



Nursery Admissions Policy

September 2026

1. Introduction

St Mary's Nursery is a happy and nurturing part of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, where our Catholic faith and values guide the way we care for every child and family. We are delighted that you are considering joining our community. We hope that all families who choose St Mary's Nursery will feel able to share in, and support, the loving, inclusive ethos that sits at the heart of our school.

A place in St Mary's Nursery is a wonderful start to your child's journey with us, but it does not automatically lead to a place in our Reception class. **Applications for Reception must be made separately, in line with the school's published admissions arrangements.**

The local governing body of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is responsible for admissions to St Mary's Nursery.

2. Admission Number

St Mary's Nursery can admit **20** children per session. This is the maximum number of children who can attend at any one time.

In line with Early Years Funding regulations, a child may use their funded hours at no more than two different providers in a single day.

3. Admissions to St Mary's Nursery

Children may join **St Mary's Nursery**

- From the day after their third birthday, but only if they are already eligible for funded two-year-old provision; or
- From the start of the term after their third birthday for all other children, in line with the universal early years entitlement.

Parents can use their funded early education hours at St Mary's Nursery in accordance with the national Early Years Funding regulations. Children may take up their funded hours at no more than two different providers in a single day.

Further information about session times and the Nursery Day are available in the St Mary's Nursery Induction information letter.

4. Oversubscription Criteria (*see also notes at the end of the policy*)

Where there are more applications than places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

In accordance with legislation Pupils with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (a plan made by the Local Authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 which specifies the special educational provision required for a child) which names the nursery will be allocated a place first. This will reduce the number of places available.

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children. (see notes 2&3)
2. Catholic children who are resident in the deanery of St Mary's and the Annunciation Marple Bridge and New Mills.
3. Catholic children who are resident in the parish of Holy Spirit, Marple.
4. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)
5. Catholic children of staff members of St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy.
6. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)
7. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 4&5)
8. Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. (see note 6)
9. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader. (see note 7)
10. Any other children.

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.

- (i) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can most appropriately be met at this nursery, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 10)
- (ii) The attendance of a brother or sister at St Mary's Nursery at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above (see note 8).

5. Tie-Break

Where two or more applications cannot be separated by the criteria above, priority will be given to children living closest to the nursery determined by the shortest distance. In the event of distances being the same for two or more children where this would determine the last place to be allocated, then random allocation will be carried out and supervised by a person independent of the school.

6. Application Process

Parents should complete the Nursery admissions application Form.

Once a place has been offered, parents will be asked to provide evidence of their child's date of birth, such as a birth certificate or passport, so that we can confirm their age for funding and administrative purposes.

If an application is made under a faith criterion, parents will also need to provide the required supporting evidence to the nursery so that the application can be considered correctly. Parents should complete the Supplementary Information Form when applying under a faith criterion.

Applications will be reviewed on receipt. Where the number of applications exceeds the places available, offers will be made in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria.

7. Allocation of Places

If the number of applications received is fewer than the number of places available, all applicants will be offered a place.

Where the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, applications will be prioritised strictly in accordance with the **oversubscription criteria** set out in this policy.

The school will endeavour to offer the funded hours requested on the Application Form. Where this is not possible due to capacity, parents will be offered alternative hours that are the closest match to their stated preferences.

Successful applicants must accept the offered place within 2 weeks of the date of the offer letter

Once acceptance has been received, successful applicants will be contacted again, to confirm the arrangements for their child's admission.

Once places have been offered in line with the oversubscription criteria, funded hours will be allocated in the following order:

1. Universal funded entitlement (15 hours per week)
2. Extended funded entitlement (up to 30 hours per week), where eligible
3. Additional fee-paying hours, where available

8. Waiting List

Our waiting list is ordered strictly using the nursery's oversubscription criteria. This means it isn't affected by when an application was made, a child's age, or whether the hours requested are funded or paid. As new applications are received, a child's position on the waiting list may move up or down. Being on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available, but we will always let you know as soon as a suitable place can be offered.

9. Withdrawal of Places

The Local Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place where:

- A place has been offered on the basis of information that is later found to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading.

10. Appeals

As nursery provision is non-statutory, there is **no right of appeal** to an independent panel. Should the need arise, parents may raise any concerns through the CMAT's Complaints Procedure which can be found on the school website.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. An Education, Health and Care Plan is a plan made by the local authority under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special educational provision required for a child.
2. A 'looked after child' has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (e.g. children with foster parents) at the time of making an application to the nursery.

A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because he or she was adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

3. '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 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 includes a looked after child living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the 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.

4. 'catechumen' means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.
5. 'Eastern Christian Church' includes Orthodox Churches and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.
6. "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.

7. "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 6 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.

8. 'brother or sister' includes:

- (i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and
- (ii) the child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same home address as the child who is the subject of the application.

9. A 'parent' means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child, and any person who has care of a child.

10. To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the admission authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

11. For the purposes of this policy, parish boundaries will be applied to the admission arrangements.

12. A child's "home address" refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided in the application form. Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the application form, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.

This policy was approved by the Local Governing Board on 21 October 2026.