

ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL
Spring Park Road, Shirley CR0 5EL

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE
(for Admissions in and from September 2025)

St John's Church of England Primary School has a distinctive Christian ethos which is at the heart of this School and provides an inclusive, caring and supportive environment where children learn and flourish in a setting shaped by Christian values. We welcome applications from all members of the community and we ask all parents to respect the Christian ethos of our school.

Introduction

Part 1: Policy

The Governing Body is responsible for the admission of pupils to St John's Church of England Primary School and admits 60 pupils to Reception each September, 30 pupils per class which is the maximum limit for all infant classes. This admissions limit has been agreed between the Governing Body and the Croydon LA.

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, whose EHC Plan names St John's school are required to apply for school places separately through the local authority from whom advice is available. If a child with an EHC Plan, is placed at St John's by the local authority before the normal admission round, the places available to other applicants will be reduced accordingly. The number of Foundation and Open places will be reduced alternately by the number of such applicants admitted, the first place reducing the Foundation places by one and the second reducing the Open places by one.

Foundation Places

The Governing Body will allocate up to 45 Foundation places (see below) to pupils whose parents/carers are faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE 1) in a Christian church that is a member of Churches Together in England, The Evangelical Alliance or Affinity Churches. Written evidence of a parent's/carer's attendance at their place of worship in the form of a clergy reference is taken up by the school prior to the allocation of places.

If there are more applicants than available places, places will be allocated according to the following criteria. These are stated in order of priority:

- (a) Looked-after children or previously looked-after children, including internationally adopted previously looked after children (NOTE 2) who satisfy the general criteria for the award of Foundation places;

- (b) Children who satisfy the general criteria for the award of Foundation places and have an exceptional and professionally supported medical or social need for a place at this school. This must be supported by written evidence **at the time of application**, e.g. from a specialist health professional, social worker, or educational psychologist which must set out the reasons why this school is the most suitable school and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school;
- (c) Children who will have a sibling (NOTE 3) in the school at the time of admission, living at the same address, whose parents/carers are faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE 1) at their church;
- (d) Children of teaching staff and members of the Senior Leadership Team (see NOTE 5) who have (i) been employed at St John's for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to St John's is made or (ii) have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is demonstrable skill shortage, and whose parents/carers are at least fortnightly faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE 1) at their church;
- (e) Children whose parents/carers are weekly faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE 1) at the church of St John's the Evangelist, Shirley;
- (f) Children whose parents/carers are weekly faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE1) at another Anglican church or at Shirley Methodist Church;
- (g) Children whose parents/carers are fortnightly faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE 1) at the church of St John's the Evangelist, Shirley;
- (h) Children whose parents/carers are fortnightly faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE1) at another Anglican church or at Shirley Methodist Church;
- (i) Any other children whose parents/carers are weekly faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE1) at a Christian church (as defined above) but who do not qualify within any of the criteria (a) to (h) above.
- (j) Any other children whose parents/carers are fortnightly faithful and regular worshippers (NOTE 1) at a Christian church (as defined above) but who do not qualify within any of the criteria (a) to (h) above.

If there are fewer qualified applicants than there are available Foundation places, any unfilled places will become additional Open places. Unsuccessful Foundation applicants will be considered for any unfilled Open places remaining after the allocation of both Foundation and Open places has been completed.

Open Places

The Governing Body will allocate 15 Open places to pupils whose parents/carers have chosen the school for the type of education it provides. Parents applying for an Open place do so knowing that the school aims to provide an education based on Christian principles and, therefore, the Governing Body hopes that all pupils will take part in the Christian worship of the school and will attend religious education lessons.

If there are more applicants than available places, applicants will be placed in order on the list returned to the Croydon LA according to the following criteria. These are stated in order of priority:

- (a) Looked-after children or previously looked-after children, including internationally adopted previously looked after children (NOTE 2);
- (b) Children who have an exceptional and professionally supported medical or social need for a place at this school. This must be supported by written evidence **at the time of application**, e.g. from a specialist health professional, social worker, or educational psychologist which must set out the reasons why this school is the most suitable school and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school;
- (c) Children who will have a sibling (NOTE 3) in the school at the time of admission, living at the same address;
- (d) Children of teaching staff and members of the Senior Leadership Team (see NOTE 5) who have (i) been employed at St John's for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to St John's is made or (ii) have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is demonstrable skill shortage;
- (e) Children in order of nearness of the home to the school (see NOTE 4);

NOTE 1

"Faithful and regular worshipper" is defined as attendance of the parent/carer at worship either weekly or fortnightly, depending on the criterion under which the application is made, for at least two years prior to application. Those who have recently moved to the area and who worshipped previously in a different church will be asked to supply a reference from that church so that the two year period is covered. The Governors do not give a higher preference to families where both parents worship. Governors will give careful consideration to the written Clergy reference which should take due account of the parent's/carer's individual circumstances in assessing the level of attendance. Parents/carers may wish to discuss with their clergy details of exceptional circumstances, such as illness, which have prevented faithful and regular attendance. In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirement of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

NOTE 2

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 the school. A previously looked after child is a child who immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those 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. 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). The Governors will require written confirmation that the child is looked after, or previously looked after, and will be so at the time of making an application to the school.

NOTE 3

Qualifying siblings are brothers and sisters, half-brothers and half-sisters, step-brothers and step-sisters, foster and adopted brothers and sisters who share the same home and for whom the applicant has parental responsibility.

NOTE 4

Distance is measured in a straight line from the applicant's home to the closest of the school's gates using the LA's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority in each criterion. Please note the LA use a computerised measuring system (GIS) **and** geographical reference points as provided by the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). For shared properties, eg. flats, the geographical references will determine the start point within the property boundaries to be used for distance calculation purposes.

