

# Our Lady & St John Catholic College

## Admissions Policy 2017-2018

Our Lady & St. John is a Catholic College provided by the Diocese of Salford and maintained by Blackburn with Darwen Local Education Authority as a Voluntary Aided School. The school's Governing Body is the Admission Authority and is responsible for taking decisions on applications for admission. For the school year commencing September 2017 the Governing Body has set its planned admissions number at 130.

The governors recognise that the first responsibility of the school is to serve the Roman Catholic community for which it has been established. This is focused on designated parish communities and the Roman Catholic primary schools that are partners in providing for those communities. In establishing their over-subscription criteria the governors have taken full account of the Code of Practice produced by the Department for Education. This is reflected in the emphasis placed on supporting looked after children.

### **The Associated Roman Catholic Primary Schools are:-**

- Holy Souls
- Our Lady of Perpetual Succour
- St Alban's
- St Anne's
- St Antony's
- St Mary & St Joseph's

### **The designated parish communities served by the schools are:-**

- Holy Family, Blackburn
- St Alban and Good Shepherd, Blackburn
- Holy Souls, Blackburn
- Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Blackburn
- Part of Sacred Heart (formerly St Anne's Parish)

Applications for admission to the school for September 2017 should be made on the common application form enclosed with the Local Authority's brochure or on-line. Your application must be submitted by the national closing date (31<sup>st</sup> October). After the closing date the admission committee will allocate places.

Children with either an Education, Health and Care Plan, a statement of Special Educational Needs or an IPRA (see note 1), naming Our Lady & St John will be given priority over all other applicants.

Where the school receives more applications than there are places available, after admitting children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a statement of Special Educational Needs or an IPRA naming Our Lady & St John, the Governing Body will admit children in accordance with the criteria set out in priority order below, i.e. all category (a) children first, then category (b) and so on:-

- a) Baptised Roman Catholic pupils who are “looked after children” or “previously looked after children” (see note 2)
- b) Baptised Roman Catholic pupils attending an associated Roman Catholic Primary School (see list above)
- c) Baptised Roman Catholic pupils who are resident in a designated parish (see list above) and would have a sibling attending the school at the time the admission would take effect (see notes 3 and 4)
- d) Baptised Roman Catholic pupils who are resident in a designated parish (see list above and note 3)
- e) Baptised Roman Catholic pupils who would have a sibling attending the school at the time the admission would take effect (see note 4)
- f) Other Baptised Roman Catholic children
- g) Non Roman Catholic pupils who are “looked after children” or “previously looked after children” (see note 2)
- h) Non Roman Catholic pupils attending an associated Roman Catholic Primary School (see list above)
- i) Non Roman Catholic pupils who would have a sibling attending the school at the time the admission would take effect (see note 4)
- j) Children with proven and exceptional medical/social needs where these needs can only be met at this school (see note 5)
- k) Other children.

### **PLACE OF RESIDENCE:**

Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the child’s “permanent place of residence” will be determined as the address of the parent who normally has responsibility for the majority of school days in a week. Where the parents live at different addresses and there is shared parenting, the address used will normally be the one where the child wakes up for the majority of Monday to Friday mornings. If there is any doubt about this, then the address of the Child Benefit recipient will be used then the address at which the child is registered with their GP will be used.

### **TIE-BREAKER:**

Where there are more applicants for the available places within a category, then the distance between address points for the school and the home measured in a straight line will be used as the final determining factor, nearer addresses having priority over more distant ones. This address point is within the body of the property and usually located at its centre. Where the cut-off point is for addresses within the same building, then the single measure between address points will apply and the Local Authority’s system of a random draw will determine which address(es) receive the offer(s). The draw will take place at the Local Authority’s offices, and the names will be drawn by a local authority officer who is independent of the admissions process.

### **Priority for Twins/Multiple births**

If an application has been made for places for twins/ triplets/2 or more siblings in the same year group and insufficient places are left within the published admission number (i.e. one of the siblings is the last child who can be admitted within that number) it may be possible for the Admission Authority to offer places to the other sibling(s) in the birth group.

If you wish to be considered for admission under (a) to (f) a copy of the relevant Baptismal Certificate must be produced at the time of application.

## NOTES

Note 1 - The term "IPRA" means an 'individual pupil resourcing agreement'.

Note 2 - 'Looked after' means that the child was (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions.

'Previously Looked after' children are children who were previously 'looked after' but immediately after being 'looked after' were adopted or became subject to a residence/child arrangement order, or a special guardianship order.

Note 3 – A map showing the boundaries of the designated parishes can be inspected in school (and copies are available on request).

Note 4 - Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address.

Note 5 - If you feel that there are exceptional medical/social needs relating to your child which support the need for your child to attend Our Lady & St John, and wish your application to be considered under criterion (j) you must state this on your application form AND provide appropriate written supporting evidence for your application from a doctor, social worker or other professional. This evidence must explain why the preferred school is the most suitable and what difficulties would be caused if the child had to attend another school.

