



# Sacred Heart High School

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### September 2023

#### **Do I have to attend an Open Session?**

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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?**

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

#### **What forms do I have to complete?**

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You **must** complete the e Admissions form by the application deadline. This can be accessed online at <https://www.eadmissions.org.uk/eAdmissions/app>. If you wish to complete a paper copy you must request this from the Local Authority you live in. It must be returned to your home local authority by the application deadline, which is **31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**.

You should also complete the school's own Supplementary Information Form ('SIF'). This can be accessed online at <https://www.shhsadmissions.org.uk/>. If you need assistance you can contact the school. Whilst the deadline for the return of the Supplementary Information Form is also **31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**. Receipt of a Supplementary Information Form after **31<sup>st</sup> October** will mean that it will be treated as a late application.

#### **Certificate of Catholic Practice**

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If you are applying under oversubscription criteria 1 - 3, you must also submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice. This form is available from the priest at the parish where the family normally worship and it must be signed by the priest, with the official parish stamp and visible when uploaded.

If you are applying for places under oversubscription criteria 4-6 you are not required to complete page 2 of the Supplementary Information 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?**

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If you do not complete the Supplementary Information Form, 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?**

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When completing your online application there will be a prompt to upload the required documents i.e. your daughter's Baptismal Certificate and the signed, stamped Certificate of Catholic Practice. If you are applying under social/medical needs then you will also need to provide supporting evidence.

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

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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?**

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No.

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

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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?**

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Most parishes will be able to give you your priest's new address or have alternative arrangements in place.

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

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No. This simply means that your application would be grouped in the appropriate oversubscription criterion after 2e.

### **Can I submit any other documentation?**

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The Supplementary Information Form states clearly 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?**

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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?**

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The Admissions Authority for this school is the Governing Body.

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

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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?**

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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 SEND officer.

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

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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?**

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We recommend that you use all six and that you rank them in **your preference** order but that you include several schools where you believe you have a very good chance of securing a place (even if these are not your first choice).

Schools will not be informed where you have ranked them at the time applications are being considered and offers are made.

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.

You should avoid naming only one school, even if you have a sibling present at it.

If the local authority offers you a place at a school that you ranked higher than Sacred Heart, then you are automatically taken off our reserve list. If you change your mind and reject this higher offer, you will have to wait until September to re-join the waiting list for Sacred Heart.

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

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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 2024.

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.

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.
- If you are unsuccessful, and you believe there is a strong reason 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 6 years, only 12 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?**

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No. No member of staff or Governor of this school can 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.

### **Do those who live closest to the school get priority over those who live further away?**

No, it doesn't matter where you live. If we get more applications than places, we order applications in relation to the oversubscription criteria groups. Within each of the oversubscription criteria groups, no priority is given to those who live closest and places are awarded on the basis of random allocation.

### **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. It is important that the school can always contact you by letter when needed and please refer to the local authority's guidance regarding change of address.

### **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.

### **What is the non-verbal reasoning test?**

The purpose of the Non Verbal Reasoning Test is to ensure that the school offers places to pupils across a full range of ability groups. The school offers 25% of its places to pupils in the highest ability group (Band 1) and 50% of places to those in the middle ability group (Band 2) and 25% of places to those in the lower ability group (Band 3).

### **When will the non-verbal reasoning test take place?**

The test will take place on **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2023**. We will e-mail you to give you the time of the test. You will be asked to bring a copy of that e-mail with you, with an attached photograph of your daughter as proof of identity.

### **What do I do if my daughter has a test at another school on the same day?**

Your daughter should attend to take the test at the school ranked highest on the eAdmissions Form or nearest to her home. In such cases the school may be able to arrange another day on which your daughter can take the test.

### **Does it make any difference where my daughter comes in a band?**

Absolutely not. The governors will not have this information. The test has no further purpose after it has been used for allocating children to ability bands. It will not subsequently be used for deciding which set your daughter is placed in, since we will make use of Cognitive Ability Tests for that. Your daughter will sit these once she has been offered a place at the school.

### **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 may 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. This can be costly and you risk losing your deposit if you do not accept the place. 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. £16,000 per annum (not including

textbooks) and more than £80,000 for 5 years, it is reasonable. The choice is entirely yours and we will not know.

### **We are not Catholic and nor is our daughter. Can we apply for a place for her?**

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Yes. However, you should be aware that the school is very oversubscribed by Catholic families and therefore it is highly unlikely that you will get a place.

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

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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?**

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If the school is oversubscribed by baptised 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](http://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?**

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Your Local Authority will write to you on or about **1<sup>st</sup> March 2024** 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 without delay 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?**

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Those who applied for Year 7 within the original deadline but failed to secure a place at Sacred Heart High School, and anyone who applied to Year 7 after the closing date for applications, **must specifically request** to be placed on the waiting list if they still wish to be considered for a place after 1 Sept 2024.

The date that the application for admission was received is not considered. Where priority needs to be established within a particular oversubscription criterion, a new round of random allocation will occur (so that those who apply for a place at the school after an earlier round of random allocation are not disadvantaged).

A candidate's name may go down the waiting list as more applications are received.

Ability bands will not apply to the Waiting List.

The waiting list will be maintained up to and including Year 10. The list will be re-generated and re-ordered so that it reflects the admission policy in effect at the time (and not that which applied when the application was made).

212 Hammersmith Road

London. W6 7DG

Tel: 0208 748 7600

[www.sacredhearthschoolhammersmith.org.uk](http://www.sacredhearthschoolhammersmith.org.uk)