



Sacred Heart High School

PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Guidance for Schools

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 tel: 020 7798 9005.