the event of oversubscription in category 3, the geographical proximity of the child's home to the school will be taken into account. A 'straight line' distance measurement is used in all home to school distance measurements for community and VC schools in Hertfordshire. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the Address Base Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. Address Base Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.

In the event of oversubscription in any other category, the geographical proximity of the child's home address to school will be taken into account. Home address means that at which the child normally resides for 50% or more of the school week, not an accommodation address. Proof of residence will be required.

Where the final place is offered to a child who has a twin/triplets etc. applying for a place in the same school year, these siblings will also be admitted.

Nursery Application Procedures and Timetable

Applicants must complete the school's own Application Form. In conjunction with the school's Application Form, those applicants applying under criteria 2 and 3 will need to complete a Certificate of Catholic Practice obtained from their parish priest (from the parish where the family worship) or from the diocesan website on:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/att/files/education/admissions/certificate%20of%20catholic%20practice%202015.pdf>

The school Application Form will be available to download from the school website, or from the school office, when the relevant application process opens. Please submit the school Application Form, the Certificate of Catholic Practice (if applicable) and a copy of the child's Baptism Certificate (if applicable) to the school by the closing date. Offers are made to parents via email from the school on **22nd April 2022**.

20 Feb 2023	Nursery applications open
4/ 9/ 22 Feb	Open sessions
24 March 2023	Closing date for on time applications*
3 April – 18 Apr 2023	Easter holidays
25 March – 18 Apr 2023	Allocation of places reviewed, distances confirmed, sibling links verified, medical/social claims reviewed <i>according to each school's individual policy</i>
21 April 2023	Nursery places offered to families by email
28 April 2023	Deadline for accepting Nursery places

*applications can be made after the closing date, but will be dealt with after on time applications.

There is no automatic right of admission to the Reception Class for children who have attended the Nursery Class. Nursery children need to apply for a place in the Reception Class.

In-Year Admissions

The above application procedures also apply to In-Year admissions. If a place is available and there is no waiting list then the governing body will inform the family that the child is to be admitted. If more applications are received than there are places available then applications will be ranked by the governing body in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. You will be offered the opportunity of being placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained by the governing body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which the applications are received. Proof of address will be required when a position becomes available. Successful applicants will receive an offer of a place, via email from the school.

Cross Border Coordination

Cross Border Coordination for primary applications was introduced in 2011. If the child is living outside Hertfordshire, at the time of application, parents must apply on their home Local Authority's application form.

Fair Access Protocols

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 Diocese 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.

Waiting Lists

Unsuccessful candidates will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and not in the order applications are received or added to the list. Proof of address will be required when a position becomes available.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

“Adopted” –An adopted child is a child who is adopted under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 section 46 (adoption orders).

“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.

“Special Guardianship Order” - A special guardianship order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.14A which defines it as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian(s).

“Baptised Children” – Baptised children are required to provide a copy of a Baptismal Certificate.

“Certificate of Catholic Practice” - means a certificate given by the family’s parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family practises) in the form laid down by the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.”

“Child looked after” has the same meaning as in section 22 of the Children Act 1989, and means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them (e.g. children with foster parents).

“Catholic” means a member of the 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.

“Eastern Christian Church” includes Orthodox churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.

“Family” includes the Catholic or Catholics who have a legal responsibility for the child.

“Sibling” refers to brothers and sisters, step brothers and sisters, half-brothers and half-sisters or adopted brothers and sisters, a child looked after or previously looked after and in every case living permanently in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application. A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement.

“Children of other Christian denominations” means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledge God’s revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God’s will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An ecclesial community which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above.

All members of Churches Together in England and CYTUN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local Churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis.

“Children of other faiths” means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of ‘other Christian denominations’ and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in that supreme being through worship.