

ST. HELEN'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL



Admissions Policy 2026-27

Written by	Date	Ratified by	Date
A. McAuliffe	2020	Governors	2020

To be reviewed	Annually	Every 3 Years
Reviewed on	Reviewed by	Next review date
October 2023	A. McAuliffe	October 2024
October 2024	A. McAuliffe	October 2025

With Jesus alive in our hearts, we celebrate each other and learn together as a family.



St. Helen's Catholic Infant School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its governing body as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and instrument of government, and seeks at all times to be a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At 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. We therefore hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school. This does not affect the right of an applicant who is not Catholic to apply for and be admitted to a place at the school in accordance with the admission arrangements.

The governing body is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements.

Number to Admit

The governing body has set its admission number at **60** pupils to EYFS in the school year which begins in September, 2026. Pupils whose 5th birthday falls between 1st September 2026 and 31st August 2027 (i.e. children born between 1st September 2021 and 31st August 2022) will be admitted, full time, at the beginning of the Autumn Term following a short induction period.

The governing body will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's Published Admissions Number ("PAN").

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (see Note 1)

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school must be admitted. Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other children.

Over Subscription Criteria

Where the number of applications for admission **exceeds** the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in order of priority set out below:

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children. Highest priority **is** given to looked after children, Previously Looked after Children **and** those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. (see Notes 2&3)
2. Catholic children who are resident in the parishes of Brentwood – Cathedral Church of St. Mary & St. Helen with Holy Cross and All Saints, Ingatestone – St. John the Evangelist & St. Erconwold and Ongar – St. Helen Ongar and St. Margaret of Scotland Doddington. (see Notes 3&12)
3. Other Catholic children from other Parishes.(see Notes 3&12)
4. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see Note 2)
5. Catechumens and members of the Eastern Christian Churches.(see Notes 5&6)
6. Children who have a brother or sister attending at St. Helen's Catholic Infant or Junior School Academy at the **time of admission** and who do not fit into any of the categories above. (see Note 7)
7. Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of their religion. (see Note 8)
8. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader of their faith. (see Note 9)
9. Any other children.

Within each category, the following criteria in the order given below will be used to determine priority

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- i. Those who have a brother or sister at St. Helen's Catholic Infant or Junior School Academy at the **time of admission**. A sibling is defined as a brother, sister, stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address. Biological siblings will be treated as siblings irrespective of place of residence. (see Note 7)

Tie Break

In the event of over-subscription within any of the above criteria, priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distances are based on straight-line distance as supplied by the Local Authority from home to school, those living closest given higher priority. Please refer to the 'Distance tie Breaker' published in the Primary Education in Essex booklet. In the event of distances being the same for two or more children where this would determine the last place to be allocated, random allocation will be carried out and supervised by a person independent of the school. All the names will be entered into a hat and the required number of names will be drawn out.

Application Procedures and Timetable

All applications for a place at this school should be made to the local authority in which you live. For the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live. The school also requires a Supplementary Information (S.I.F) to be completed in order to rank the application with the published criteria. This S.I.F should be returned to the Head Teacher, St. Helen's Catholic Infant School, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 9BY by **15th January 2026**.

All applications will be handled in accordance with the co-ordinated admissions scheme published by Essex County Council in the Primary Education in Essex booklet.

Applications must be made by the National Closing Date detailed in the Primary Education in Essex booklet which is available from the LA.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 16th April or the next working day, by the local authority on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

If you do not provide the information required in the SIF and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child may not be placed in the appropriate faith category and this is likely to affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 15th January 2026.

Late Applications

Late applications will be dealt with as detailed in this booklet for children resident in Essex. Children resident outside of Essex should refer to the process for handling late applications published by their home LA.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1st April and 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of their

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normal age group, to reception rather than year 1.

Any such request should be made in writing to: Head Teacher, St. Helen's Catholic Infant School, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 9BY at the same time as the admission application is made. The governing body will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher, including the head teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the governing body will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and **not** in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. The waiting list will be maintained by the Local Authority until the end of the first week of term following the Admissions round. The governing body will then exercise their right to take over the waiting list after this date and will maintain it on an ongoing basis.

Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

In-Year Applications

An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the admission round and this application must be made to the local authority in which you live. Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied. If there are no places available, the parent can choose to have the child added to the waiting list (see above).

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing within 10 school days, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. The Local authority will inform parents/carers of the outcome of their in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

Fair Access Protocol

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 admission round the governing body is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The governing body has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number (subject to the infant class size exceptions).

The governing body reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where the child is already attending the school the place itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or the place was obtained by deception.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. A Statement of Special Educational Needs is a statement made by the local authority under section 324 of the Education Act 1996, specifying the special educational provision for a child. 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 application to the school.
- 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.
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 who is part of a Catholic family where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised or received if it were not for their status as a looked after child (e.g. a looked after child in the process of adoption by a Catholic family).

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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.

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. 'brother or sister' includes:
 - (i) all natural brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters, adopted brothers and 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 address as the applicant.
7. "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 creedal 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.

8. "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 8 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.

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 governing body 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 for 2026-2027.

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