



POPE PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposed ADMISSION POLICY 2025/2026

Pope Paul 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 governance** 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 these admission arrangements.

The **governing body** is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round¹. The admission authority has set the school's Published Admissions Number ("PAN") at **30** pupils to **the Reception Class** in the school year which begins in September, 2025.

The admission authority will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's PAN.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (see note 1)

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school must be admitted. Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other children.

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 and previously looked after children. (see notes 2&3)
2. Catholic Children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice (see notes 4&5)
3. Other Catholic children (see notes 4)
4. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2&3)
5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 6&7)
6. Any other siblings
7. Any other children of staff



8. Children of other Christian denominations whose application is supported by a letter from a religious leader confirming membership of the faith. (See note 8)
9. Children of other faiths whose application is supported by a letter from a religious leader confirming membership of the faith. (see note 9)
10. Any other children

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.

- i. Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can most appropriately be met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 12)
- ii. The attendance of a brother or sister at the school at the time of application will increase the priority of an application within categories 1 to 5 so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above (see note 10).
- iii. Children of Staff who are permanently employed, full time or part time, directly by the school will have increased priority within categories 1 to 6 so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) and (ii). Staff must have been employed at the school for 2 years or more at the time when the application for admission to the school is made, or the member of staff may be recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. This is set out in paragraph 1.39 of the School Admissions Code (December 2014). 'Staff' does not include contractors or peripatetic teachers.

Tie Break

Priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distances are calculated **on the basis of a straight-line measurement between the front door of the child's home address (including the community entrance to flats) and the main entrance of the school** using AddressBase Premium data which is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences. In the event of distances being the same for two or more children where this would determine the last place to be allocated, random allocation will be carried out and supervised by a person independent of the school. All the names will be entered into a hat and the required number of names will be drawn out.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live. You are also requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) attached to this policy if you wish to apply under oversubscription criteria 1 to 5, 8 and 9. The Supplementary Information Form should be returned to Pope Paul School by 15th January 2025.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 16th April or the next working day, by the local authority on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the



reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

If you do not provide the information required in the SIF and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child may not be placed in criteria 1 to 5 or 8 and 9, and this may affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 15th January 2025

Late Applications

Late applications will be administered in accordance with your home Local Authority Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. You are encouraged to ensure that your application is received on time.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or 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 of their normal age group, for example, 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 and 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to reception rather than year 1.

Any such request should be made in writing to **the headteacher via admin@popepaul.herts.sch.uk** at the same time as the admission application is made. The admission authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher, including the head teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting 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. The waiting list will be held open until **20th July 2025**

Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.



In-Year Applications

An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the normal admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Application should be made to Pope Paul School by contacting the **Headteacher via admin@popepaul.herts.sch.uk**

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied.

If there are no places available, the child will be added to the waiting list (see above).

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Fair Access Protocol

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 admission round the admission authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The admission authority has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the PAN (subject to the infant class size exceptions).

The admission authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where the child is already attending the school the place itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or the place was obtained by deception.

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 section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special educational provision required for a child.
2. A **'looked after child'** has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being 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.
3. A **'previously looked after child'** is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because he or she was adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Children previously looked after outside England and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under criteria 1/3 if the child's previously looked status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School". The child's previously looked status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:
 - (i) to have been in state care in a place...because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and



(ii) to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

Children who were not “looked after” immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under rule criteria 1 or 3. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under the exceptional medical, social or pastoral need category. Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

4. **‘Catholic’** means a member of a 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. For the purposes of this policy, it includes a looked after child living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the 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.

5. **‘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.
6. **‘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.
7. **‘Eastern Christian Church’** includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.
8. **Children of other Christian denominations** for the purposes of this policy means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledging 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 of Churches Together in Wales (CYTÛN) 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.

9. **Children of other faiths** for the purposes of this policy 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. A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- b. A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

10. **'brother or sister'** is defined as:

the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or 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 must be on the roll of the named school at the time the younger child starts or has made an application and accepted a place. If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

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. If an applicant lives at more than one address, the sibling must also reside at the same address for the majority of the school week. The sibling's address will be verified by the school.

11. A **'parent'** means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child and any person who has care of a child.

12. **Exceptional social, medical or pastoral need** is where the needs of the child can be most appropriately met at this school.

Applications under this category will only be considered at the time of the initial application unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted.

All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However, in a few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school.

Few applications under exceptional, social, medial or pastoral need are agreed. All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

- a) Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or



- b) Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs.
- c) If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address, clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.
- d) For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate. An application under this category will generally not be upheld in cases where more than one school could meet the child's need.

In exceptional cases relating to a disability, where more than one school in the county can meet the child's specific needs, a clear and compelling case can be made for the "nearest" school with the relevant facilities, environment or location.

You must clearly explain why attendance at the "nearest" school with these facilities is essential.

Applications under can only be considered when supported by a recent letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example a doctor, psychologist or police officer. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child

Applications for children who were not "looked after" immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order may be made under this rule.

13. A child's **"home address must be the child's current permanent address"** at the time of application.

"At the time of application" means the closing date for applications.

"Permanent" means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year. Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months and the child must be resident in the property at the time of application.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives for the majority of the school week. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If the child's living arrangements change after you apply and they now spend the majority of the school week living at a different address, you must provide evidence of the new permanent address. We may ask for proof of your address at any time.

If, following an initial investigation and/or any investigation by with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service, the county council concludes that, a fraudulent address has been used, correspondence confirming this decision will be sent to the applicant.



We will explain the decision-making process and the action that will be taken with the application. We will also confirm which address will be used as the child's permanent home address for admission allocation purposes.

If we receive more than one application with different address details and parents don't agree, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes.

If two applications are received, with different addresses, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.