

# St. Mary's

Church of England (VA) Primary School



## Main School Admissions Policy 2024-5 Year of Entry

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**St. Mary's Church of England Primary School Rickmansworth**  
**Main School Admissions Policy**  
**Academic Year of Entry 2024-5**

St. Mary's is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School in the Diocese of St Albans serving the Rickmansworth community. St Mary's began as a charity school in May 1711. In a caring Christian environment the school offers primary education through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

Our aim is to enrich the lives of the children who come to our school, in educational, personal and spiritual terms. We endeavour to provide a secure, happy, caring and Christian environment in which every child recognises and celebrates their achievements.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) operates an agreed co-ordinated admissions scheme in line with government legislation. HCC will co-ordinate the process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published each year. The Governing Body, as the Admissions Authority, will allocate the available places in line with this policy. The school has a published admission number of [30].

The Governing Body is required to abide by the maximum limits for infant classes (5, 6 and 7 year olds), i.e. 30 pupils per class.

### **Main Admissions Round applications for entry to Reception in September 2024**

Information about the admissions process is available on HCC's website ([www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions)). Hertfordshire residents should complete the online form or request a paper copy from the Customer Services Centre on 0300 123 4043. If you live in a different Local Authority Area, you should complete your home local authority's application form. Applicants under Rules [3, 4 or 5] should **also** complete the School's Supplementary Information Form (SIF) which is available from the school website and the School's Admissions Officer.

### **Visits to the School**

The school offers regular tours for prospective parents prior to the closing date for main admission round Reception applications. Please contact the school to book your place.

## **Admissions Criteria**

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an education health and care plan (EHCP) that names their school. The Governors will admit any child with an EHCP that names the school.

Anyone may apply for admission to the School for their child(ren). All children will be admitted if there are sufficient places available. If there are more applications than places available, the Governors will allocate places in the following priority order: (Rules should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and definitions).

- Rule 1. Children looked after and children who were previously looked after**, including those who appear (to the Governors) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- Rule 2. Siblings:** Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application who is expected to still be attending the school at the date of admission
- Rule 3. Children of staff employed by the Governing Body of St Mary's School:**  
Children will be allocated a place if either or both of the following conditions are met:
- a. Where a member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application is made.
  - b. Where the Governors can demonstrate that the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacant position for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.
- Rule 4. Foundation (attendance at Church) Places:**  
Places in this category will be allocated in the following order of priority:
- a. Children one or more of whose parents regularly attends services at St. Mary's Church Rickmansworth.
  - b. Children one or more of whose parents regularly attends services at any other Christian church located within the boundaries of the Parish of Rickmansworth.
  - c. Children one or more of whose parents regularly attends services at any Christian church located in those ecclesiastical parishes whose boundaries are adjacent to those of the Parish of Rickmansworth (which means the Parishes of: Mill End and Heronsgate with West Hyde; Christ Church, Chorleywood; All Saints', Croxley Green; St Michael and All Angels, Watford; St Matthew, Oxhey; Holy Trinity, Northwood; Emmanuel, Northwood; St Mary, Harefield.)
- Rule 5. Disadvantaged Places:** Children who are eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium, Pupil Premium or Service Premium who live within the boundary of the ecclesiastical parish of St. Mary's Church Rickmansworth.
- Rule 6. Community (distance) Places:**  
Children of parents who at the time of application reside within the boundary of the ecclesiastical parish of St. Mary's Church Rickmansworth. The website [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) is helpful in checking parish of residence.

**Rule 7            Any other children**

If there are more applications than places available, priority will be given within each of these Rules (other than Rule 4) to those children who live closest to the school. In the case of applications under Rule 4, if there are more applications than available places under any of sub-categories a. to c., priority will be given within each sub-category to those children who live closest to the school.

**Fair Access Protocol**

The school takes part in HCC's Fair Access Protocol and will admit children under the FAP before children on the continuing interest list and over PAN if necessary.

## **Notes and definitions**

### **Children in the care of a local authority (Children Looked After)**

Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 2, Section 7 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

These children will be prioritised under rule 1

Highest priority will also be given to children who were previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order<sup>1</sup> or a special guardianship order<sup>2</sup>. A 'child looked after' is a child who is:

- a) in the care of a local authority, or
- b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social service functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989).

Children who were not 'looked after' immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under rule 1.

#### <sup>1</sup> Child arrangements order

Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence order have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

<sup>2</sup>Special guardianship order – under 14A of The Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Rule 1 if the child's previously looked status and adoption is confirmed by HCC's 'Virtual School'.

### **Siblings**

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, legally adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or their partner or 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 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 bridging foster placement.

The sibling must be in the school at the time of application (or have been offered and accepted a place) and be expected to still be on roll at the date of admission.

## **Home address**

The address provided on the application form must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application

- "At the time of application" means the closing date for applications
- "Permanent" means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year at the time of application, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months **and** the child must be resident in the property at the time of application. If, because of the nature of the agreement, it is not possible to provide a 12-month tenancy agreement, alternative proof of address will be requested and verified as necessary with HCC's Shared Anti-Fraud Service.

It is for the Governing Body (as the admission authority) to determine the address to be used for admission purposes.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If a child's permanent residence is disputed, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes. If two applications are received, with different addresses, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

Applications made as part of the main Reception admissions round are processed by HCC on behalf of the Governors, in accordance with HCC's published coordinated admission schemes. All in-year admission applications are processed by the school.

If HCC receives two different applications for the same child from the same address e.g. containing different preferences, parents/carers will be invited to submit a joint application or provide court documentation to evidence the preferences that should be used for the admission process. Until the preference issue is reconciled, neither application will be processed.

