



# Sacred Heart High School

## PROOF OF BAPTISM – GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

### **I haven't got a certificate of baptism**

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1. Whether a baptism took place in this country or anywhere else in the world, obtaining a certificate of baptism is usually quicker and easier than most people assume.
2. A copy of a certificate can usually be obtained quickly and easily from the parish of baptism, whichever country this is in.

### **I don't know / can't remember which parish it was**

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3. If the location of the parish is not known, or the parish no longer exists, enquiries may be made of the diocese in which the parish is located. Telephone numbers for most of these are available from International Directory Enquiries and are listed in the Vatican directory the *Annuario Pontificio* for the current year.
4. If the name of the diocese is not known, then enquiries can be made of the national Episcopal Conference or of the local Papal Nuncio's office. Alternatively, the website [www.katolsk.no/utenriks/liste\\_en.htm](http://www.katolsk.no/utenriks/liste_en.htm) lists all Catholic dioceses worldwide by country. Used in connection with a good atlas (try [www.multimap.com](http://www.multimap.com)) this will usually identify the nearest diocese. The site also has links to diocesan websites – most dioceses now have one.

### **The records at my parish have been destroyed**

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5. In some parishes, records may have been destroyed, e.g. by fire, flood or war. If this is the case, the diocese or equivalent will be able to confirm this in writing.

### **Further Guidance**

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6. For further guidance on this topic, contact the Westminster Diocese Education Service, e-mail: [education@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:education@rcdow.org.uk) tel: 020 7798 9005.



# Sacred Heart High School

## PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

### Guidance for Schools

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1. The onus of proving membership of the Catholic Church rests primarily with the person seeking to establish the fact. This does not, however, prevent schools from assisting applicants to find out this information. The Church asks for “moral certainty” about membership. This guidance sets out the ways in which this is normally established.

It is important when applying this guidance to ensure that the Church does not put at a disadvantage either those who are from other races or cultures or those who may be less able to follow the guidance to parents.

2. Normally membership of the Catholic Church is proved simply by production of a certificate of Baptism into a Catholic Church.
3. A Catholic Church means any church in communion with the Church of Rome. This includes the 21 Eastern Catholic Churches.
4. Where a person has been baptised into a non- Catholic Church and subsequently received into full communion with the Catholic Church, proof of membership is by a Certificate of Reception.
5. If for some reason a certificate of baptism or reception is not available, it should be possible to obtain from the local diocese or from the relevant Episcopal conference for the country concerned, a statement that records at a particular church no longer exist. In these cases a letter from the parish priest that the person is a practising Catholic may have to be relied upon.
6. In other cases when there is a good reason why a certificate of baptism or reception is not available, a sworn statement from a person who witnessed a baptism can be accepted as proof, provided there is no conflict of interest.
7. In this guidance “Certificate” simply means a written document certifying that certain facts are recorded in a register of baptism, reception etc. It may, for instance, be in the form of a letter.
8. For further guidance on this topic, contact the Westminster Diocese Education Service, e-mail [education@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:education@rcdow.org.uk) tel: 020 7798 9005.