



# ADMISSIONS POLICY 2026-2027

PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOLS  
LUTON & CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE AREA

APPROVED BY: LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE    LAST CONSULTED ON: NOV-DEC 2024

DATE: JANUARY 2025

NEXT CONSULTATION DATE (unless required earlier): OCT 2031

St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. This Admission Policy applies to the following schools within:

## Central Bedfordshire:

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery
- St Vincent's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

## Luton:

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
- St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School
- St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will 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 articles of association and seeks, at all times, to be a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Catholic schools, 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 admissions authority for the school is the Board of Directors of the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust who has responsibility for admissions to this school. The Board of Directors has delegated responsibility for the administration of the admissions process to the Local Academy Committee of the relevant school.

The admissions process for the above listed schools is part of the Local Authority co-ordinated admissions scheme. To apply for a place at any of the above listed schools in the normal admissions round, an application must be made using the school admission application process of the local authority in which you live naming the school on the application form. Applications need to be made by 15 January 2026. A Supplementary Admission Form must also be completed and returned directly to the school by the same date.

The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round<sup>1</sup>. The relevant Local Academy Committees have set admission numbers for pupils to be admitted to the reception year and nursery in the school year beginning September 2026 as follows:

<sup>1</sup> This is for admission to the school at the start of the school year in September and not for applications made in-year

School	Admission Numbers
	Primary School
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School	60
St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School	60
St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School	60
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	30
St Vincent's Catholic Primary School	30

The relevant Local Academy Committee 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.

#### **Oversubscription Criteria**

*Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority. Where reference is made to "relevant parish(es)", this is the parish that the school resides in.*

1. Looked after and previously looked after children, including those who have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (see note 2).
2. Catholic children who are resident in the relevant parish(es) for whom the school is the nearest Catholic school (see notes 3 & 7) and who have a sibling (see note 4) attending the school at the time of admission.
3. Catholic children who are resident in the relevant parish(es) for whom the school is the nearest Catholic school (see notes 3 & 7).
4. Other Catholic children (see note 3).
5. Children of school staff (see notes 5 and 10).
6. Baptised or dedicated children of other Christian denomination whose parents wish them to have a Catholic education and whose application is supported by a Minister.
7. Children from other faiths whose parents wish them to have a Catholic education and whose application is supported by a religious leader
8. Any other children.

*Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.*

- (i) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social or, medical need of the child which can most appropriately be met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made (see note 6).
- (ii) The attendance of a brother or sister at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above (see note 4).

- (iii) Other pupils within the category who do not fit into provision (i) and (ii) outlined above.

### **Tie Break**

Priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distances are calculated on the basis of a straight-line measurement between the front door of the child's home address (including the community entrance to flats) and the main entrance of the school using the local authority's computerised measuring system. 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**

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round<sup>2</sup>, you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live. You are also requested to complete the Supplementary Admission Form attached to this policy if you wish to apply under oversubscription criteria 2 to 4 and 6. The Supplementary Admission Form should be returned to the relevant school by 15 January 2026.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 16<sup>th</sup> 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. Parents can lodge an appeal by writing to the Clerk to the Governors of the school to which you are applying.

*If you do not provide the information required in the Supplementary Admission Form and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child will not be placed in criteria 2 to 4, 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 15 January 2026.

### **Late Applications**

Late applications will be administered in accordance with your home Local Authority Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. You are encouraged to ensure that your application is received on time.

### **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.

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<sup>2</sup> This is for admission to the school at the start of the school year in September and not for applications made in-year.

### 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 1 April and 31 August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to reception rather than Year 1.

Any such request should be made in writing to the Chair of the Local Academy Committee of the relevant school at the same time as the admission application is made. The Local Academy Committee 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 Local Academy Committee 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. Waiting lists for admission will operate throughout the school year.

Reception: The waiting list will be held open until July 2027. Parents will need to reapply for a place at their preferred school after this date if they wish their child's name to be carried forward on the waiting list.

Year 1 to 6: Unsuccessful applications received from the start of the autumn term 2026 until the end of the spring term 2027 will be placed on a waiting list until 31 July 2027. Applications received from the start of the summer term 2027 to the end of the academic year will be placed on a waiting list until 31 July 2028.

**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 the child will be admitted where there are available places. Application should be made directly to the school.

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 child will be 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.

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

## Nursery

Nursery places are allocated by the school and applications for admissions should be made directly to the school.

**Central Bedfordshire schools:** Places are offered on a first come, first served basis for admission the following September. If spaces are available, there will be further admission in January and April.

**Luton schools:** Places are offered on a first come, first served basis and parents can apply from the first school day of the Autumn Term for the following September.

Attendance at the school's nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered at the school and an application form must be submitted for transfer from nursery to primary school.

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



**Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)**

1. 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 arrangement order or special guardianship order.

Both categories include those children who have been in state care outside of England.

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 living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

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 (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).

4. 'brother or sister' includes:
  - (i) All natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or 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 home address as the child who is the subject of the application.
5. 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.
6. To demonstrate an exceptional social or medical need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the governing body will require a letter from a Doctor (medical need) or Director of Children Services (social need) in the relevant Local Authority, specifying why the school is the only reasonable alternative for the child and the reasons why other schools in the catchment area for the child are not appropriate.
7. For the purposes of this policy, the relevant parishes are:
  - Central Bedfordshire: St Vincent's, Our Lady of Czestochowa, St Mary's
  - Luton: St Martin de Porres, Hockwell Ring, St Margaret of Scotland, Our Lady Help of Christians, Holy Ghost, Sacred Heart, St Joseph's
8. A child's "home address" refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form ("CAF"). Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the CAF, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.
9. In the case of UK service personnel and crown servants returning to England, a place can be allocated in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declare a relocation date. The address at which the child will live will be applied as long as the parents provide evidence of their intended address. This address will also be used in the case of applying the over-subscription criteria and tie break. Further, a parent may request a Unit or quartering address

is used as the child's home address when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria.

10. Where the applicant's parent or carer is a member of staff employed on a permanent contract by the schools for at least 2 years prior to the point of application or is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.



**Supplementary Admission Form for Primary & Nursery Schools within the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust. Once the application form is complete, it must be handed directly to the school reception who will provide confirmation of receipt.**

<b>Child's full name</b>			
<b>Full Address</b>			
<b>Home phone number</b>			
<b>Mobile number</b>			
<b>Date of Birth</b>		<b>Gender</b>	Male/Female
<b>Religion</b> (Catholic applicants must provide the child's original Baptismal Certificate to be photocopied)			
<b>Catholic</b>	Yes/No	<b>Parish of:</b>	
If you are not a Catholic please provide the name, address and telephone number of a Minister of Religion who knows you and your child and will support your application. (Please inform your minister that you have given his/her name for this purpose).			
Details of Minister of Religion:			
<b>Other Christian</b>	Details...		
<b>Other Non-Christian</b>	Details...		
<b>Baptism details</b>	Date and address of Parish/Church		
<b>Details of siblings already attending school</b>	Name:	Name:	Name:
	Class:	Class:	Class:
<b>Details of parent/carer 1</b>	Name:	Address:	
		Phone number:	
<b>Details of parent/carer 2</b>	Name:	Address:	
		Phone number:	