

MODEL POLICY

DIOCESE OF CLIFTON

St Agatha's Catholic Primary School, Bristol Admissions Policy 2006/2007

1. St Agatha's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school, which was established by the Church to serve the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine. The governing body, acting in accordance with the Code of Practice and the Clifton Diocesan Policy Statement, is responsible for the admission of pupils.
2. The Indicated Admission Number (IAN) for the Reception Year (2006/07) is 30 pupils. Pupils are normally admitted in the September of the school year in which they reach their fifth birthday. However they are not required to attend school until the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday and so in appropriate cases admission may be deferred until the beginning of the Spring and Summer Terms. If parents wish a deferment they should indicate so when accepting the offer of a place.
3. Applications for a place at the school should be made on LEA's common admissions form and sent to Schools Admissions Department, (*address*), by (commonly agreed date for LEA). LEA will then send details of those children whose parents have expressed a preference for St Agatha's to the Clerk to Governors at the school. The Governing Body will then seek the additional information necessary to apply the oversubscription criteria listed under section 5 of this policy. In the event of oversubscription, the Governing Body will apply its criteria to the applicants and notify the LEA of its decisions. LEA will then notify parents on behalf of the governors of St Agatha's the end of the Spring Term 2006 (or locally agreed date).
4. A waiting list of unsuccessful applicants will be held until 30 June 2005 and then discarded. If places become available before then offers will be made in accordance with the order of priority in paragraph 5 below.
5. In the event of oversubscription (i.e. more applications than available places) places will be offered in accordance with the following order of priority.
 - 5.1 Looked After Children who are baptised Catholics.
 - 5.2 Catholic children who live in the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine.
 - 5.2 Other children who are baptised Catholics and who live in the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine.
 - 5.3 Baptised Catholic children who live outside the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine and who do not have a Catholic primary school serving the parish in which they live or at whose parish school a place is not available.
 - 5.4 Looked After Children for whom a place is requested by the relevant person/authority
 - 5.5 Children of a Catholic parent(s) who live within the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine.
 - 5.6 Children who will have a brother or a sister at the school at the time of their admission.
 - 5.7 Children of other Christian faiths who live within the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine and whose parents are members of their church and have the written support of their minister.

- 5.8 Baptised Catholic children who live outside the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine and who fall outside Category 5.2 above.
- 5.9 Other applicants not in the above categories.

In Categories 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.8, baptismal certificates should be available for inspection.

A map of the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine is available at the school.

Definitions

- (a) Brother and sister are defined as children who share one natural parent, step brother or sister, or have been legally adopted or fostered into the family
- (b) Looked after children, as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989.

6. Tiebreakers

When applications within categories 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 above exceed the number of places available, priority will be given to:

- 6.1 children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of their admission
- 6.2 children who live furthest from the nearest alternative Catholic school at which a place is available

Priority in other categories will be given to:

- 6.3 children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of their admission
- 6.4 children who live nearest to the school

Distance will be calculated “as the crow flies” from main gate/door (as appropriate) to the main entrance to the school premises. (Distance will be calculated by the nearest available walking distance).

- 7. **Casual (in-year) applications**, i.e. those which fall outside the normal admissions round, will be considered by the Admissions Committee against the criteria listed in paragraph 5 above.

8. Late Applications

Applications received after the closing date given in 3 above but before the offer of places is made by the Governing Body will be considered in accordance with the priorities in 5 above if, in the opinion of the Admission Committee, there were good grounds for applicants not being able to meet the required deadlines.

- 9. In September 2005 the Governors received 35 applications which fell in the following categories:

5.1	22	5.4	4
5.2	1	5.5.	3
5.3	-	5.6	5

and admitted 30 i.e. all applicants in categories 5.1 – 5.5 inclusive.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 10. Parents have the right to appeal against the refusal by the Governing Body to admit their child, and should put their appeal in writing to the LEA (for the normal admissions round) or to the Clerk to the Governors at the school (for in-year applications) within 14 days of receiving the letter of refusal. Appeals will be arranged by the Diocesan Department for Schools and Colleges and conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice on School Appeals.

11. CHILDREN WITH STATEMENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

There is a different procedure for the admission to school for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs: it is administered by the local education authority (LEA) in whose area the family lives. The LEA is responsible for issuing the Statement and consulting parents and the governing body of St. Agatha, if a preference has been made for the school, before the school is named in the Statement.

