

Admissions – Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to attend an Open Session?

No. However, we strongly recommend that you do and that you stay for the Head Teacher's talk. You need to visit the school to see if it will suit your daughter. You also need to know as much about the admissions process as possible since admission arrangements change regularly in response to changes in the Code of Practice on admissions. You should not assume that the arrangements are the same as previous years or that your daughter will automatically get a place even if her sister is here.

I missed the Open Sessions – is it possible to come and visit the school?

We do not arrange tours or visits outside of the Open Day sessions.

What forms do I have to complete?

You **must** complete the Common Application Form ('CAF') by the application deadline. The CAF can be obtained from your daughter's primary school or home local authority or online at <https://www.eadmissions.org.uk/eAdmissions/app>. It must be returned to your home local authority by the application deadline, which for the 2017 intake is **31st October 2016**.

You should also complete the school's own Supplementary Information Form ('SIF') which is available with the brochure at the Open Session and also from the school's website (www.sacredhearthish.org.uk). Whilst the deadline for the return of the SIF is also **31st October 2016**, it is recommended that this form and any documentation required be returned to the school by **Friday, 21st October 2016**. The school will be closed from **24th-28th October** inclusive and no checking procedure will be available. Receipt of a SIF after **31st October** will mean that it will be treated as a late application.

Certificate of Catholic Practice

If you are applying under oversubscription criteria 2-5 you must submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice ('CCP') by the closing date. This form (which used to be called a priest's reference form or Section C) is available from the school or from the diocesan website. Please complete the top part of the form with your details and then take the form to your parish priest (or the priest at the parish where you normally worship) for signature. It is your duty to ensure that the CCP is submitted to the school in good time. The priest will only sign this form if he knows you and agrees that you are a practising Catholic family. The deadline for receiving the completed, signed and dated form from the Priest for the 2017 intake is **11th November 2016**.

If you are applying for places under oversubscription criteria 9-12 you are not required to complete the CCP Form. However, you will be required to provide evidence that you practise your faith in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, rites and practices of the faith to which you belong. In order to demonstrate this, Christian applicants must provide copies of Baptismal Certificates for the Christian candidate or explain why no Baptismal Certificate is available and what evidence of practice by your daughter is available within your denomination.

What happens if I do not complete the school's own supplementary form?

If you do not complete the SIF, the Governing Body will be unable to fully assess your application and it is extremely unlikely that your daughter will be offered a place.

Do I need any other documentation?

A full list of required documentation is provided on page 4 of the supplementary application form.

I don't know where my daughter's baptismal certificate is. What should I do?

Advice on how to obtain a Baptismal certificate and what to do if the Church has been destroyed is in the brochure.

Do both parents have to be Catholic?

No.

Does my daughter's Primary Head have to sign the Supplementary Information Form?

No. However, the Primary Head may well be able to advise and help you over admissions.

My Parish Priest has moved. What should I do?

Most parishes will be able to give you your priest's new address or have alternative arrangements in place. As far as possible you should send the CCP to your priest's new parish, together with a stamped envelope addressed to the school for him to use.

My daughter's Baptism took place after she was six months old. Will my application be automatically unsuccessful?

No. There are often very good reasons which prevent a baptism from taking place within the six month period. You should note that the Admissions Policy states: *The governing body will presume that the requirements of the relevant canons have been fulfilled when the candidate's baptism takes place within six months of birth. Where baptism takes place after a longer period, but no later than one year, applicants will need to produce evidence to demonstrate that they complied with those requirements, that those requirements did not apply to them or that they were prevented from complying with them by a legitimate cause. The governing body will only consider a legitimate cause as something which prevented baptism from taking place at the appropriate age and not through a choice made by parents to delay. For adopted children or where other circumstances delaying baptism beyond the first year of life apply, timings will be from the date of the relevant event (for example adoption, conversion or reception into the Catholic Church from another church). The circumstances must be explained in the Supplementary Information Form. The requirements of the Canons do not strictly apply to such people but nevertheless the Church expects baptism to take place as soon as possible after the event.* As far as possible you should provide a full explanation on the Supplementary Form and provide documentary evidence to support this.

