

ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Monkswood Lane (Off Monkswood Way) Stevenage Herts SG2 8QJ

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ADMISSION POLICY **FOR THE NURSERY 2026-2027**

Applications open: X September 2025

Applications close: X November 2025

Pupils in St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School are happy, confident and very proud of their school. They clearly understand their mission statement, 'Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him.' They can quote scripture to give examples of how they do their best to follow Jesus every day. Pupils explain that if they ever feel worried about something they are confident that adults will help them in a discreet and caring way. They are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the more vulnerable members of society and can reference Catholic social teaching when discussing their work with the local foodbank.

Catholic Schools Inspectorate October 2024

Pupils enjoy school. They respond well to the high expectations of staff. Pupils strive to do their best and achieve well. Pupils are extremely kind and caring. They frequently give up their free time to help each other. Lessons are free from disruption and lunchtimes are a buzz of happy and harmonious play.

Ofsted May 2024

At St Margaret Clitherow school we are committed to Safeguarding Children

*Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world.
Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him*

Introduction

St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary school was founded by the Catholic Church to provide Catholic education for children of Catholic families. At our nursery, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the nursery's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the nursery's education is fully supported by all families in the nursery. All Applicants are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the nursery. This does not affect the right of parents who are not of the faith of this nursery to apply for and be considered for a place here.

The Governing Body has responsibility for admissions to the Nursery and intends to admit 26 pupils into the Nursery class in the school year, which begins September 2026. We will accept applications relating to children whose date of birth fall between 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023.

Your child's attendance at our nursery does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education. Separate applications must be made the school for admission to the main school. Exceptional circumstances are not considered as part of the Nursery admission criteria.

The Governors intend to offer 15 hours (morning only) or 30 hours (morning and afternoon). We will treat all applications with the same priority whether applying for part-time (15 hours) or full-time places (30 hours). All nursery aged children are entitled to 15 hours free nursery provision. St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School offers this on a Monday to Friday basis, term time only 8.45am - 12:00pm. If eligible for 30 hours, St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School offers 30 hours on a Monday to Friday basis, term time only 8.45am - 3.15pm. If your child is not eligible for the 30 hours free childcare, you can pay for the additional 15 hours. Once all offers have been accepted, should your circumstances change, Admissions Governors may allow some flexibility on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the School Office for further information.

Parents may be eligible for 30 hours of free nursery provision and need to apply for an eligibility code. Please see the following website to check conditions of eligibility www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents Places for 30 hours will only be confirmed on receipt of a valid eligibility code. Parents must reapply each term for their eligibility code. A child will not be able to start the additional hours without a code.

If there is not a significant amount of applications for the afternoon sessions (full 30 hours place), the Governors may decide to withdraw the 30 hour offer. However, the Governors will continue to offer the morning places (15 hours) regardless of take up.

If the nursery has fewer applications than places available, all applicants will be offered a place. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic applicants in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Westminster. Applications will be ranked in accordance with the oversubscription criteria below.

In some circumstances, a reduced timetable may need to be implemented by the school to meet any additional needs of a child.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

1. Catholic 'looked after' children and Catholic children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangement Order or a Special Guardianship Order including those Catholic 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).
2. Baptised Catholic children who have a sibling at the school (in Years R to 5) at the time of application.

3. Baptised Catholic children who are resident in the parish of St. Hilda's Catholic Church, Stevenage. The parish boundaries are attached as Appendix 1.
4. Other baptised Catholic children who are resident in parishes other than St Hilda's Parish.
5. Other baptised Catholic children.
6. Other 'looked after' children and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangement Order or a Special Guardianship Order including 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).
7. Other children.

Applications in any of the criteria listed above will be further prioritised according to the following:

- (a) The attendance of a sibling at the school (in years R to 5) at the time of application.
- (b) The distance from the candidate's residence to the school
- (c) Where two candidates tie for the final place, the offer of a place will be determined by lottery, which will be carried out by the Governors in the presence of an independent witness. When the last offer is made to a child of a multiple birth i.e. twin, triplet etc., the remaining child(ren) will also be offered a place, even though it will mean exceeding the published admission number.

Applications in previous years

Last year, the Governing Body were able to offer places to applicants up to criteria 4. The school welcomes applications from all categories.

Timetable and Application Procedures

Open date: X September 2025
Closing date: X November 2025

To apply for a place at this nursery the applicant must complete the School's application form (if applying under criteria 1-5 and 7-9) and return it with the requested documentation being a copy of the Baptism certificate:

The Admissions Secretary, St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary school,
Monkwood Lane (off Monkwood Way), Stevenage, Herts SG2 8QJ.

If your application form and supporting documentation is received after the closing date, it will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed.