For the main Reception admission round, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received by HCC "on-time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 (the late deadline). If the amended joint application is received after 1<sup>st</sup> February, it will be treated as "late".

## **Twins and Multiple Births**

Where the last available place has been allocated to a twin or multiple birth child, the Governors will also admit the other twin/multiple birth siblings, if necessary as exceptions to the infant class size limit.

### **Children of Staff**

Staff is defined as all teaching and non-teaching staff, employed by the school on a permanent contract. Child here means [the biological child, step-child, adopted or foster child of the member of staff in every case living permanently or on a long-term foster placement within the staff member's home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of application. *[Children of the partner of a member of staff are also included in this definition if they have been living with the member of staff as part of the same family household from Monday to Friday for two years, at the date of application.]*

### **Foundation (attendance at Church) Places**

In this context a Christian Church is one that is a member of Churches Together in Rickmansworth and/or Churches Together in England. Services means acts of public worship.

In the case of children seeking admission **under Rule 4**, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their Vicar/Minister in Charge confirms, on the SIF, regular church attendance by one or more of the child's parents, which is defined as attendance at services on average at least twice a month over a period of at least three years immediately prior to application. Please note applications under Rule 4 **must** be supported by evidence of the required period of church attendance.

Where a parent who currently attends one of the Christian churches described in sub-categories a. to c. of Rule 4 previously attended another Christian Church located outside the parishes listed in sub-categories a. to c. of Rule 4, the Governors will take attendance at that previous Church into account when considering whether the test of three years' attendance has been met. Supporting evidence will also be required from the previous church on the School's SIF.

The Governors rightly expect that a parent or carer whose child has been allocated a place under 'Foundation' Rule 4 will still satisfy the requirements of that Rule at the time of admission.

In the event that during the three-year period specified for attendance at worship the applicant's church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admission arrangements in relation to attendance at worship will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

### **Disadvantaged Places**

Rule 5 places are limited to those children who live within the boundary of the ecclesiastical parish of St. Mary's Church Rickmansworth at the date of application and who are eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium, the Pupil Premium or the Service Premium. Parents and carers can contact the school and complete the online form to determine if their child is eligible for any of these premiums. The form can be found at: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/canhelp/>

### **Calculation of distance from home to school**

The Governors use HCC's 'straight line' distance measurement when calculating the distance from a child's home to the school. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places.

The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.

Where there is a need for a tie-breaker where two different addresses measure the same distance from the school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed to be nearest as logically this may be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie-break will be random. Every child entered onto the HCC admissions database has an individual random number assigned, between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. When there is a need for a final tie break the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority.

### **Continuing Interest list (Waiting list)**

After places have been offered, HCC will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list for the Reception admissions round on behalf of the Governors. A child's position on a CI list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and a child's place on the list can change as other children join or leave it. For year groups in the main school, the school is the admission authority and manages its own CI list for all year groups. HCC will direct parents/carers to the school if enquiring about a vacancy. Continuing interest lists will be maintained for every year group. To remain on the CI (waiting) list after this time parent/carers must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form.

### **Appeals**

Parents who have not been allocated a place for their child in the Reception class have the right of appeal to an independent panel.

At transfer time parents wishing to appeal who applied online should log into their online application and click on the link 'register an appeal'. For those who did not apply online, please contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request an appeal pack.

### **Deferred entry into Reception and part-time places**

Successful applicants are entitled to a full-time Reception place from the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A child's parent/carer can defer the date their child is admitted to Reception until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made. All children must join the school in the Reception year or a new application will need to be made for a Year 1 place.

Where parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's specific needs with the Headteacher at the earliest possible stage.

### **Summer-born children into Reception**

Parents and carers of a summer-born (1<sup>st</sup> April-31<sup>st</sup> August) child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group to Reception rather than Year One. The Governors will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned, as well as taking into account the views of the Headteacher of the school.

When informing parents and carers of their decision on the year group to which the child should be admitted, the Governors will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

Where the Governors agree to a parent's request for the child to be admitted out of their normal age group, the parent must make a fresh application for a Reception place for their child in the following year's main admissions round.

If the request is refused then parents must decide whether to accept any offer of a place for their child in the child's normal age group or to refuse it and make an in-year application for a place in Year 1.

The statutory right to appeal does not apply if a child is offered a place at the school but not in their parents' preferred age group.

### **Requests for education out of year group (other than summer-born children Reception deferral requests)**

The school's policy is that children should normally be educated in their correct chronological age group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet their individual needs. If parents/carers believe that their child should be educated in a different year group then they should at the time of application submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family, stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age group. Applications will be considered by the Governors who will make their decision in the best interests of the child, based on the individual circumstances of each case, including the view of the child's parents and of the headteacher, the child's social, academic and emotional development, medical evidence (where relevant) and whether or not the child has previously been educated out of year group. If the application is refused this does not constitute the refusal of a place and there is no right of appeal from the Governors' decision.

### **In-Year Admissions**

For In Year admissions, the school is the admissions authority. In Year applications should be made using the school's In Year Application Form, available from the school website or by contacting the school office. Applicants under Rules [3, 4 or 5] should also complete a SIF and return it direct to the school. Where there are more applications than places available, the oversubscription criteria set out in this policy will be used to rank applications and allocate places.

The school will write to you with the outcome of your In Year application and, if you have been unsuccessful, will include registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at [www.hertfordshire.gov/schoolappeals](http://www.hertfordshire.gov/schoolappeals).

The School's Governing Body may be contacted by writing to:

Mrs Tracey Middleton  
Clerk to the Governors  
St Mary's Church of England Primary School,  
Stockers Farm Road,  
Rickmansworth,  
Herts.  
WD3 1NY

or by telephoning the school on 01923 776529