LORETO COLLEGE

DETERMINED ADMISSIONS CRITERIA
SEPTEMBER 2027

As a Catholic school in the trusteeship of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils based on the vision and values of Mary Ward. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. All applicants are therefore expected to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school.

The governing body is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round. The school's Published Admission Number (PAN) is currently 150, however, this does not apply to the year groups where the PAN was previously stated as 160 at the time of secondary transfer.

In the case of multiple births, the admission authority will admit over the school's PAN when a single twin/multiple birth child is the last child ranked. In this instance, no further places will be allocated from the continuing interest list until the total number falls below the published admission number.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan: Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school. These children will be admitted within the school's PAN but before any child prioritised under the school's oversubscription criteria.

In the event of oversubscription, places will be ranked in the following priority order:

Priority 1 Baptised Catholic looked after girls and previously looked after girls**,** including those children who have been in state care outside of England.
Priority 2 Baptised Catholic girls.
Priority 3 Looked after girls and previously looked after girls.
Priority 4 Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church.
Priority 5 Any other girl.

Places will be allocated within each of the above priorities in accordance with the categories below (in the order of A to F).

Category A Girls with a sibling who is, or was, a pupil at the school – *see explanatory note (c).*

Category B Girls who have a parent/carer or guardian, who is a member of staff at the school – *see explanatory note (e).*

Category C Girls who have a compelling social/medical reason for attending the school – *see explanatory note (f).*

Category D Girls attending any of the following feeder schools in the St Albans area:

- *St Adrian's*
- *St Alban and Stephen*
- *St Bernadette's (London Colney)*
- *St John Fisher*

Category E Girls attending any of the feeder schools outside the St Albans area:

- *Our Lady (Welwyn Garden City)*
- *Our Lady of Lourdes (New Southgate)*
- *Pope Paul (Potters Bar)*
- *Sacred Heart (Bushey)*
- *Sacred Heart (Whetstone)*
- *St Catherine's, (Barnet)*
- *St. Josephs (Hendon)*
- *St. Joseph's (Luton)*
- *St Philip Howard (Hatfield)*
- *St Robert Southwell (Kingsbury)*
- *St Vincent's (Mill Hill)*
- *St Teresa's (Borehamwood)*
- *St Theresa's (Finchley)*

Category F All other girls.

Tie Break

In the event of there being insufficient places to meet the total required for this list, **distance,** the Hertfordshire County Council home school measurement system will be used as a tie break. 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. In the event of two or more girls having identical distances the Governors, as the admitting authority, will admit above the published admission number. However, no further places will be allocated from the continuing interest list until the total number falls below the published admission number.

Application Procedures and Timetable

Parents/carers must complete their own Local Authority Application form. Parents/carers of children living in Hertfordshire can make an online application via the Hertfordshire County Council website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 for a paper application (CAF Form). Parents/carers should return the application form direct to the County Council. Parents/carers of children not living in Hertfordshire must make an application to their local authority.

Parents/carers should also complete the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) (Loreto Form A). This form is available from the school office or via the website www.loreto.herts.sch.uk/admissions/secondary-transfer/ The Supplementary Information Form (Loreto Form A) should be returned to the Admissions Office, Loreto College, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3RQ by 31st October 2026.

Both forms will supply the necessary information to establish eligibility under the criteria. Failure to return the SIF (Loreto Form A) together with all supporting documentation to the school by the closing date will mean that the admission authority will use only the information provided on the CAF (HCC Form) which may result in the child being assigned to a lower priority and may affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 31st October 2026.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 1st March 2027, or the next working day, by the local authority on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons related to the oversubscription criteria listed above.

Parents/carers have the right to appeal against non-admission. Parents/carers wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal". Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details and log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system".

Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group, including 'Summer Born' Children

The school's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".

If parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age-appropriate cohort. DfE guidance makes clear that "it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect parents/carers to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case".

A supporting letter from the Headteacher of the primary school that the child attends must be provided in support of **'summer born children'**, ie those who were initially admitted to reception a year late and educated out of year since then.

The school's governing body, as the relevant admission authority, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The governor's decision will be based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents/carers, the Headteacher, the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal.