If you do not provide the information required in the SIF and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child will not be placed in criteria 1 to 4 or 6 to 8, and this is likely to affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

Late Applications

Application forms and supporting documents received after the closing date will be dealt with after the initial allocation process has been completed. If the nursery is oversubscribed it is very unlikely that late applicants will obtain a place.

Outcome of application

We will notify you of the outcome of your application in writing on X December 2025. Please accept or

decline your place by X January 2026 using the acceptance form enclosed with your application outcome.

NOTES

Change of Details

If any of the details on any of your forms changes between the date of application and the receipt of the letter of offer or refusal, you **must** inform the school. If misleading information is given or allowed to remain on either of your forms, the Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the place deeming the application to be fraudulent, even if the child has already started the nursery.

Fair Access

The nursery 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 admissions round, the Governing Body is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any local protocol that has been agreed by both the Diocese and the Governing Body for the current school year. The Governing Body has this power even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number. Children submitted under this protocol will be prioritised above those on the Continued Interest List (also known as the waiting list).

In-Year Admissions

In-year applications are made directly to the school. If a place is available and there is no waiting list the child will be admitted. If there is a waiting list then applications will be ranked by the Governing Body in accordance with the over subscription criteria with the following modifications: Catholic children without an offer of a nursery place elsewhere are given priority immediately after Catholic 'looked after children and Catholic previously looked after'; similarly, other children without an offer of a nursery place are given priority immediately after other 'Catholic looked-after and Catholic previously looked after'. If a place cannot be offered at this time then you may ask us for the reasons and you will be informed of your right to appeal. You will be offered the opportunity of being placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained by the Governing Body in the order of the oversubscription criteria as above and not in the order in which the applications are received. Names are removed from the list at the end of each academic year. When a place becomes available the Governing Body will confirm who is at the top of the list so that an offer can be made.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

The admission of children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. (This used to be called a Statement of Special Education Needs). Details of this separate procedure are set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. If your child has an EHC plan you must contact your Local Authority SEN officer. Children with this nursery named in the EHC Plan will be admitted as part of the nursery's PAN but before the oversubscription criteria are used.

Waiting List

Unsuccessful candidates will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out in the policy and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. A letter will be sent to the applicant in the Summer Term requesting confirmation that the candidate wishes to stay on the waiting list. If confirmation is not received in writing, the candidate's name will be removed at the end of the academic year. When a place becomes available the Governing Body will confirm who is at the top of the list so an offer can be made. The Applicant must accept the place and start at the nursery within two school weeks of the offer being made. Failure to do so may result in the offer being retracted. The waiting list will remain open until the end of the academic year.

Definitions

'Applicant' refers to the parent/guardian with legal responsibility applying for a place

'Candidate' refers to the child for whom an application is made

'Candidate's residence' The address provided 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, 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.

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 school week. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If the child's living arrangements change after you apply and they now spend the majority of the school week living at a different address, you must provide evidence of the new permanent address.

We may ask for proof of your address at any time. If, following an initial investigation and/or any investigation by with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service, the county council concludes that, a fraudulent address has been used, correspondence confirming this decision will be sent to the applicant. We will explain the decision-making process and the action that will be taken with the application. We will also confirm which address will be used as the child's permanent home address for admission allocation purposes.

If we receive more than one application with different address details and parents don't agree, 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.

If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address but contain 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.

If duplicate applications are made to different LAs for the same child, those LAs will liaise and share information. The child's home LA will determine if the application will be processed.

* 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.

‘Catechumen’ means a child who is a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will be evidenced by a Certificate of Reception into the Order of Catechumens for a child aged 7 or over.

‘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 living with 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, after consulting with the Diocese, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church].

‘Certificate of Catholic Practice’ means a certificate issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of the child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous

since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/governors/admissions/>

‘Children of other Christian denominations’ means: children 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 CYTŪN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local Churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis.

‘Children of other faiths’ means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of ‘other Christian denominations’ and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

‘Distances’ from the candidate’s residence to the school as determined by Hertfordshire County Council’s *‘straight line’* distance measurement system is used for all home to school distance measurements. 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.

‘Eastern Christian Church’ Includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a Certificate of Baptism or Reception from the authorities of that Church.

‘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.

‘Parent’ means the adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child.

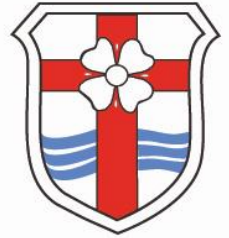
‘Parish Boundaries’, for the purposes of this Policy, parish boundaries are shown on the attached map and are available on the school’s website.

‘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 admitting authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. **‘Special Guardianship Order’** is an order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 s.14A appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian(s). This applies to children who were looked after up until this order was made. Children looked after immediately before the order is made qualify in this category.

