

Loreto College St Albans
Secondary Transfer – Frequently Asked Questions

N.B. These FAQs are intended to help those parents who wish to apply for a Year 7 place for their daughter at Loreto College St Albans. The answers are given as a guide and do not supersede any information given by the Local Authority or the Oversubscription criteria published by the Governors. In cases of doubt parents should contact the school and seek clarification.

How do I apply for a place?

Loreto College is part of the Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) co-ordinated system for secondary transfer. Applications from parents living in Hertfordshire must complete the HCC application form which can be found on the Herts Direct web site. If you live outside Hertfordshire then you must make an application to the Local Authority where you live. They will then pass your details to HCC. Please remember that HCC and other authorities have a closing date for applications and you must apply before this date.

Do I need to complete any other forms?

Yes. Because the HCC form does not contain all the information that we require to decide which of our criteria you meet you will need to complete a Governors form to give this information and return it directly to Loreto College. This form can be found on the Loreto College website, and hard copies are available from the school.

You will also need to complete the Westminster Diocese Certificate of Catholic Practice Form which can be found on the Diocese website, or obtained from the school. This form is necessary to establish your status as Practising Catholics and must be signed by the Priest at the parish where you regularly worship, before being returned to the school.

We also require a copy (not the original please) of your daughter's Baptismal Certificate. If we do not receive any of these documents then your daughter will be allocated to a lower priority and may not be offered a place.

How do you know who has applied to the Local Authority for a place.

HCC receive information from other Local Authorities and prepare an alphabetic list of everyone who has shown Loreto as one on their preferences. This list is then passed to Loreto so that we can allocate places.

What happens next?

We use the HCC list, together with the information on the other forms, to put every application in order according to our published criteria. We then give HCC a copy of this list and they check to see if there is a place for you at any other school on your list of preferences. If there is more than one place available you will be offered a place at the school you ranked highest on your application.

Do we have to show Loreto as our first preference to have any chance?

The HCC list does not tell us anything about your list of priorities so Loreto, and all other secondary schools, do not know whether they are your first, second or third choice. Therefore the order will not affect the decision that we, or any other school, makes. Your list of priorities should be exactly that, and if Loreto is the school that you really want then you should show it first.

How do we know if we will be one of the 160 offered a place?

There is no way of anyone knowing beforehand whether you will be offered a place at any school. It all depends on who applies and who best meets the oversubscription criteria. All that any school can do is give you historic data which might give you some idea. We, like other schools, are very happy to share this with you but you will then need to compare the results from the past with your own situation.

However, you should not be put off applying just because past data suggests you would not have been offered a place in previous years. Every year is different and you may find that this is the year when we offer places lower down the list.

How do we qualify for a place under the social or medical criterion?

Very few places are offered under this criterion and to qualify you will need to demonstrate to the Governors that Loreto is the only school that can meet your daughter's very particular needs. To do so you will need to produce written evidence from a qualified professional person, such as a doctor. You should though be aware that most common conditions can be dealt with by any school, and that it is difficult to give examples of the types of condition that will qualify since they are, by their nature, unique. If you would like to discuss your particular needs in general before making an application we will be happy to do so, but we will not at that stage be able to give a final decision.

Our daughter does not have a sister at Loreto, and does not attend any of the schools listed in your criteria. Given the numbers in these criteria do we have any chance?

If you are a practising Catholic family your daughter will be in Priority 7, regardless of the school that she attends. Although a number of the places in this criterion are reserved for the schools listed, some of those places will have already been allocated to pupils who meet a higher criterion, e.g. those who already have a sister at Loreto. Also we may have more reserved places than applicants from some of the schools listed. So, we normally have places to offer to most applicants who meet Priority 7 even if they do not attend one of the listed schools

How do you decide between applicants who meet the same criterion?

If we have a number of applicants meeting the same criterion and we do not have enough spaces then we use distance from your home to Loreto, with those living nearest being offered places.

How do you measure the distance?

HCC measure the distance in a straight line from your home to Loreto and supply us with those distances when they give us the initial alphabetic list of applicants. HCC use an approved computer system and their website will allow you to check the distance from your home to Loreto.

How near to Loreto do we need to live to have a chance of a place?

Since we expanded to take 150 girls some years ago there have been enough places available under Priority 7 for us to meet the need from most practising Catholic applicants living in Hertfordshire, regardless of which school they attend. Some years we offer places to practising Catholics living in areas of north London such as Enfield and Edgware. In one year we were able to offer some places to girls meeting Priority 10, so there is always a chance.

What can we do if we are not offered a place?

If, on your original application, you placed us above the school that you have been offered you will automatically be included on our Continuing Interest (CI) list. Some places do become available after the initial allocation because some applicants decline their offer of a place. HCC, on behalf of all secondary schools in the county, run regular CI list allocations and you may be offered a place under this system. We will be able to tell you where you stand on our CI list about one month after the initial allocation date.

You also have the right to appeal against not being offered a place. Loreto use the HCC appeals system and so application to appeal must be made to HCC. If you originally applied online then you can register an appeal directly with HCC online, otherwise an appeal form is available from Loreto College.

Finally may we say that Loreto College is committed to helping you as much as we possibly can both before and during the secondary transfer process. If you have any further questions please contact us and we will be happy to respond to your enquiries.