

ST ALBERT THE GREAT SCHOOL

POLICY FOR ADMISSIONS 2017 - 2018

The Governing Body has sole responsibility for admissions to St Albert the Great Catholic School and intends to admit 30 children at the beginning of each academic year. This is the published admission number for the school.

Applications are invited for September 2017 for children who will attain 3 years of age between 01/09/2016 and 31/08/2017. 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 is fully supported by all families in the school. All families are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

For several years the school has been fully subscribed and has received applications which exceed the number of places available. Whenever there are more applications than places available, the following over-subscription criteria will apply:

Over-Subscription Criteria for Admission

1. Catholic¹ looked after² children and Catholic children previously looked-after who have been adopted³ or made subject to child arrangements orders⁴ or special guardianship orders.⁵
2. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice⁶ who will have a sibling⁷ at St Albert the Great School at the time of admission.
3. Other Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice who are resident within our parishes – Our Lady Queen of All Creation, The Church of the Resurrection and St Mary and St Joseph.
4. Baptised Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice who are not resident within the local serving parishes.
5. Other baptised Catholic children.
6. Other looked-after or previously looked-after children who have been adopted or made subject to child arrangements or special guardianship orders.
7. Other children with siblings at the school
8. Children of Catechumens⁸
9. Members of other Eastern Christian Churches⁹
10. Practising Christians,¹⁰ whose application is supported by a letter from their minister confirming membership of the faith community.
11. Any other applicant.

1 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 for a child by a certificate of baptism in a Catholic church or a certificate of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

2 Looked after child has the same meaning as in s.22 of the Children Act 1989, and means any child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them (eg children with foster parents at the time of making an application to the school).

3 Adopted means those children who, following being looked after, have been adopted and whose parents can give proof of this status.

4 A child arrangements order is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.8 settling 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.

5 A 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).

6 '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 Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. The CCP is available from the school or from the Diocese at www.rcdow.org

7 A Sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner, a child looked after or previously looked after and in every case living permanently in a

placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application. A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement. A sibling relationship does not apply when the older child(ren) will leave before the younger one starts.

8 Catechumen means a child who is a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens.

9 Eastern Christian Church includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally be evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.

10 Christian is a member of a Church which belongs to 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.'

Within each of the over-subscription categories, priority will be given, in the following order, to children who are:

children of staff (teaching and non-teaching, who have worked at St Albert the Great School for at least two years at the time of application), who live at the same home address as that member of staff.

Tie Break

In the event of these criteria not being able to distinguish between applicants, then the applicant living closer/closest to school will have priority. The home to school distance will be measured from the premium address point of the child's home to the address point of the school, using Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system. In the event that two equidistant applicants are applying for the one remaining place, a random allocation (lottery) will be made in the presence of an independent witness. The child's home is defined as where the child spends more than 50% of the week.

If application is made for twins/triplets/siblings in the same academic year, and one child is offered a place, the governors will admit the twin/siblings.

The governors will give top priority within a category to children with exceptional needs, where:

- i) the needs are presented at the time of application in the form of compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional such as a social worker, doctor or priest.
- ii) the needs of the child can only be met at this school as opposed to any other.

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Parents of children with an EHC Plan should contact their local authority SEN department. Children with this school named in their EHC Plan will be admitted.

The governors will maintain a continuing interest list for admissions, which will be ranked only when places become available in the school. Ranking will be in accordance with the published admissions criteria. Children will be kept on the continuing interest list until such time as their age makes them no longer eligible for admission, or parents request withdrawal from the list.

Admissions Procedure

Parents should complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF), which is returned to St. Albert the Great School, and an online e-admissions form from the local authority area in which they live. Applicants may also ask their local authority for a paper form if they wish. The SIF is available from the school website (www.albertthegreat.herts.sch.uk) or by post from the school at the request of the parents. The date for return of the SIF is specified below and is the same as the closing date for the local authority form. Parents should complete the SIF and the e-admissions form by the specified date. If a SIF is not completed,

the Governing Body will apply their admission arrangements using the information submitted on the e-admissions form only, which may result in the application being given a lower priority.

A Baptismal Certificate will be required to accompany all applications by Catholics.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE

Applicants applying under criteria [2.3 and 4] must submit a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) by the closing date. This form (which used to be called a priest's reference form) is available from the school or from the diocesan website at www.rcdow.org.uk. Parents should fill in the top part of the form with their details and then take the form to their parish priest (or the priest at the parish where they normally worship) for signature. It is the parent's duty to ensure that the CCP is submitted to the school in good time. The priest will only sign this form if he knows you and agrees that you are a practising Catholic family. You will need to get a form signed for each Catholic school you are applying to which has a 'practising Catholic' criterion.

The Admissions Committee of the Governing Body will meet in the Spring Term to consider applications for the following September. Successful applicants will be invited to spend an afternoon in school during the latter part of the Summer Term, prior to admission.

Late Applications

Applications arriving after the closing date of 15th January 2017 will be dealt with after all initial offers have been made.

In-Year Admissions

Applications for In-Year admissions are made directly to the school. Where there is no waiting list the local authority will be notified and the child admitted. 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 this time then a request can be made for the reasons and information will be given of the right of appeal. The opportunity of being placed on a waiting list will be made. This waiting list will be maintained by the Governing Body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which the applications are received. When a place becomes available the Governing Body will rank the list according to the criteria and make 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 any 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 admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number. Children admitted under HCC's Fair Access Protocol will be prioritised before children on a continuing interest list.

Appeals Procedure

All unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal to an independent panel for a place to be made available for their child. Hertfordshire parents wishing to appeal, who applied online, should log onto their online school application and click on the link 'register an appeal'. If the application was not made using Hertfordshire's online application system, parents should contact the Customer Service Centre (0300 123 4043) to request an appeal pack.

For In-Year applications, parents should contact the school directly in the first instance.

IMPORTANT! Please note that:

Home is the child's permanent place of residence. It is not the child-minder's or a relative's address.

DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application form.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

Applicants should note that where an address contained within an application qualifies it for admission, then that address will be verified. To enable the Board of Governors to verify addresses, all applicants should provide any two of the following three documents:

- a bank or building society statement which shows the address at which the child is resident;
- a utility bill (for instance electricity, gas, Television License, telephone) which shows the address at which the child is resident;
- the child's Medical Card.

This is in addition to the standard requirement to provide a Birth Certificate in order to verify the age of a child.

ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MUST BE ORIGINAL AND NOT FACSIMILES OR PHOTOCOPIES.

Original documents will be returned and a photocopy held to the end of the admissions process. Applicants preferring not to put verifying documents in the post or seeking alternative verifying arrangements should contact the school to agree alternative verification arrangements. All photocopied documents will be returned or shredded at the end of the allocation procedure.

In the event of fraudulent information being presented in an application, the Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place.

Timetable for Admissions for September 2017

Closing date for nursery of the e-admissions Form (County) and the Supplementary Information Form (School) is 17th March 2017. Nursery offers will be available online from 25th April 2017.