NURSERY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

2026/2027

Compliance statement

Every policy is reviewed at regular intervals and where applicable, as stipulated by law.

Each policy is also available in additional formats including Braille and in additional languages upon request, within reasonable timescales as stipulated by the school.

Reviewer/s:	Danielle Ashley
Last reviewed on:	March 2025
Next review due by:	March 2026
Approved by:	Full Governing Board

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INTRODUCTION TO OUR SCHOOL

'Together we can, with Christ by our side.'

St Joseph's Catholic Infant and Nursery School is a part of the St. Joseph's Catholic Federation. We are committed to educating our children to achieving their full potential in order that they make a positive difference in their community and the world. We strive for excellence so that every child develops spiritually, socially, academically and morally. Our Federation exists to educate our children with the gospel values, traditions and beliefs of the Catholic faith in partnership with the parents and parish communities This ethos is central to everything we do. We primarily to serve the Catholic community and Catholic children always have priority of admission. However, the Governing Body also welcomes applications from those of other denominations and faiths and from those who have no faith but who support the religious ethos of the school.

We are in the Diocese of Southwark. It is in the trusteeship of the Diocese. St Joseph's Federation serves three parishes: Virgo Fidelis, St Matthew's and St Margaret Clitherow. 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.

The Governing Body has responsibility for all admissions to the school. The Governors intend to accept up to 30 children (morning sessions) and up to 30 children (afternoon sessions) in the Nursery Class.

ADMISSION CRITERIA FOR ST JOSEPH'S NURSERY SCHOOL

Where the number of applications for admissions exceeds the number of places available, the Governing Body will apply the following criteria, in the order of priority set out below, to decide which children to admit:

1. Looked After Catholic Children or Looked After Children in the care of Catholic families and previously Looked After Catholic Children who have been adopted or have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.
2. Baptised Catholic children being brought up in the Catholic faith who live within the parish boundaries of the three named parishes, who weekly worship at Catholic Mass.
3. Baptised Catholic children being brought up in the Catholic faith who live outside the parish boundaries of the three named parishes, who weekly worship at Catholic Mass.

4. Baptised Catholic children being brought up in the Catholic faith who live within the parish boundaries of the three named parishes, who worship intermittently at Catholic Mass.
5. Baptised Catholic children being brought up in the Catholic faith who live outside the parish boundaries of the three named parishes, who worship intermittently at Catholic Mass.
6. Baptised Catholic children who do not worship at Catholic Mass.
7. Other Looked After Children and other previously Looked After Children who have been adopted or have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order.
8. Christian children of other Christian denominations whose application is supported by the Minister.
9. Children of other faiths whose application is supported by a minister or faith leader.
10. Any other applicants.

TIEBREAKER

1. The following order of priorities will be applied when applications within any of the above categories exceed the places available and it is necessary to decide between applications.
2. The attendance of a brother or sister at either St Joseph's Infant or St Joseph's Junior School at the time of entry will take priority over applications, within each criterion, who do not have siblings.
3. Social/Medical needs which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong relevant evidence must be provided, at the time of application, by an appropriate professional authority e.g., qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, social worker or priest.
4. The distance measured in a straight line from the centre of the pupil's main 'home' to the Woodend gate, which is our school's main entrance. In the event of distance being equal the ultimate tiebreaker will be drawing of lots. Proof of address will be required.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

You will need to fill in this Application Form if your child will be 3 years old by 1st September 2026. The admissions criteria can be found on the reverse of this page.

Application forms must be completed and signed by a parent or legal guardian and the child named on the application must be resident with the person signing the form at the time of application.
There is no automatic transfer from Nursery to Reception classes – you must apply again next year for a place in the Infant School.

Children with Special Educational Needs sit outside the normal admissions process.
However, if a child is admitted during a normal admission round to a relevant age group they must be taken into account when determining and applying the school's admission number. Accordingly, children with Statements or Education, Health and Care Plans (ECHPs) already admitted to the school must be counted towards the admission number when considering whether there is still a place available for another child without a Statement or EHCP.

Completion of the Application Form is not mandatory; however, if one is not received by the school, the governors will not be able to apply their admission criteria and the application will be considered under criterion 10 – any other applicants.

If you are in anyway unsure of what to do, please do not hesitate to telephone the school. Translators can also be arranged via the school office.

If any information given on either form should change you MUST inform us immediately; places may be withdrawn if incorrect information is given.

The Governors ask that you complete the Supplementary Information Form and then provide the requested identification documents electronically by email. Alternatively, you may bring in the original documents to the school where we will make a copy for you. **The closing date will be 15 January 2026**. If there is any additional information, in respect of special medical, social or pastoral needs which you feel will help Governors in determining the correct criterion for your application, you should send it to the school marked for the attention of the Admissions Committee; the appeal stage is usually too late. Applications received after the closing date are 'Late Applications' and will be processed after the admissions cycle is complete.

Prospective parents are welcome to come and visit our school - please contact the school office should you wish to do so. We have tours every Wednesday morning at 9.30am.

WAITING LIST

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list. The waiting list will be operated using the same criteria listed above, for one

academic term in the year of admission. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place. When a place becomes available, all current applications for a place in the year group will be considered
in accordance with the criteria of the Admissions Policy. Information can be provided to parents about the order of priority of applications being held at a particular time but no guarantee can be given that higher priority applications will not be received by the time a place becomes available.

PUPILS WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP)

The admission of pupils with a Statement of Educational Needs or with an EHC Plan are dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements and EHC Plans by the pupil's home Local Authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with a statement or EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria.

IMPORTANT NOTES

❖ Looked After Children means: 'Children in public care' at the date on which application is made and must be supported by a letter from the relevant Local Authority (Children's Services) Department. If an application is made under the criterion "adopted children who were previously looked after" it must be supported by a letter from the relevant Local Authority (Children's Services) Department.

❖ Parish Boundaries are as defined by the Archdiocese of Southwark. Definitions are available in the school office. These can also be accessed via the school website or can be sent to an applicant upon request.

❖ Catholics include members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.

❖ Weekly worship means: 'Fulfilling the obligation of attendance at a Catholic Mass each Sunday and Holy Day or on the eve of such days unless prevented so by serious reason'.

❖ Intermittent worship means: 'Does not always fulfil the obligation of attendance at a Catholic Mass each Sunday and Holy Day or on the eve of such days unless prevented so by serious reason' (that is worship fortnightly, monthly or occasionally).

❖ Catechumenate means families who are undertaking instruction which will lead to baptism. This must be verified by the Parish Priest.

❖ Home means: 'The normal registered place of residence of the parents and children, not that of a relative or childminder'. Home Local Authority means the Local Authority in which your home is situated. The school and the Local Authority must be notified of any change of address immediately. Failure to do so could result in the child being denied a place at a preferred school.

❖ Brother or sister means children who live as brother and sister, including natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters whose main residence is at the same address as the applicant.

❖ Distance will be measured in a straight line from the centre of the pupil's main 'home' to the designated main entrance with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority. For shared properties e.g., flats the centre will be taken from the centre of the building.

❖ Appeals – Parents whose applications are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with section 85(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and must set out reasons on which the appeal is made. Appeals should be made to the Admissions Appeal Clerk at the school address. Parents/carers have the right to make oral representations to the panel.

We look forward to welcoming you and your child into our school family.