



ST MARY'S CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL, SAFFRON WALDEN

Our motto is: 'Let your light shine... as you grow', (inspired by Matthew 5: 15-16)

Our vision is: 'We nurture our pupils to be the best they can be in every way - in an inclusive and supportive environment, rooted in Christian teachings.'

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-26

The published admission number for Reception each year is 30 and the total capacity of the school is 210. We provide a full-time place for children from the September following their fourth birthday. This means that children born on and between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021 will normally be admitted into Reception in the academic year beginning September 2024 (during which they will become 5 years of age). All children will normally be admitted through a phased entry during September 2025. Children are admitted without reference to ability or aptitude. For delayed entry into reception please see below.

All schools are required to give priority to children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) where the school is named and looked after children and previously looked after children (*2). During the Summer term of 2025, parents and children will be invited to the school to discuss admission arrangements and begin settling in.

Application Procedures

The Local Authority (LA) co-ordinates admissions arrangements for all primary schools within Essex. (Parents of three or four year old children will receive a notification regarding applications directly from the LA in November 2024). Applications are encouraged to be made online and parents can apply for up to four schools in ranked preference order. For full details see www.essex.gov.uk/admissions. The LA (Essex) administers the allocation of places for Reception children and written offers of places will be issued by them in the Spring Term 2025.

A Supplementary Information Form (SIF) also needs to be completed where an application is made using the over-subscription criterion 2 and 7, (see below).

It is essential that parents wishing their children to attend St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School, should register their preferences at the earliest opportunity and by the published closing date. Parents submitting late applications should be aware that their application will be considered after all 'on time' applications have been considered and the initial allocation of places has been made.

Applications for delayed entry into Reception year

Where a child is offered a place in Reception at the school before they are of compulsory school age, parents have the option of deferring their child's entry until later in the school year or requesting that their child attends part-time until compulsory school age is reached (the start of the term following their fifth birthday). In these circumstances, Parents still need to apply at the usual time for a school place and, following agreement with the School, the place for that child will be held open and not offered to another child.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request a place for their child outside of their normal age group. For example, parents/carers of Summer born children (1 April – 31 August) may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request instead that the child is admitted into Reception rather than Year 1.

A request for a place outside of normal age group should be made to the Governing Body's Chair of Admissions Committee, providing reasons for the request with supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family. The decision is made by the Admissions Committee on a case by case basis considering the best interests of the child. The request should be made in the September prior to the normal entry in the following September, (but no later than October 1st), to give sufficient time for the case to be considered by the Admissions Committee prior to the normal application process deadline.

If the request is agreed, the application for a place in the next cohort would have to be made in the following September and would be considered along with all the other applicants for admission in that year in line with the relevant admission criteria. There would be no guarantee that a place would be available.

If the request is refused, parents could still apply for admission to reception to the child's normal age group by the usual closing date. Parents who are refused a place for which they have applied have the right of appeal to an independent admission panel who will examine if the admission criteria have been properly applied. Parents do not have this right of appeal if they have been offered a place and it is not in the year group they would like. (*1).

Applications for school places outside the normal admission round

Since the publication of the Admissions code 2021, strict timescales have been imposed and in compliance the method of application has been changed. For full details please refer to item (*6) in the supplementary notes for further detail or use the hyper-link below.

Admission Arrangements - St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

<https://www.stmaryssw.org.uk/>

Over-subscription Criteria

Where applications expressing a preference for St Mary's CE (A) Primary School exceed the number of places available, the order of priority for admission to the school will be as follows:

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children, (*2). Any child for whom the school is named in a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan. (*2)
2. Children of parents who are at the heart of the Anglican churches in the parochial area of the Saffron Walden team ministry and who are not resident within the catchment area of another aided school. Parents are regular worshippers attending Sunday services at least once a month and/or are involved in weekday worship (up to 20% of places are available for this category) (*3).
3. Children who have siblings (*5) in any year group of the school except the final year at the time of application;
4. Children residing in the catchment area;(*4)
5. Children of staff directly employed by the school where the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
6. Those who would benefit from attendance at this school in exceptional medical circumstances based on evidence as defined in the County admission arrangements.
7. Children of parents who are members of other faiths but who express a desire for a church school education (*3);
8. Any other applicants.

In the event of oversubscription, within any of the above criteria, priority will be determined by straight line distance (calculated electronically by the LA) from home to school with those living closest being given the highest priority. Random allocation will be used as a tie-break to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the school is the same. This process will be independently verified.

Applications from parents with shared responsibility:

Parents must nominate one address for the child's domicile. Only one application can be made on behalf of the child to the local authority. For further information please refer to: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions> (Primary School places, Primary School admission booklet, Shared parental responsibility).

Withdrawal of offer of placement:

The school reserves the right to withdraw an offer of placement when:

1. The offer has been made in error.
2. The placement was obtained through fraudulent or an intentionally misleading application.
3. Where the parent or guardian has failed to respond to an offer of placement and has subsequently failed to respond to further communication from the school and has exceeded a specified date set by the school.

Other Information

A map of the catchment area is available for inspection at the school office and on our website www.stmaryssw.org.uk . (*4)

For consideration under criterion 2 and 7 a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) must be completed (see note 3).

Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a place on a waiting list which will be maintained for the remainder of the academic year of entry. In such circumstances, parents have the right to appeal against the Admission Committee's application of the admission criteria. Details of the appeal procedure and who to contact will be included in the refusal letter.

Policy ratified by Full Governing Body in November 2023

Please note: this policy is reviewed annually in November by the St Mary's Admissions Committee and ratified in the Full Governing Body meeting in November of each year. When changes are made, this policy will be shared with the Diocese of Chelmsford, before it is formally published.