Admissions Policy

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Chair of Governors: Rebecca Shilling

We believe that everyone is precious and loved by God. We aspire to let our light shine in all that we do. We nurture and empower one another to flourish. Together we shine in our world by showing compassion and by serving others. Let God's light shine through us.

Diocese of London / London Borough of Islington
Admissions Policy for the 2027/28 School Year

St Mary's Church of England Primary School serves the following three parishes in the Church of England Deanery of Islington:

- St Mary's, Upper Street
- St Stephen's, Canonbury
- St James's, Prebend Street

The Governing Body is the admission authority. Where applications exceed available places, it applies the oversubscription criteria below. The Published Admission Number (PAN) for Reception entry in September 2027 is 30. The school normally organises one class of 30 pupils in each year group; this does not create a statutory limit of 30 in Key Stage 2.

Infant classes must comply with the statutory limit of 30 pupils per school teacher during an ordinary teaching session, subject to the legal exceptions explained in the in-year admissions section. A Reception offer is for a full-time place from September following the child's fourth birthday, with the options for deferred and part-time entry set out below.

Children whose Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) names the school must be admitted through the statutory EHCP process, separately from the oversubscription criteria. The school participates in Islington's Fair Access Protocol and complies with lawful directions and binding appeal decisions.

Applications for Reception entry
Apply through your home local authority's Common Application Form, normally online. For September 2027 entry, the closing date is 15 January 2027 and National Offer Day is 16 April 2027. Late applications are dealt with under the home authority's published co-ordinated scheme. Admission to any nursery does not guarantee a Reception place; a separate application is required.

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA
After admitting children whose EHCP names the school, remaining places are allocated in this order:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children, including children who appear to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of adoption (see definitions).

2. Children who, at the time of their proposed admission, will have at least one sibling attending the school.

3. Children whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are regular and committed members of St Mary's, Upper Street; St Stephen's, Canonbury; or St James's, Prebend Street.

4. All other applications.

For criterion 3, return the school's Supplementary Information Form to the School Office so religious practice can be verified. This is additional to the local-authority application. If faith evidence is not supplied, the application is still considered under any other criterion for which the child qualifies.

Tie-breaker
Where there are insufficient places for all applicants in a criterion, priority is given to the shortest straight-line distance from the child's principal home address to the school's main gates in Fowler Road, London N1 2EP. If two or more applications have the same distance, the final place is allocated randomly using a computerised system supervised by someone independent of the school.

DEFINITIONS
Looked after children are children in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions, within section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, at the time of application.

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order immediately after being looked after. This includes children who appear to the admission authority to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of adoption. State care outside England includes care by a public authority, religious organisation or another care provider whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society. Appropriate supporting evidence may be requested.

Siblings are whole or half brothers or sisters by blood or adoption, and step or foster brothers or sisters who live with the child for whom the application is made and will attend the school at the time of admission.

Regular and committed members are parents or legal guardians who attend church at least twice a month over a period of twelve months. The school provides a Supplementary Information Form for the vicar, priest or minister to confirm this in writing.

Home address and distance mean the child's principal residential address and its straight-line distance to the school's main gates in Fowler Road, London N1 2EP. Evidence is checked through the admissions process. Where a child lives at more than one address, parents should seek advice from the school and Islington admissions team so the principal address can be established consistently.

WAITING LISTS
Unsuccessful Reception applicants who have not been offered a higher-preference school are automatically placed on the Reception waiting list. Those offered a higher-preference school may ask to join. The Reception waiting list will be maintained at least until 31 December 2027. The school and Islington admissions team will tell parents who administers the list during the co-ordinated period.

The school maintains its own year-group waiting lists until the cohort leaves Year 6, asking parents annually whether they wish to remain. Where no response is received by the stated deadline, the child is removed. Islington's separate centrally administered in-year lists are cleared at the end of each term; parents using that service must renew their application as required by the council.