My child does not attend a Feeder School. Does this mean she will automatically be unsuccessful?

No. This simply means that your application is likely to be considered under oversubscription criteria 5.

Can I submit any other documentation?

The Supplementary form is clear what documentation is essential. You may submit any further documentation in support of your daughter's application where it is relevant to the admissions criteria. **Do not omit anything that you might subsequently rely on as part of an appeal. It will be too late then.**

My child is adopted. What documentation do I need to provide?

The Admissions Code states: *In the case of previously looked after children, admission authorities may request a copy of the adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order and a letter from the local authority that last looked after the child confirming that he or she was looked after immediately prior to that order being made.*

Who is the Admissions Authority for Sacred Heart High School?

The Admissions Authority for this school is the Governing Body.

I have twin daughters. What happens if you only have one place?

The Admissions policy states: *Where a place is achieved by a twin or child of a multiple birth but there are no remaining places for their twin or multiple birth sisters, the school will admit the remaining twin or multiple birth sisters over the published admission number.*

My child has an Education, Health and Care Plan. What should I do?

Girls with an Education, Health and Care Plan ('EHC plan') which name the school are dealt with under separate statutory procedures by the local authority, and will be admitted without reference to the Admissions policy. If your daughter has an EHC plan you must contact your local authority SEN officer.

Do I have to name this school as my first preference?

No. In common with all schools, we operate an equal preference system, and will not know where you have ranked us. Nor will we know which other schools you have named. Where more than one school is able to make you an offer, you will be given a place at the school you have ranked highest.

Do I have to use all six of my preferences?

We recommend that you use all six and that you rank them in preference order but that you are realistic in naming schools and ensure that you have an insurance policy. If you name only the most popular schools, then you may not get a place at any of them. You should avoid naming only one school, even if you have a sibling present at it.

Where more than one school is able to make an offer, your Local Authority will allocate your daughter to the school you have ranked highest. If you are confident that your local/nearest school will make an offer, then you should rank it first if it is your first preference. If, however, your first preference is another school, where you are not so confident that your application will be successful, then rank that school first or second and place your local school or insurance policy lower, since its position on the list will not make any difference to your chances of getting a place there. It is important for you to be aware that schools will not make an offer from the waiting list if you have been successful at another school you ranked higher. Whilst schools will not know at the time of application where you have ranked them, after offers are made, for the purposes of the waiting list, they will know if you have a place at a higher ranked school.

What if I don't get any offer or don't get my first preference?

If you do not get any of the preferences you have named, then as far as possible your Local Authority will make an offer at a school where there is a vacancy. You are strongly advised to accept whatever offer is made, to avoid your daughter being without a school in September 2017. Even though you have accepted an offer in March, this does not mean that you cannot withdraw if you receive an offer from the waiting list of another school later on.

Remember: there are 3 ways for a pupil, without an EHC plan, to gain admission to a school:

- Through the co-ordinated admissions process – you will receive a single offer on 1st March;
- After 1st March, a school may make an offer if there has been a withdrawal, provided you do not have a place at a school which you have ranked higher. In 2016, at least 40 pupils were offered places off the waiting list at this school;
- If you are unsuccessful, and you believe there is a strong reason why your child should be admitted to the school or you believe an error has been made in your case, then you can appeal the decision and your appeal will be heard by an Independent Appeal Panel. Please do not, however, rely on information for your appeal that you chose not to submit at the time of application, since it is not the role of an Independent Appeals Panel to rerun the admissions process. In the last 5 years, only 7 pupils in total (not each year) have been successful on appeal.

Can you tell me what my chances are of getting a place at this school?

No. No member of staff or Governor of this school is able to tell you this. We do not know how many applications we will receive or how many will be from baptised Catholics. You need to use the Admissions policy to work out for yourself how likely it is that your application will be successful.

Will my application be unsuccessful on distance?

