

## **ST. MARY'S BLUECOAT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **ADMISSIONS POLICY: 2023/2024**

#### **Applications to School**

As an Aided School, we are responsible for our own admission arrangements but in order to help everyone we follow the same timescale as the rest of Shropshire LA. Many parents choose to let us know at an early date that they would like their child to attend the school in due course. A preliminary form stating this interest can be obtained from school. Whilst it is helpful if parents can let us know at this early stage, it must be noted that such expressions of interest do not constitute registering a child or placing a child's name on a waiting list nor being offered a place. Offers of places can only be confirmed in the academic year before the child is due to start school after application has been made to Shropshire Council via the online application facility. This should be made before the closing date of 15<sup>th</sup> January preceding the academic year in which the child is due to start school.

Parents can name up to 3 preferences in application. Anyone unable to access the online facility should contact the Admissions Team. The Admissions Committee is responsible for the allocation of places. Parents will be informed by letter from the Council's Admissions Team on behalf of the governing body whether their application has been successful or not after 16<sup>th</sup> April. Applications for pupils starting school but not in the reception year should be received as soon as possible.

Applications for any year group other than Reception should make an application directly to the school. Parents who are interested in sending their child to the school are welcome to make an initial visit to the school. Information about the school is provided on the school's website [www.stmarysbc.co.uk](http://www.stmarysbc.co.uk).

#### **At what age may your child start school?**

Children are eligible for admission to the school in the September following their fourth birthday and must start their education no later than the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday. Many parents will be happy for their child to start school in the autumn term, but a small number of parents may have concerns that their child might be too young for mainstream school.

Parents of Spring and Summer born pupils (see chart below) can, if they wish, opt to have their child admitted to mainstream school later in the academic year. Children whose parents opt to have them admitted at the start of the academic year in September do not have a higher priority for admission than those who opt for later entry. Likewise those who opt for a later entry are not at risk of 'missing out' as long as they complete the application form at the correct time. However, where a child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday falls in the summer and parents wish to defer entry to the autumn term 2024, the child would usually be required to join the school in Year 1, not Reception. In such cases, parents must apply separately for a

Year 1 place, which could only be considered for allocation after the summer half-term holiday in 2023, by which time there might not be any places available in the year group. Parents of summer-born children who wish to defer entry to Reception for a whole academic year should contact Shropshire Council Admissions Team for further advice before 15 January closing date in the normal application year.

Parents are asked to indicate when making their application which is the desired term of entry for their child. This will make no difference to the allocation of a school place but assists us in place planning in our schools and nursery settings.

Alternatively parents will be able to opt for 15 hours nursery provision for the autumn term free of charge, especially if a parent feels that their child is not ready for mainstream school. *Parents will need to apply separately for a place at St.Mary's Bluecoat CE School Nursery.*

This table helps to explain by dates of birth when children can start their primary age education.

<b>5<sup>th</sup> Birthday falls</b>	<b>Can start school on first day of</b>	<b>Must have started school on first day of</b>
Between 1 September 2023 and 31 December 2023	Autumn Term 2023	Spring Term 2024
Between 1 January 2024 and last day of Easter holidays	Autumn Term 2023 or Spring Term 2024	Summer Term 2024
1 <sup>st</sup> day of Summer Term 2024 and 31 August 2024	Autumn Term 2023, Spring or Summer Term 2024 or Autumn Term 2024*	Summer Term 2024 or Autumn Term 2024*

Parents may opt to defer entry to the term after their child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and will not lose a Reception place which has already been allocated through the applications process.

**\* In this instance the child would be required to join the school in Year 1, not Reception. Parents must apply separately for a Year 1 place which could only be considered for allocation after the summer half-term holiday in 2023, by which time there might not be any places available in the year group.**

If you decide you would like to apply for a place for your child in Reception Year you will need to apply online via Shropshire Council's website at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk) or by telephoning the Admissions Team on 0345 678 9008.

The closing date for applications will be 15 January preceding the school year of entry.

The allocation date for 2023/24 will be 18<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Admissions Criteria**

The school serves first its traditional catchment area in Low Town, and the country area to the south. A map of the area may be requested from the school or Shropshire Council as the Local Authority (LA). We are an "Aided" Church of England Primary School and Christian values underpin our ethos but we welcome children of all faiths or those of no faith. We

sometimes have space to take children from other parts of Bridgnorth, and are happy to show families around the school by appointment.

The school's admission number is 30.