(Revised Feb 2005)

ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOL : NOTES OF EXPLANATION OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY MODEL

- Paragraph 1:** Explains the area the school was established to serve and that the Governing Body is the admission authority. In making its policy it is working with the Diocese and within the Code of Practice.
- Paragraph 2:** Each school has an agreed Indicated Admission Number (IAN) and must admit up to that number. Sentences 3-5 show that the governing body will meet the wishes of parents to defer admission of their child to later in the school year (January/April) if they think their child is not ready, and reserve a place for him. Advice has been changed to allow the parent to seek deferment after a place has been offered to avoid any charge of refusal to admit on the grounds of losing some revenue.
- Paragraph 3:** It is good practice to tell parents when to apply and to whom, how to apply and when they will know the result of their application. All LEAs have been required to agree common admission arrangements for all their schools, including voluntary aided schools. Usually this is an agreement to use a common application form which is returned initially to the LEA who then inform governors of applicants to their schools. If the common admissions form does not include the information (such as date and place of Baptism) required by the Governors in order for them properly to apply their oversubscription criteria, then the school may send an additional information form to applicants or ask to see Baptismal Certificates etc. In such cases amend this statement accordingly and as necessary to describe the local agreement. NB. In no way does the use of a common admissions form undermine the governors' right to determine who to admit into their school. Local arrangements should simply exist to make school admissions applications simpler for parents, to avoid duplication of effort and to stop multiple applications and offers of places to the children of unscrupulous parents.
- Paragraph 4:** There is no requirement to have a waiting list. However if you have one you must say so and when it ceases to operate.
- Paragraph 5:** Categories of priority need some explanation. The principles here are:
- First priority to baptised Catholic looked after children in agreed or designated parish(es).
 - Second priority to baptised Catholic children in agreed or designated parish(es).
 - Third priority to baptised Catholic children who do not have a Catholic school serving their parish or whose parish school is full

and so a place is not available **BUT** not for those who choose not to use their parish school.

- Fourth priority to Looked After Children who are not Catholics but for whom the LEA/relevant person has sought a place
- Fifth priority to children **who have a Catholic parent(s)** but **has/have** not had the child baptised but wish a Catholic education for him/her.
- Sixth and seventh priorities are self explanatory.
- Eighth priority is given to Catholic children who have access to their own Catholic school but for some reason or other prefer to go to another school. Governors should appreciate that this order does give priority to some non-Catholic Christians over Catholics and could be contentious in some cases. **The Governing Body may wish to give these children a higher priority in those very few cases where its Catholic school is nearer to the family home than the designated Catholic school and the LEA is prepared to pay transport to the former but not the latter.**

NB Looked after children are at a particular disadvantage and as Catholic schools would wish to support them and their carers, priority is therefore given to them after the school has met the requirements of the Trust Deed to provide for baptised Catholics [living in the agreed parish(es)]. Catholic looked after children should always be given the first right of admission.

A map of the parish or designated area is necessary to resolve any border dispute.

Definition of brother/sister has been expanded to take account of concerns/points raised at the seminars.

Paragraph 6:

Tie breakers are essential and may be different for different categories of priority as in our model. In Categories 1 and 2 it is suggested that if all applicants cannot be admitted priority be given to **Looked After Children, then to brothers/sisters to "keep the family together"** and after them to those who have furthest to go to the nearest available Catholic school. While the sibling priority operates in other categories, distance from the school is then used. We suggest "as the crow flies" as it can be objectively measured on a map and so less liable to dispute. However some LEAs are able and willing to measure the nearest available walking distance. If your LEA is able to do this and the school's designated area normally covers only your LEA area this is to be preferred. If your area crosses LEA boundaries and one LEA will not supply such a facility then "as the crow flies" is to be preferred.

Paragraph 7:

Explains how applications outside the normal round are dealt with.

Paragraph 8

Deals with late applications. The Admissions Committee determines good grounds but it must be objective, consistent and fair e.g. a family moving into the area from a reasonable distance and so not able to express a preference before, late adoption of a child or movement of a child into care would appear to be good reasons. Failure to submit a preference through forgetfulness etc or moving a short distance over a parish/LEA boundary would not normally be considered good grounds.

Paragraph 9: The governing body is required to give such information so that parents can assess their chances of whether their application will be successful.

Paragraph 10: If an application is refused the governing body is legally obliged to give the parents a full explanation in writing. This should tell them how many pupils have been admitted and in what categories, and where their child comes in the order of priority for admissions, and how to appeal.

Paragraph 11 **The school is required to admit a child with a Statement if it is named on the Statement. The LEA is required to meet parental preference, if possible, but must consult the governing body before making its decision. Children with Statements come first, although the procedure is different, and normally count against the Admission Number.**

(Revised February 2005)