

ST TERESA'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025/2026

St Teresa's Catholic Academy is part of the Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust. The admission authority for the school is the Board of Directors of Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust who has responsibility for admissions to this school. The Board of Directors has delegated responsibility for the admissions process to the Local Board of Governors at St Teresa's Catholic Academy.

St Teresa's Catholic Academy within the Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. 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.

St Teresa's Catholic Academy welcomes and respects each pupil as a child of God, recognises individual capabilities, nurtures potential, and celebrates success.

Admission to the school is the responsibility of the Governing Body and not the Local Authority (LA), however all application should be sent through the LA. The school is a partner in the co-ordinated admission arrangements for primary admissions in Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and follows their admission timetable.

This policy has been prepared by the Governing Body following the last consultation between 22 November 2017 and 3 January 2018. Parents are asked to ensure that they read and fully understand the conditions of admission to the school. They are asked to pay particular attention to the over-subscription criteria and to the evidence required with the application.

Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school

- A child reaches compulsory school age on the first of these dates following a fifth birthday: 31 December; 31 March; 31 August
- At St Teresa's we follow the statutory requirement to offer all children a full-time school place from the September following their 4th birthday.
- Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the school 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.
- Parents may request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

- Parents may seek a place for their child outside their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. Additionally, parents of a summer born child (1 Apr to 31 Aug) may choose not to send that child until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group, i.e., to reception rather than Year 1. (The needs of working parents and associated childcare arrangements will not be considered under this heading.)
- Such applications must be submitted to WBC as part of the normal main admissions round, but the written agreement of the Governors, obtained through the Headteacher, must be sought and obtained prior to such an application being granted. The application will be considered strictly in accordance with the Oversubscription Criteria detailed below. In the

circumstances of an out of age application failing, a child will not be considered for admission to the normal age group unless the normal age group application has also been made.

- In considering whether to endorse an application outside the normal age group, the Governors will consult with the Headteacher, deciding each case on its merits and the best interests of the child. They will take into account the views of the Headteacher, the parents' views, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the school will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.
- Where parents choose to defer their child's admission or take up the place part-time but later wish to increase it to full-time before their child has reached statutory school age, this must be discussed with the Headteacher to agree the effective date.

Where parents do not wish to take up the allocated place until the next school year, the place will not be held. A fresh application would have to be made and there would be no guarantee that a place would be available at the school.

St Teresa's Pre-School

Children who are enrolled in the Pre-School will not transfer automatically to St Teresa's Catholic Academy and parents must make a separate application for admission to St Teresa's.

The school will consider all applications solely in the light of its Admissions Policy. Enrolment in St Teresa's Pre-School confers no advantage or preference.

Applications for entry to St Teresa's Catholic Academy in the academic year September 2025 – August 2026 must be included on the Common Application Form and submitted to your home local authority (the local authority to whom you pay council tax); the closing date is 15 January 2025. This can be completed online.

In addition to the Common Application Form parents/carers applying under one of the faith categories are asked to complete a separate Supplementary Information Form (SIF), available from the school or from Wokingham Borough Council. The additional information on this form assists governors in placing applications in the correct over-subscription category. All completed SIFs should be returned to St Teresa's Catholic Academy.

Decisions on which children are to be offered a place will be made by the Governors' Admissions Committee of the school during February 2025 and WBC will be notified by the 15 March 2025. Offers of places will be made on behalf of the Governing Body on the 16 April 2025. Parents are required to accept the offer of a place to their home local authority in accordance with their co-ordinated scheme. Parents who apply online will also be able to view the results of their application on 16 April 2025.

Any offer of a place will be on the basis that the information supplied is accurate and up to date.

Applications received after the deadline for receipt will only be considered **after** all those received by the deadline. This means that, if no places are left after considering all the applications received by the deadline, even if an application fulfils a higher criterion than that under which places have been offered to other applicants, it will be unsuccessful.

The published admission number (PAN) of children to be admitted in 2025/2026 is intended to be 45. All year groups have a maximum of 45 children. The admission number is compatible with the duty to comply with Infant class size legislation. The teaching group size at Key Stage 1 will not exceed 30.