This evidence should accompany the application form. If necessary, parents can submit the application form and send the supporting evidence at a later date but the supporting evidence **MUST** be received by the Local Authority on or before the closing date for applications. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the Local Authority receives the supporting evidence.

If you do not provide the supporting evidence on or before the closing date, then it will not be possible to consider your application under the medical/social criterion.

Please bear in mind the following points in relation to this criterion:

1. Only *exceptional* reasons associated with the child and directly relevant to the suitability of Our Lady & St John (i.e. showing why the child needs to be admitted to this particular school) are normally accepted under this criterion.
2. All schools can make provision for special educational needs and can also manage common conditions – e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy.

After the closing date, during the early stages of the allocations process, all applications which have requested consideration on the grounds of medical/social needs are considered separately by a panel from the Admission Authority. This involves considering all statements and evidence provided by parents to support the application. The panel may, at their own discretion, contact parents/carers and third parties (with parental consent) to request further information where this is needed to reach a decision.

The Panel's focus in assessing each claim for consideration under this criterion will be to assess whether the evidence provided (a) actually confirms that this child has an exceptional medical/social need AND (b) demonstrates a clear and exceptional

need for this child to attend this specific school for reasons arising from the exceptional medical/social need.

Where the reasons claimed are not considered exceptional or do not disclose an exceptional need for the child to attend Our Lady & St John, then the application will be dealt with under the other admission criteria.

## **LATE APPLICATIONS**

Applications that are received late, but with good reason and before the published 'cut off' date, will be considered alongside the on-time applications. Applications that are late without good reason and applications received after the published 'cut off' date will only be considered after all the on-time applications have been considered and allocated places.

## **NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS**

Letters informing parents of whether or not their child has been allocated a place at Our Lady & St John will be sent out by the Local Authority in March 2017. Parents of children not admitted will be informed of the reason and offered an alternative school place by the Local Authority.

The Governing Body reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a school place where false evidence is received in relation to baptism, sibling connections or place of residence.

## **WAITING LIST**

Children who are not admitted will have their name placed on the waiting list. The names on this waiting list will be in the order resulting from the application of the admissions criteria. Since the date of application cannot be a criterion for the order of names on the waiting list, late applicants for the school will be slotted into the waiting list according to the extent to which they meet the criteria. Thus it is possible that a child who moves into the area later may have a higher priority than one who has been on the waiting list for some time. If a place becomes available within the admission number, the child whose name is at the top of the list will be offered a place. This is not dependent on whether an appeal has been submitted. Please note that looked after children, previously looked after children and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair access protocol must take precedence over those on the waiting list.

The Waiting List will operate until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017. Should the parent/guardian wish the child to remain on the waiting list beyond this date, they must notify the school.

## **APPEALS**

Where the Governors are unable to offer a place because the school is over subscribed, parents have the right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel, set up under the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998 (as amended). Appeal forms are available from the school office. Appeal forms should be completed and returned to the school within 20 days of receiving the letter refusing a place.

## **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents/carer(s) may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if a child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health

### **Children who are already of secondary school age**

Parent(s)/carer(s) must submit their written request for admission out of the normal age group to the Governing Body. If their request is agreed and a place is available in the requested year group, the child will be admitted.

### **Children who wish to seek admission to Year 7 outside their normal age group (i.e. who are currently placed in a lower year group).**

Parent(s)/carer(s) will need to submit a normal Common Application Form (CAF) to the Local Authority (in writing or online) for admission into the normal age group at the same time as they submit a written request to the Governing Body for their child to be admitted out of the normal age group.

**Please note:** This Governing Body will not honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parent(s)/carer(s), therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference school.

The Governing Body will make a decision on the request before the Secondary national offer date if at all possible.

If the request is agreed, the parent(s)/carer(s) must make a new application for the next main admission round the following year, and their current application for the normal age group should be withdrawn before a place is offered.

If their request for admission outside the normal age group is refused, parent(s)/carer(s) must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group that they receive from the Local Authority, or to refuse it and make a further in-year application to the Governing Body for their child to be admitted outside their normal age group when they leave the current primary school.

### **Making the decision**

Parent(s)/carer(s) seeking admission of their child outside their normal age group must send their written request to the Governing Body. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/ carer(s) to provide the Governing Body with all relevant information relating to this request, including the parent(s)/carer(s) views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; medical history and views of a medical professional (where relevant); whether the child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely; and whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group.

The Governing Body is required to take into account the views of the Head Teacher on the application as well as the information from the parent(s)/carer(s). The Governing Body will make their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each individual case, and in the best interests of the child concerned.

The Governing Body will then inform the parent/carer of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to and will provide the reasons for their decision.

Parent(s)/carer(s) have a statutory right to appeal to an independent admission appeal panel against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. As the purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, the right of appeal does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred year group. However, they may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside their normal age group.