In implementing their admissions policy, the governing body seeks to ensure that all admissions to the school are carried out fairly.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) which names St. Mary's Bluecoat CE Primary School will be allocated places, after which places are allocated according to an agreed set of criteria in strict order of priority as follows:

- 1 'Looked after children' or children who were previously 'looked after' but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order<sup>1</sup> including those who appear to the admission authority, The Governors of The Trinity Federation, to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Children with medical or special circumstances. This will be considered only if parents can provide written medical evidence that St. Mary's Bluecoat C.E. Primary School is essential to the medical wellbeing of their child. In exceptional circumstances priority may be given above those children who qualify under priorities 3 to 8.
3. Children living in the designated catchment area (see appendix 1) and who have an older sibling at the school on the date they are due to start.
4. Other children living inside the designated catchment area (see appendix 1) and whose homes are nearest to the school.
5. Children living outside the catchment area and who have an older sibling at the school on the day they are due to start and whose homes are nearest to the school.
6. Other children living outside the catchment area on a distance basis

**Notes:**

**A looked after child** who is (a) in the care of the local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989)

<sup>1</sup> An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).

A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians)

A sibling connection is defined as a brother or sister, step-brother or step-sister, half-brother or half-sister, living at the same address as part of the same family unit and of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 – 16 years). Fostered and adopted siblings are also included. Older siblings must be attending the school on the date the younger sibling is due to start there. However, cousins or other relatives who take up residence in a home in order to establish an "in catchment area" address will not be given priority under the sibling criterion.

For admissions purposes, all distances are measured as a straight line distance on a computerised mapping system which pinpoints the eastings and northings of the home address and the nearest appropriate entrance gate of the relevant school. The shortest distance being given highest priority. Where two addresses are within the same block of flats, the lowest number of flat or nearest to the ground floor will be deemed to be the nearest in distance.

In the case where one of twins or triplets from the same address are successful in application, the school will admit both or all multiple siblings.

In the event that two or more applications are considered to be of equal priority after all other criteria have been taken into account a tie breaker will be used. This will be by random allocation and overseen by an independent party not connected with the admissions process.

There is no cost associated with the admissions process to any Shropshire LA maintained schools.

### ***Late Applications***

Applications received after 15 January will only be handled where a family has moved house after the closing date or where there has been a serious illness or bereavement in the family. In such exceptional cases the latest date by which applications can be considered will be mid-March in the school year preceding the year in which the child is due to start. Where a late application cannot be allocated a place the applicant's name will be placed on a waiting list and considered at the Review stage.

### **Unsuccessful Applications**

If an application is unsuccessful then parents may have the refusal decision reviewed. Parents should write to the Chair of Governors who will forward the letter to the Review Committee. This Committee will then review the refusal decision. The review decision will not be taken by one individual. The purpose of the Committee is to check that all applications have been dealt with in accordance with the Admissions criteria and whether there are any exceptional circumstances which ought to be taken into account.