‘Sibling’ Priority for siblings helps bond links between the school and families. It also provides a degree of domestic convenience for parents. However, schools must not operate a ‘siblings first’ policy where the effect is to admit a non-Catholic sibling thereby denying a place to a Catholic child who may be the first or only child from a Catholic family. For this reason, the diocesan model policy allows for priority

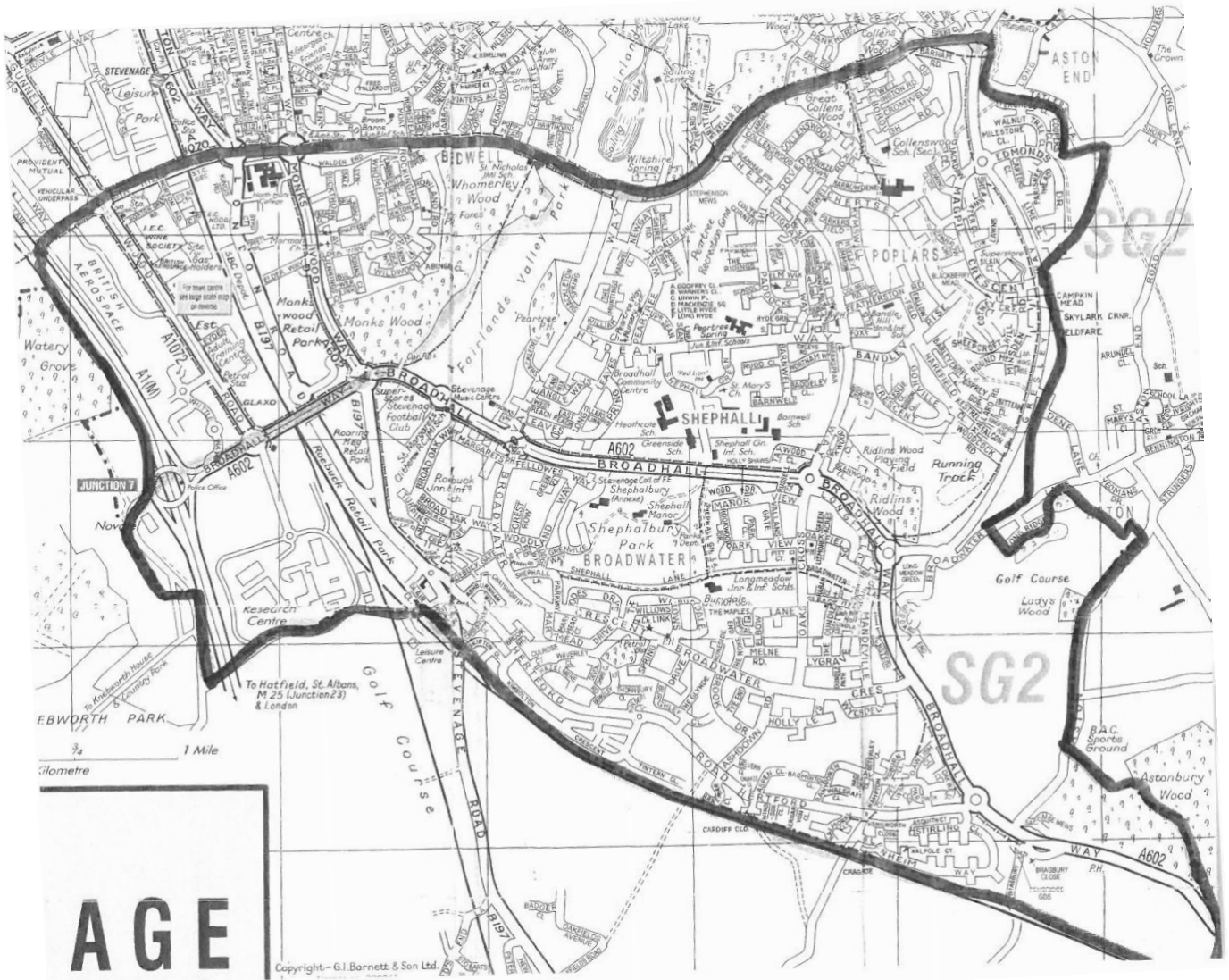
16 to be given to siblings who will be placed at the top of the criteria under which the application has been made if that particular criterion is oversubscribed.

ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



APPENDIX 1

St Hildas' Parish Boundary, 9 Breakspear, Stevenage, Herts SG2 9SQ



Barnett's Street Plan of Stevenage, Copyright – G.I. Barnett & Son Ltd Licence No. 398861

If you would like to see a larger version of this map, please contact the School Office.