Where the school becomes oversubscribed within the Oversubscription Criteria, priority will be given to those living nearest to the school. Closeness to the school will be calculated using a straight line measurement from the home address point determined by Ordnance Survey Data to the centre point of the school as determined by the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham's computerised measuring system.

It is impossible to say how far away is too far. If your application is unsuccessful on distance alone, you may subsequently gain a place from the waiting list, though, of course, this cannot be guaranteed. You should also be aware that a vacancy may arise at any time throughout the period from March to September. This year, the last offer of a place was made on 22nd August.

For your information, the distance from home to school of the last applicant offered a place on 1st March who was neither a looked after child, nor had a documented medical or social need nor was a sister was 4.5033m.

Following National Offer Day, the distance from home to school of the last applicant who was neither a looked after child, nor had a documented medical or social need nor was a sister was 9.9813m.

What do I do if I move address after submitting the Supplementary Information Form?

If you change address at any time after submitting the supplementary information form, please inform the Head Teacher as well as your home Local Authority. The supplementary information form clearly states: *If the candidate's home address changes after the application deadline, the applicant must notify the home local authority immediately confirming the reason for the change of address. Where the Governing Body is satisfied that the application contained fraudulent or intentionally misleading information relating to the candidate's home address, any offer of a place made will be withdrawn, and the applicant may face prosecution.*

Will there be an interview as part of the admissions process?

No. Schools are not allowed to interview for the purposes of admission. However, if your application is successful, you and your daughter will be invited into school to meet with a member of staff so that we can make transition to secondary school as straightforward as possible.

Does it make any difference if I apply to an independent school?

Not at all. However, you should be aware that if an independent school offers you a place, it will do so before your Local Authority contacts you with a single offer. You will be asked to accept the place and to submit a non refundable deposit of half a term's fees (c. £2,400). If you intend to apply for an independent school as insurance against not getting a place here, then be aware that it is expensive, though balanced against a minimum outlay of c. £14,500 per

annum (not including text books) and more than £75,000 for 5 years, it is reasonable. The choice is entirely yours and we will not know.

I am not a Catholic and nor is my daughter. Can I apply for a place for her?

Yes. However, you should be aware that the school is very oversubscribed by baptised and practising Catholics and therefore it is highly unlikely that you will get a place. The Admissions policy gives information about previous applications. You will note that this states that no application from a non Catholic family was successful last year. This has been the case for many years.

Does the school by law have to admit 10% of non Catholics?

No. See extract from the Code of Practice on Admissions below.

1.36 As with other maintained schools, these schools are required to offer every child who applies, whether of the faith, another faith or no faith, a place at the school if there are places available. Schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character (commonly known as faith schools) may use faith-based oversubscription criteria 28 and allocate places by reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.

I am a member of an Orthodox Church. Does this make a difference?

If the school is oversubscribed by baptized Catholics, then the Governors are obliged to offer places to these pupils first. Though there is a very close relationship between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, there is not yet 'full communion' between the two. For a list of those Churches and Rites in full communion with Rome, follow the link: www.rcdow.org.uk/education Click on the link for admissions and go to Annex 7 of Guidance for Governing Bodies. The admissions policy sets out the order in which members of other Churches and faiths will be admitted, should the school be under subscribed by baptized Catholics. This is very unlikely to happen.

When will I hear whether or not my application has been successful?

Your Local Authority will write to you on or about 1st **March 2017** with a single offer. If the offer is for this school, we will write very soon after that to confirm this. We would appreciate it if offer responses could be returned within five working days so we can have an early indication of offers that are not required and places not taken up at this stage can then be offered to the next eligible candidates on the list.

What about the waiting list?

After admissions decisions have been made and places have been accepted, the Governors will hold a reserve list of applicants. The order of the Reserve List will be determined in accordance with the oversubscription criteria and will be maintained until 31st August 2017. Vacancies arising after National Offer Day and 31st August 2017 will in the first instance be offered to candidates on the Reserve List.

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