Oversubscription Criteria

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or Children with a Statutory Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names this school will be allocated a place and will count towards the admission number.

The Governing Body will consider all applications equally, irrespective of ability or need and without reference to the positioning in the ranked list on the application form. In the event of more than 45 applications being received, places will be allocated strictly in the following order of priority:

1. Catholic* *'Looked After Children'* or *'Previously Looked After Children'****
2. Baptised Catholic* children with a baptised Catholic* sibling in attendance at St Teresa's Catholic Academy (not including the pre-school) at the time of application and expected to still be there at the time of entry to the school. (Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.)
3. Baptised Catholic* children
4. Non-Catholic *'Looked After Children'* or *'Previously Looked After Children'* ***
5. Unbaptised children of baptised Catholic* parents
6. Other pupils with a sibling at the school, not including the pre-school (sibling defined as in 2 above).
7. Children of parents who are practising members of other Christian denominations who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An ecclesial community which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above. All members of Churches Together in England and of CYTUN are deemed to be included in this definition**
8. Children of parents who are members of other faiths**
9. Other children

***'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 in the process of adoption and living within 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, can consult with the diocesan Catholic Academies and Schools Office if they need further guidance.

**** If application is being made for a place at the school as a member of another Christian denomination or another faith a letter confirming membership of that Christian denomination or faith and signed by the appropriate minister of religion or faith leader, will be required. The letter should be provided at the same time as the SIF is returned to the school.**

*****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 arrangements order or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the governing body) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.**

Tie Breaker

Should there be more applicants than places in any of the above categories, priority will be given to children living closest to the school. Distances will be measured in accordance with the definition contained in the Local Authority's Parents' Guide.

In the unlikely event that two or more children live at the same distance from school and if there are insufficient places available, random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). This will be by drawing of lots, carried out by at least two members of the Governing Body, supervised by an independent person.

In the case of a multiple births' application falling at the cut-off point, if only one sibling is not offered a place within the Admission Number, then they will be admitted as an exceptional circumstance. If more than one sibling from that multiple birth is not offered a place within the Admission Number, the parent/carer will make the decision as to which child or children are admitted.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE REQUIRED WITH APPLICATION

Please see detailed information above, in summary:

Categories 1-9	A fully completed Supplementary Information Form
Categories 1,2, 3	Child's baptismal certificate or certificate of reception
Category 5	Parent's baptismal certificate or certificate of reception
Categories 7,8	A letter confirming membership of Christian denomination or other faith signed by the appropriate minister or faith leader

Applications made on the LA's Common Application Form, without submission of a Supplementary Information Form and/or relevant supporting evidence described above, will still be considered by the Governors' Admissions Committee, but under category 9 of the over-subscription criteria. For those children who are not offered a place a waiting list will be maintained by the LA for the Autumn Term. The order of priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over-subscription. Looked after children, previously looked after children and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, take precedence over those on a waiting list. No account is taken of length of time on a waiting list. St Teresa's will take over the waiting list in January 2026. At the end of the academic year parents will be contacted to see if they wish to remain on the waiting list.

Parents of prospective pupils are welcome to visit the school by prior arrangement.

The Fair Access Protocol for Wokingham Borough Council Schools has agreed arrangements to secure the timely placement of all pupils in schools. 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 governing body is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The governing body has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number (subject to the infant class size exceptions).

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 to the school by contacting Caroline Robins at admissions@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk. 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 a maximum of 15 school days of receipt, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Appeals

Parents have the right of appeal if an application is rejected. This right does not apply where a child has been offered a place, but it is not in the parents' preferred age group. Details of the procedure and the appropriate form can be obtained from: The Clerk to the Appeals Panel, Democratic Services Team, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1WQ (Tel: 0118 974 6059).

Admissions in 2023/2024

Category	Applications received by the closing date	Applications since received	Admissions
Category 1	1	0	1
Category 2	9	0	9
Category 3	25	1	15
Category 4	0	0	0
Category 5	9	0	6
Category 6	2	0	2
Category 7	2	0	1
Category 8	1	0	0
Category 9	47	0	6
TOTAL	96	1	40