"Home" is defined as the address where the child normally resides as their only or principal residence. Addresses involved in child minding (professional or relatives) are excluded. Parents/carers will be asked to provide documentary evidence to confirm their address (e.g. a utility bill) and parental responsibility (e.g. a short birth certificate). The LA and school must be notified of changes of address immediately. Failure to do so could result in the child being denied a place at St John's School.

NOTE 5

'Children of teaching staff and members of the Senior Leadership Team' refers to situations where the staff member is the natural parent, the legal guardian or resident step-parent.

Part 2: Procedures

Parents/carers apply to St John's by completing the Common Application Form contained in the booklet provided by the local authority (LA) in which they live (i.e. their "home" LA), and returning it to their "home" LA by the date specified by the LA. Parents/carers may also apply online to their LA for a school place provided that they have an e-mail address. Details of the LA's online procedure are available in the LA's Admission to Primary School booklet. Croydon LA will then inform the Governing Body of the names and details as provided on the Common Application Form, of all children whose parents/carers have nominated St John's School amongst their six preferences.

The Governing Body will not be informed of the position within the order of preference of any application.

Where an application is made on behalf of more than one child resident in the same household, e.g. twins, a separate application form must be completed for each child. St John's is a two form entry school and it should be noted that sibling applicants may not be placed in the same class throughout their time at the school.

Parents/carers applying for a FOUNDATION PLACE, must also complete our online Supplementary Information Form, found on our school website. The Supplementary Information Form must be completed fully by the date specified by the LA. Please note that an application may only be made for **either** a Foundation Place **or** an Open Place but **not** for both.

If no Supplementary Information Form is submitted, it will only be possible for the applicant to be considered for an Open place.

Multiple Births

Where there are insufficient places to admit both twins, an additional exception will be made to accept the other twin. With triplets or other multiple birth applicants, each one would be considered according to need and available school resources.

Tie-breaker

In the event that two or more applicants have equal right to a place under any of the above criteria and there are insufficient places, the Governing Body will use distance, in the first instance, to decide between applicants. Where two or more qualified applicants live equi-distant from the school, the governors will determine the matter by drawing lots.

The School admits children to the Reception class in the September of the school year in which a child attains the age of 5 years. (The school year runs from 1 September to the 31st August.) All parents/carers are entitled to a full-time place for their child in the reception class from September, but may defer entry until the beginning of the term after their child is five years old (i.e. when the child reaches compulsory school age) or until the beginning of the summer term, whichever is earlier. Children may attend part-time until their child reaches compulsory school age. Parents/carers who have been offered a place at the School and wish to defer entry for their child and/or attend part-time must put this in writing to the head teacher at the earliest opportunity and before the start of the autumn term.

EDUCATION OUT OF NORMAL (CHRONOLOGICAL) AGE GROUP

Children are normally educated in school with others of their age group; however, in exceptional circumstances parents/carers may seek a place outside of their child's normal age group. Decisions will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case. Parents/carers must state clearly why they feel admission to a different year group is in the child's best interests and may provide recent professional evidence to support this. Further details of how to make such a request are available from the school.

Appeals against unsuccessful application for admission

Parents/carers who are not offered a place for their child have the right to appeal to an independent Appeal Panel. Parents/carers wishing to appeal should obtain an appeal form from the school. The form should be sent to reach the Clerk to the Admissions' Appeal Panel, c/o the School, within 20 school days of the date of the letter confirming the governors' decision not to offer a place. Should an appeal be unsuccessful, the governing body will not consider a further application from those parents/carers within the same academic year, unless there have been significant and material changes in their circumstances.

Parents/carers considering an appeal against an unsuccessful application for admission should also read carefully the section on Appeals in the 'Admission to Primary School' booklet. This sets out the limited circumstances under which appeals panels can allow appeals once class sizes have reached their statutory limit of 30 pupils in Key Stage 1.

Waiting List

The School operates a waiting list from which any places that become available are offered in accordance with the admission criteria. The list is used from 1 September each year until 31 August. Parents/carers must request in writing to join the list but they must also apply to the Local Authority.

Late Applications

Those applications received after the Local Authority's deadline for the normal admissions round, without good reason, will not be considered until after all of the on-time applications have been processed by the Local Authority.

In-Year Admissions

Applications for a place at the school in-year must be made using the in-year application form of the local authority (LA) where the school is situated. This form must be returned to the Local Authority. The school's supplementary form must also be completed for applicants for foundation places and returned to the School office. The governors will use the prevailing criteria at that time to rank the application. The offer of a place at St John's will be made by the school on behalf of the governors. In the event of the governors deciding that a place cannot be offered, parents/carers will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents/carers from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

In Year Applications from Siblings of Current Pupils: Where there is a vacancy there will be no distinction made between whether the application is for an Open or Foundation place. Should there be competition for the vacancy the decision will be made on the basis of distance from the school. Priority for in year admissions will always be given to looked-after and previously looked-after children, and children with an exceptional and professionally supported medical need, as per criteria (a) and (b) above.

Where there are in year vacancies for multiple year groups, they will be considered in ascending order from Reception upwards, with any consequent effect on sibling applications being taken into account accordingly.

Crown Service Applicants

In accordance with the Department for Education Admissions Code, families from the Armed Forces and other Crown Services, who are returning to the UK will not be penalised for living outside the Country at the time of application, provided that the application is accompanied by an official letter from the MOD, FCO or GCHQ declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering address. In such cases that address will be accepted for the purposes of the application, and the application will be considered on the same basis as other applicants without disadvantage.

Fair Access

The School is committed to taking its fair share of pupils who are hard to place in accordance with the locally agreed fair access protocol. Pupils admitted under the protocol will take priority over any children on the waiting list and this may include, on occasion, admitting above the published admission number.