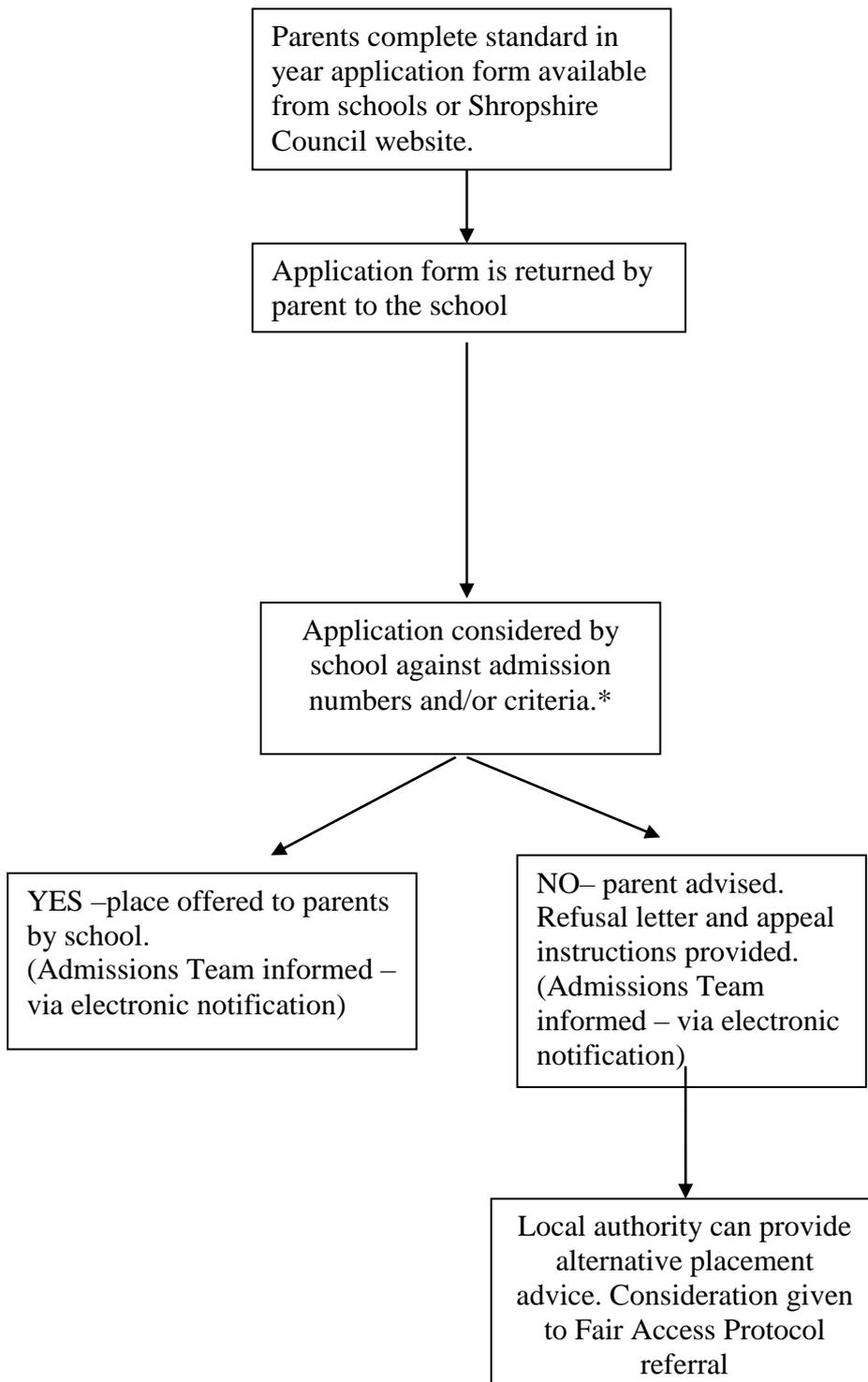
If the Governing Body's Review Committee is satisfied that no further places can be allocated, then applicants will be informed of their rights to an Independent Appeal.

Details and information about the arrangements for appeals are set out in the Council's information booklet "Parents' Guide to Education in Shropshire," copies of which are held in school for reference. Alternatively, they are available from The Admissions Team, Learning & Skills Group, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 6ND.

If the appeal is still unsuccessful the applicant's name will be placed on a waiting list which will operate until the beginning of the new academic year. If, subsequently, a place comes available and there are 2 or more applicants the admissions criteria will be used to determine the priority of the applications.

**In Year Admission Process** (at times other than start of Reception)

**Mid-term applications are made directly to the school.**



\* If a place is available within the PAN then a place will be offered by the Executive Headteacher and it will be reported back to the Admissions Committee. In the event that a place isn't available within PAN, the Admissions Committee will meet to determine whether to offer a place.

Mid-term applications will be dealt with using the same admissions criteria given above. To apply for a place other than the start of Reception Year, parents should apply directly to the school on a mid-term application form available on the Shropshire Council website [www.shropshire.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/schooladmissions) or from school. If there is a space in the relevant year group a place will be granted. If the application is for a place in an over-subscribed year group then the Executive Headteacher will meet with the Admission Committee to consider whether additional places can be offered above the published admission number. If a place cannot be offered, parents will receive a formal letter and information on how to appeal against the decision from Shropshire Council Admissions Team.

In certain circumstances specified in admissions regulations, the school may be required to offer places to children over and above the published admission number due to their exceptional circumstances e.g. service children in accordance with the Armed Forces Covenant or children who are placed in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol.

Other than the first term of Reception year, the school will maintain a waiting list for unsuccessful applicants. If any vacancies arise, places will be offered to applicants included on the waiting list in strict accordance with normal published oversubscription criteria. If a place can be offered the applicant will be expected to take up the place within 6 school weeks or by the start of the next half term, whichever is the earliest date, with the exception of Reception children who have deferred entry until later in the same academic year. At the end of the first term of the academic year of admission, the waiting list will transfer from Shropshire Council to the school. If an offer of a place is refused, the pupils' name will be removed from the waiting list.

Allocation of places for children moving into Shropshire Council's designated catchment area can only be considered when formal confirmation (signed tenancy agreement when no property is owned, or exchange of contracts ) of the address has been received.

All applicants are required to give correct information about the genuine residential address of the child. Where any information regarding a home address is found to be fraudulent or misleading a school place may be withdrawn even if the child has been admitted to the school.

### **Nursery**

Attendance at St. Mary's Bluecoat CE Primary School's Nursery is not a guarantee or a condition of entry to the school.

Date of policy: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Appendix 1: St. Mary's Bluecoat CE Primary School catchment area map.

