

THE SACRED HEART LANGUAGE COLLEGE

Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster

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ADMISSION POLICY FOR SEPTEMBER 2023- 2024

This policy refers to admissions to the school to Year 7 at The Sacred Heart Language College in September 2023. The Sacred Heart Language College is a Catholic school in the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Westminster. Its prime purpose is the education of Catholic girls.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our girls. 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. All applicants are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

Admission to Year 7

The published admission number (PAN) for the school is 150 girls. The Governing Body has sole responsibility for admissions to this school and intends to admit 150 girls to Year 7 in September 2023. Priority will always be given to Catholic applicants.

Where there are more applications for places than the total published admission number (PAN) of 150 places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

- Criterion 1. Catholic "looked-after" girls and Catholic girls who have been adopted (or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after, 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.
- Criterion 2: Baptised Catholic girls with a Certificate of Catholic Practice who are currently attending Catholic primary schools within the London Borough of Harrow, namely St Anselm's, St Bernadette's, St George's, St John Fisher, St Joseph's and St Teresa's.
- Criterion 3. Baptised Catholic girls with a Certificate of Catholic Practice.
- Criterion 4. Other baptised Catholic girls.
- Criterion 5. Other "looked after" girls and girls who have been adopted (or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after.
- Criterion 6. Other girls who are currently attending Catholic primary schools within the London Borough of Harrow (i.e. St Anselm's, St Bernadette's, St George's, St John Fisher, St Joseph's and St Teresa's) who do not fulfil criterion 2.
- Criterion 7. Christian girls from Christian families, whose application is supported by either a certificate of baptism or a letter from a minister of religion confirming membership of the faith community.
- Criterion 8. Girls from other faiths whose application is supported by a letter from their faith leader confirming membership of the faith community.
- Criterion 9. Any other girl.

NOTES

1. **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.
2. Inside of each criterion, priority (after those with exceptional need) is to those with a sibling attending the school at the time of admission. 'Sibling' means a sister to include adopted sisters, half sisters or step sisters. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older girl(s) will leave before the younger one starts.

3. **Distance tie-break:** where the offer of places to all applicants in any of the categories listed above would lead to over subscription, places up to the published admission number of 150 will be offered to those living nearest to the school. Each address is geo-coded and distance is measured by Harrow Local Authority in a straight line from the home to the centre point of the school. In cases where applicants live equidistant from the school and places cannot be offered to both girls, random allocation by lottery in the presence of an independent witness will be used.
4. **'Looked after child'** has the same meaning as in S.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 at the time of making an application to the school), 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.
5. **'Adopted'**. An adopted child is a child who is adopted under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 s.46 (adoption orders).
6. **'Child arrangements order'**. A child arrangements order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.8 which defines it as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.
7. **'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).
8. **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 for a girl 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 also includes a "looked after" girl who is in the process of adoption by a "Catholic family", where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised were it not for his/her status as a looked after child. For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception in the Catholic 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.

Certificate of Catholic Practice means a certificate given by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church which the family attends) in the form laid down by the Bishop's 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. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests at www.rcdow.org.uk/admissions

"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 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.

"Children of other faiths" means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 7 above 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.

9. **'Parent'** means the adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child.
10. **Residential / Home.** This must be the address where the girl lives for more than 50% of the school week and they must be living there on the closing date for receipt of applications. Confirmation of address will be required.
11. **Multiple Births:** The Governing Body does not give priority under its admission criteria for twins, triplets or other multiple applications from one family for the same year group. If there are insufficient places available and one twin/sibling is offered the last place, the Governing Body will agree to exceed the published admission number and admit the additional girl(s).
12. Where a girl is admitted according to Criteria 3, 5, 6 and 7 parents are advised that any future siblings are unlikely to get a place as the school is usually oversubscribed with applicants in criteria 1 and 2.
13. **Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC):** The admission of girls with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) 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. Girls with an EHC Plan naming this school will be admitted.
14. **In-Year Admissions.** In-year applications are made directly to the school. If a place is available and there is no waiting list then the Local Authority will be informed and the girl will 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. If a place cannot be offered at this time then you may ask us for the reasons and you will be informed of your right of appeal. 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. Names are removed from the list at the end of each academic year. When a place becomes available the governing body will re-rank the list and inform parents whether or not a place is to be offered.
15. **Girls educated out of chronological age group:** Application may be made for a girl to be educated out of her age group i.e. a 12 year old being admitted to Year 7, or any girl admitted in-year to the year below their chronological age group. The applicant should write to the Chair of Governors at the time of application requesting that the girl be admitted out of her chronological age group.
16. **Change of Details:** If any of the details on your form change between the date of application and the receipt of the letter of offer or refusal, you **must** inform the school immediately. If misleading information is given or allowed to remain on the form, governors reserve the right to withdraw the place, even if the girl has already started at the school.

Fair Access

The School is committed to taking its fair share of girls 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 girl 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 girl would mean exceeding the published admission number.

Applications to Year 7

Please note, there are two application forms:

- i. **The e-admissions form (formerly called the Common Application Form).** This can be accessed from the website online at www.harrow.gov.uk. All completed e-application forms should be submitted, together with a copy of proof of your daughter's age and proof of your address, to the Admissions Service of your local borough, as directed, on or before Monday 31st October 2022.
- ii. **The School's Supplementary Information Form.** Applicants applying under criteria 2, 3, 5 and 6 should complete our school's Supplementary Information Form. This may be obtained from the school or the Local Authority and should be returned, together with a copy of your daughter's Baptism certificate (if applicable), to the **Admissions Secretary, The Sacred Heart Language College, on or before Monday 31st October 2022.**

All applications received after that date will be classified as "LATE". This means that these applications will not be processed until after all administrative procedures have been completed. Late applicants will then be placed at the bottom of the relevant category, according to the admissions criteria. **THIS MAY RESULT IN A LOSS OF AN OFFER OF A PLACE.**

Applications for criterion 1 must be accompanied by written proof of the girl's status from the appropriate authority. Those wishing to be considered under criterion 2 or 3 should also provide the school with a copy of the girl's baptismal certificate. If the certificate is not available, applicants should indicate in writing the reasons for this being the case. Those applying under criterion 2 should obtain a Certificate of Catholic Practice from the priest at the parish where the family normally worships. The priest will not sign the form if he does not know the family.

It is essential that all relevant details are sent in at the time of application so that the criteria for admission may be applied fairly in the event of any change of circumstances (e.g. a change of address, reception into the church, baptism etc.) the school must be notified immediately. If a place is offered on the basis of misleading or out of date information, the governors reserve the right to withdraw the offer of the place even if the girl has already started at the school.

The local authority will write to you on behalf of the governing body with the outcome of your application on 1st March 2023 and the information will also be available on line. You should indicate your acceptance of the place by Midday, Wednesday 15th March 2023. Information concerning the Appeals Procedure will be sent out to those who are unsuccessful in obtaining a place.

The school maintains a waiting list, ranked according to the published criteria, and places will be offered as and when vacancies occur. The waiting list will remain open until 31st August 2024. If you wish your child's name to stay on the waiting list after this you must apply to the school in writing before that date.

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal should do so, stating the grounds for appeal, in writing, to:

The Clerk to the Governors,
The Sacred Heart Language College,
186 High Street,
Wealdstone, Harrow,
Middlesex HA3 7AY.

In the case of over-subscription a waiting list will be drawn up for parents who wish their daughter to be included on this. The waiting list will be held open until the start of the Autumn Term 2024.

Admissions from the waiting list will be according to the norms of the Admissions Criteria.

Please note: The closing date for the receipt of any appeals: Friday 14th April 2023.