Every new application and each vacancy triggers a fresh ranking against the published oversubscription criteria and tie-breaker. Time spent waiting gives no priority and positions may move down as well as up. Statutory EHCP admissions, Fair Access placements and other admissions required by law take precedence where applicable. Joining a waiting list does not replace the right to apply formally or appeal a refusal.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

An in-year application is an application for Reception made on or after the first day of the first term of the admission year, or an application to another year group. Applications may be made throughout the school year, including where the relevant class is full.

How to apply and how decisions are made

Apply using Islington Council's online in-year application service. The council forwards the application to the school for a decision by the Governing Body or its Admissions Committee. Parents living outside Islington may also seek advice from their home authority. A paper copy of the application information is available on request. To seek faith priority under criterion 3, return the school's Supplementary Information Form directly to the School Office.

Where there are sufficient places, an applicant is offered a place without having to meet a faith criterion, unless a lawful ground for refusal applies. Where there are more applicants than places, applications are ranked using this policy's oversubscription criteria and tie-breaker. Being without a school place does not create an additional oversubscription category; vulnerable children may be supported separately through the Fair Access Protocol.

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

Where an infant class already has 30 pupils taught by one school teacher, a further in-year place will not normally be offered if admission would breach the statutory infant class-size limit. Applicants remain subject to the published oversubscription criteria when a place becomes available. An ordinary request or recommendation from the local authority does not, by itself, authorise a breach of that limit.

Admission above 30 is permitted only where the law allows it, including a qualifying excepted pupil, a binding independent appeal decision or a lawful direction to admit. Any local-authority direction must be formally made under the relevant statutory powers, and the school will confirm and record the legal basis for compliance with infant class-size requirements.

The limited excepted-pupil categories include qualifying in-year EHCP admissions; looked after and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal round; correction of an admissions procedural error; successful appeals; children newly moving into the area with no other available school within reasonable distance, where the local authority confirms eligibility; qualifying UK service children; qualifying multiple-birth siblings; and certain pupils receiving part of their education in a mainstream infant class from a special school or SEN unit. The conditions in the regulations and paragraph 2.16 of the School Admissions Code apply in each case.

Key Stage 2: Years 3 to 6

In-year applications are considered under the school's published admissions arrangements. Where applications exceed available places, the same oversubscription criteria and tie-breaker apply. The infant class-size limit does not apply to Key Stage 2. A year group reaching 30 pupils is not, by itself, a lawful reason to refuse admission: any refusal on capacity grounds must explain why an additional admission would prejudice efficient education or the efficient use of resources, based on the circumstances of that year group.

In-year outcomes, waiting lists and starting school

The school aims to give a written decision within 10 school days of receiving an in-year application and must do so within 15 school days. A refusal explains the reason, the appeal deadline, how and where to appeal, and the opportunity to join the year-group waiting list. Parents will not be told that they may only join a waiting list instead of submitting an application.

When a vacancy arises, the Admissions Committee re-ranks all current applicants and offers the place to the highest-priority child, subject to any admission required by law. The school informs Islington of applications and outcomes as soon as reasonably practicable, aiming for two school days, and supplies vacancy information when requested. After an offer is accepted, the child starts as soon as possible, especially if they are out of school.

Applications will not be refused solely because a child is not of the school's faith, has applied later than others, followed a different curriculum, or because information has not arrived from a previous school. Children with SEND who do not have an EHCP are considered fairly under the ordinary arrangements. The school complies with the Equality Act 2010 and makes reasonable adjustments where required.

APPEALS TIMETABLE AND PROCESS

Parents refused a place may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. The refusal letter gives reasons, contact details and the deadline for submitting written grounds. Parents may appeal while remaining on the waiting list. The school publishes the annual appeals timetable by 28 February.

