



St Thomas More Language College

Admission Policy 2021 – 2022



Introduction

St Thomas More Language College is a Catholic school for the education of Catholic pupils which is provided in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Westminster.

'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 this includes a looked after child in the process of adoption and living with a Catholic family, where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised were it not for his/her status as a looked after child. For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception in the Catholic 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.

Responsibility for the admission of pupils rests with the Governors, who will consider applications to the school made on behalf of eligible pupils by parents and guardians. As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. As a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. All applicants are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

Parents/guardians¹ who make an application to the school are invited to attend one of the school's Secondary Transfer Open Evenings, and priority will be given to applicants who are a Catholic child with a Certificate of Catholic Practice.

¹ Parent/Guardian is defined as the person or persons who have legal responsibility for the child.

How Places will be Allocated

The Governors intend to admit the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) of 120 pupils in Year 7 each school year and, in doing so, will endeavour to preserve its comprehensive character by establishing a balanced intake across the ability range in the ratio 25:50:25 meaning 25% upper ability, 50% middle ability and 25% lower ability. This will be achieved by the use of standardised verbal and nonverbal tests. Governors will apply the following criteria in order of priority to all applicants if oversubscribed starting from Criteria 1.

Oversubscription Criteria

1. Catholic looked after children and Catholic children who have been adopted (or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after.²
2. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic Practice³ from their parish priest of the parish or ethnic chaplain of the community in which the family attend Sunday Mass and a Baptismal Certificate.
3. Any other baptised Catholic applicants⁴
4. Other looked after children and children who have been adopted (or made subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after.
5. Catechumens and members of an Orthodox Communion.
6. Children of other Christian⁵ denominations whose membership of their faith, and that of their parents/guardians, is supported either by a certificate of baptism or by a letter from their priest or minister in the community they worship confirming that they are members of their faith.
7. Any other applicants.

² A 'looked after child' means a child in the care of the local authority or being provided with accommodation them in the exercise of their social services functions, within the meaning of Section 22 of the Children's Act 1989. 'Adopted' means children who were adopted under the Adoption act 1976 and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. 'Child Arrangements Orders' is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 S.8 setting the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live. Children 'looked after' immediately before the order is made qualify in this category. 'Special Guardianship Order' is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 S.14A which defines it as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s).

³ 'Certificate of Catholic Practice' means a certificate issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of a child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests. See www.rcdow.org.uk/schools/admissions

⁴ Includes baptised Catholic children without a Certificate of Catholic Practice.

⁵ "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 CYTŪN 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.

Priorities

Should there be an oversubscription of children within a criterion listed above, the Governors will first allocate places in the following order:

- a. To an application, where compelling evidence is provided at the time of application, from an appropriate professional such as a doctor, priest or social worker, of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child, which can only be met at this school.

- b. Then to a sibling who will have a brother or sister⁶ on the school roll at the time of admission or who is in the current Year 11 cohort at the time of applying.
- c. Then to those children attending our neighbouring school, St Josephs Catholic Primary School, Cadogan Street, Chelsea, SW3 2QT.
- d. Then to children whose parent is employed by St Thomas More Language College for two or more years at the time of application.
- e. Then to those pupils living nearest the school as measured by an electronic routeing method administered by Hopewiser Limited which measures distance 'as the crow flies' from each individual property from the main entrance of the College. Should the distance be exactly the same applicants will be placed in order by means of a lottery which will take place in front of an independent witness – all applicants with matching distances are randomly selected via a tombola method and numbered in order of selection, the first applicant to be selected will precede the other applicant(s) with the same distance. A child is deemed to be resident at a particular address when he/she resides there for 50% or more of the school week.

⁶ Siblings include half, step and adopted brothers and sisters.

Applications from twins or multiple births.

If the offer of places result in the admission of one pupil of a multiple birth/twin and not others, the Governors reserve the right to offer places to all pupils of the same multiple birth/twin.

Pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC).

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with this school named in their Education, Health and Care Plan will be admitted, details of the procedure are set out in the DfE Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The parents of children with an EHC have access to a separate appeal mechanism (the SEND Tribunal) and not to the independent Appeal Panel established by the College's Governing Body.

Application Procedures and Timetable.

How places were offered last year (figures will include pupils with an EHC Plan).

Applications received: 600	Places offered: 120
Appeals Lodged: TBA	Successful Appeals: TBA

Timetable

Closing date for applications: 31st October 2020

Banding Test: **(TBC)**

Offers of place posted: 1st March 2021 by the Home Borough

Application Form

To apply for a place at this school you should complete and return two separate forms by Saturday 31st October 2020. In order to make a full application you should complete the school's Supplementary Information Form (SIF) attached to this policy and return it to the Governors' Admissions Panel via the school office, together with all other relevant paperwork required for your application. You must also complete a Common Application Form (CAF) from your Local Education and return it to them. If you do not complete both the CAF and SIF and return them by the closing date, the governing body may be unable to consider your application fully against the oversubscription criteria and it is very unlikely that your child will get a place at the school.

Certificate of Catholic Practice

Certificate of Catholic Practice means a certificate given by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family practises) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Waiting Lists

Where an applicant is unsuccessful, parents/guardians may ask, in writing, for the child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be updated each term as and when vacancies occur and/or parents who have not previously made an application to the school submit an application. Length of time on the waiting list will not influence a child's chance of gaining a place. All applications on the waiting list, including late applications, will be judged against admission criteria as vacancies occur. Parents whose applications are unsuccessful are entitled, under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 to appeal against the governing body's decision.

When a vacancy arises the school will allocate the place according to the oversubscription criteria and according to the band in which the vacancy has arisen.

Admission Appeals

An independent admission appeals panel will be established to hear appeals concerning non admission to the school in accordance with the provisions of the 'Admission Appeals Code'. Parents/Guardians will be sent information regarding their right to appeal.

In-Year Admissions

Applications for In-Year Admissions must be made via the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. If a place is available and there is no waiting list then the local authority will communicate the governors' offer of a place to the family. If more applications are received than there are places available then applications will be ranked by the governing body in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. If a place cannot be offered at the time then you may ask us for the reasons and you will be informed of your right of appeal. You will be offered the opportunity of being placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained by the governing body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order which the applications are received. The waiting list is open to applicants all through the academic year. Names are removed from the list at the end of each academic year. When a place becomes available the governing body will re-rank the list so that the LA can inform the parent that the school is making an offer.

Fair Access Protocols

The school is committed to taking its fair share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admissions round the governing body is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under a local protocol that has been agreed by both the Diocese and the governing body for the current school year. The governing body has this power even when the child would mean exceeding the published admission number.

Children Educated Outside Their Chronological Age Group

Any application for a child to be educated out of his/her age group will be considered by Governors on an individual basis and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents should write to the Chair of Governors during the Autumn Term in the (academic) year of application, giving reasons and providing compelling professional evidence.