



GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS – 2024/2025 APPLICATIONS

How to apply for a place in a Catholic school in Arundel and Brighton

The Governing Body of each Catholic school is responsible for agreeing and publishing a Policy each year which explains how places are offered if the school is oversubscribed (where there are more applications than places available). The Admissions Policy will be available from the school and posted on their website, or available from the Local Authority. Admission policies are often different for each school; parents need to read the policies carefully and seek clarification from the school if they are unsure about any aspect.

The Bishop expects Catholic schools to give priority to Catholic applicants who want a Catholic school. Catholic schools exist to assist parents in handing on the Catholic faith to their children. Where a school is oversubscribed, the Governing Body may apply criteria where a higher priority of admission will be given to those who attend Sunday Mass more frequently. Governing bodies will require confirmation of practice from a priest at the church where the family normally worship. Governing bodies may also use other criteria, such as giving priority to applicants who have a brother or sister in the school at the time of admission, living in a named parish, living near the school, or who have social or medical needs.

It should be noted that a priest's signature does not guarantee a place at a particular school. Governing bodies take into account the information given by the priest and prioritise applications according to their published admission criteria. It is the Governing Body of the school, and not the priest, that makes decisions on who is offered a place at the school.

What parents need to do to make an application

- 1) Complete a Common Application Form (CAF) which is the legal application form for all schools. This is available from the admissions office of the Local Authority (LA) in which the parents live (and not from the LA where the school is located). The parent must list all schools to which they are applying on the CAF. Parents must follow the instructions given with the CAF about its completion and return.
- 2) Complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) which is available from the Catholic schools to which parents are applying. A separate form needs to be completed for each Catholic school. The SIF requires parents to provide such information as Baptism details and, where required in the school's Admission Policy, information about Sunday Mass attendance. Some schools ask for the completed form to be returned to them so they can send it to the priest, others ask the parent to take it to the priest. Once this is done, the priest of the parish where the family attend Sunday Mass will complete a section on the form. Depending on the procedure of the school, the priest will either send the form back to the school or give it to the parents to return to the school by the date given on the form.
- 3) It is for the parents to ensure that the SIF is returned to the school as explained on the form. Not all schools will necessarily have the same date for return. If a SIF is not returned, governing bodies must still consider the application but as they will not have all the information they need to assess the application against their criteria, applicants who do not return the SIF will be placed in a lower priority category than those who have returned a SIF.

Notes to help parents with completing the Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

- 1) The terms 'parent' or 'carer' are used for all persons who legally have parental responsibility for the child. 'Parents' or 'carers' should enter details for each person who has parental responsibility and if any one of them is not the child's mother or father, specify this on the SIF.

- 2) The address of the child's main place of residence should be given (i.e. where the child spends the majority of weekday nights).
- 3) Catholic applicants must give the name of the parish in which they live even if they attend Mass in a different parish, giving the name of the church and its location.
- 4) Parents should give the name and location of the church they normally attend Sunday Mass if it is different from the parish in which they live.
- 5) If parents attend more than one church on a regular basis, they should specify this.
- 6) Parents should indicate the length of time they have been worshipping at the church or churches they attend.
- 7) Parents are required to provide proof of the child's Baptism or reception into the Church. The priest or school will ask for the original or certified copy of the baptismal certificate or evidence of reception into the Church.
- 8) Where the school includes frequency of Mass attendance as a criteria element, parents should indicate how often they attend Sunday Mass by ticking the box that best describes their attendance at Sunday Mass. (Saturday Vigil Mass counts as Sunday Mass). Such attendance should be over a period of time.
- 9) Applicants from other denominations/faiths should complete what is applicable to their circumstances and ensure a minister/faith leader completes part 3B.
- 10) Applicants of no faith affiliation should insert a cross in the applicable box in Part 1. In such cases, neither they nor the priest/faith leader need to complete Parts 2 or 3.

Timetable for parents for applying for places:

AUTUMN TERM PRIOR TO ADMISSION NEXT SEPTEMBER

The Local Authority's coordinated scheme will set the dates for applications to be submitted. Parents apply to the LA in which they live for places at their preferred schools by the closing date of 15 January (Primary).

An application for a child to be admitted to St Mary's Catholic Primary School should also include a completed Supplementary Information Form (SIF). This form should be handed in to St Mary's Catholic Primary School by the closing date of the 15 January. The SIF is used to collect the appropriate information for entry into a Catholic school. Although it is not mandatory for a parent to complete a SIF, without it the governing body will have to consider the application after all applications with a SIF.

AFTER THE CLOSING DATE

The governing body receives a list of applicants from the Local Authority and ranks them in strict accordance with their oversubscription criteria. It then sends the ranked list back to the Local Authority.

OFFER OF PLACE

After collation, parents receive an offer from the LA at the highest preference school where place is available. The offer is made by the LA on behalf of governors. For primary schools, the offer is made on/about 16 April (National Offer Day).

AT TIME OF OFFER OF A PLACE

If admission is refused, parents have the right to appeal. They should contact the school for details.