Stage	Timescale
National Offer Day for Reception 2027	16 April 2027
Deadline to lodge an appeal	At least 20 school days from notification of refusal; the exact deadline is published or stated in the refusal letter.
Normal-round appeal submitted on time	Heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.
Late application appeal	Heard within 40 school days of the normal deadline where possible, or within 30 school days of lodging the appeal.
In-year appeal	Heard within 30 school days of lodging the appeal.
Notice of hearing	At least 10 school days before the hearing.
Additional evidence	By the reasonable deadline stated in the appeal paperwork.
Decision letter	Sent within five school days of the hearing wherever possible.

Infant class-size appeals are considered under the specific legal tests in the School Admission Appeals Code. The panel's powers are more limited where admitting another pupil would breach the infant class-size limit. A successful appeal is binding on the school.

Deferred entry and part-time attendance
Once a Reception place is offered, parents may defer entry until later in the same school year, but not beyond compulsory school age or the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made. Parents may also choose part-time attendance until compulsory school age. The offered place is held for an agreed lawful deferred start and is not offered to another child.

A child reaches compulsory school age on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday, or on that date if their birthday falls on it. Parents should discuss deferral or part-time attendance with the Executive Headteacher so arrangements reflect the child's needs. Deferral within the offered year is different from requesting Reception entry a year later.

Admission outside the normal age group
Parents may request admission outside their child's normal age group, including where a child has experienced ill health, was born prematurely or has particular developmental needs. Summer-born children, born between 1 April and 31 August, may remain out of school until September after their fifth birthday. Parents may request Reception entry then rather than Year 1.

For the normal September 2027 Reception intake, children were born between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023. Parents of summer-born children in that cohort seeking Reception entry in September 2028 should contact the school and local authority early and submit a written age-group request to the Governing Body through the School Office, with relevant supporting information. Parents should also follow the ordinary application deadlines while the request is considered, discussing with the local authority how their application should be managed.

The Governing Body decides each request individually in the child's best interests. It considers parental views; academic, social and emotional development; relevant medical information; previous education outside the normal age group; the effect of prematurity; and the Executive Headteacher's views. Parents receive a written decision with clear reasons.

Agreement to an age-group request does not guarantee a place. If agreed, the application is processed in the appropriate admissions round using the published criteria, without lower priority because of the child's age. If parents instead apply to Year 1 in September following the fifth birthday, there may be no vacancy. Parents can appeal refusal of a school place; there is no statutory admissions appeal solely against an offered place being in a different year group, although concerns may be raised through the complaints procedure.

Fair Access Protocol and lawful directions
The school participates in the agreed Islington Fair Access Protocol, which provides a separate route for eligible children who are vulnerable or difficult to place. Ordinary applications are processed first as required by the Code; potential eligibility for Fair Access is not itself a reason to refuse a normal application. A Fair Access placement may take precedence over the waiting list and may require admission above the school's normal class organisation. Infant class-size law still applies. Parents retain appeal rights against any refusal of their preferred school.

The Governing Body complies with lawful directions to admit and statutory EHCP duties. It records decisions and the legal basis for any admission above normal numbers. Informal advice cannot override admissions law.

Legal framework and policy review

These arrangements are to be read with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended; the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended; the School Admissions Code 2021; the School Admission Appeals Code 2022; the Equality Act 2010; and the Children and Families Act 2014, including the duty to admit where an EHCP names the school.

The governing body determines admission arrangements annually and consults where required by law. Once arrangements for a school year have been determined, changes must follow the statutory rules on corrections and variations. This updated draft does not itself amend already determined arrangements. Before publication, the Governing Body will confirm the lawful route for each change, notify the appropriate bodies and obtain any required Schools Adjudicator approval.

Useful information

Islington in-year applications

https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/schools/apply-for-a-school-place/apply-for-a-school-place-in-year

School Admissions Code

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2

School Admission Appeals Code

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code

School admissions arrangements and variations

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-admissions-arrangements

Islington School Admissions: in-year@islington.gov.uk | 020 7527 5515. Parents may contact the School Office for the Supplementary Information Form, paper copies and advice about the school's arrangements.

Updated 2 November 2026. Draft for governing body review and completion of any required statutory process before publication.