Similarly, there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school. The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Headteacher and senior leadership of the school.

Continued Interest List

The school is part of the Hertfordshire County Council scheme for in year admissions. In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on the continued interest list.

A child's position on the Continued Interest list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and **not** in the order in which applications are received or added to the list, a child's place on the list can also change as other children join or leave it. Parents/carers will be contacted if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. **Inclusion in the school's continued interest list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.**

Continuing interest lists are maintained for every year group until the end of the summer term within the academic year that the application is made. In order to remain on the Continued Interest list after this time, parents/carers must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing the HCC In Year Application Form.

The application process for in year admissions, which includes the In Year Admissions Criteria and In Year Admission Form A is published on the school website at www.loreto.herts.sch.uk/admissions/in-year-applications/

Explanatory Notes

*(a) An **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** is a plan made by the local authority under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special educational provision required for a child.*

*(b) **Looked after girls** and girls who were previously looked after, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are those who were looked after but ceased to be so because of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order[1] or a special guardianship order[2]*

Children who were not looked after immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under this rule.

Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012. Baptised Catholic looked after girls will be prioritised under Priority 1, all other looked after girls will be prioritised under Priority 3.

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[1] Child arrangements order Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

[2] Special guardianship order Under 14A of The Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

The same priority will also be given to girls who were previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

A "looked after" girl is a girl who is:

i) in the care of a local authority, or
ii) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989).

All Baptised Catholic children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under Priority 1, all other children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under Priority 3.

Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified by law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order and the application would be prioritised under Priority 1 or 3.

*Children who were not "looked after" **immediately** before being adopted, or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under Priority 1 or 3. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under Priority 1 (Category C) if Baptised Catholic or Priority 5 (Category C) if not Baptised Catholic.*

Children previously looked after outside England and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Priority 1 or 3 if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School".

The child's previously looked after status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:

i) to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and
ii) to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is in "state care" if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by –

i) a public authority;
ii) a religious organisation, or
iii) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

(c) *A **sibling** is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after[(1)] and in every case living permanently[(2)] in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application.*

If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

(d) *A **parent** means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child, and any person who has care of a child.*

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[1] Children previously looked after are those children adopted or with a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. This definition was amended following a determination by the OSA in August 2014.

[2] A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement. If an applicant lives at more than one address, the sibling must also reside at the same address for the majority of the school week. The sibling's address will be verified by the school.

(e) ***Children of staff*** *will only be admitted in the following circumstances:*

i) when the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years on a permanent or fixed term contract at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made and they continue to be employed at the school at the point of admission, or

ii) the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

iii) for the purposes of satisfying these criteria:

- *a "member of staff" applies to both teaching and non-teaching staff who are employed directly by the school on a permanent or fixed term contract, on either a full-time or part-time basis.*

- *"children of staff" is defined as a daughter, step-daughter, or a daughter who is adopted or fostered (documentary evidence will be required). In all cases the child must reside permanently at the same address as the member of staff.*

(f) ***Girls who have a compelling social/medical reason for attending the school*** *will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted. All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However, in a few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school. Few applications under Category C are agreed.*

All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

i) specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or
ii) professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet he child's needs.
iii) if the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate
iv) for medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate. A Category C application will generally not be upheld in cases where more than one school could meet the child's need.

In exceptional cases relating to a disability, where more than one school in the county can meet the child's specific needs, a clear and compelling case can be made for the "nearest" school with the relevant facilities, environment or location. You must clearly explain why attendance at the "nearest" school with these facilities is essential.

Applications under Category C can only be considered when supported by a recent letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example a doctor, psychologist or police officer. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child. Applications for children who were not "looked after" immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order may be made under this priority.

A panel of Governors will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule.

(g) ***'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 this includes a looked after child who is part of a Catholic family where a priest's certificate demonstrates that the child would have been baptised or received if it were not for their status as a looked after child (e.g. a looked after child in the process of adoption by a Catholic family).*

(h) ***'Catechumen'*** *means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.*

(i) ***'Eastern Christian Church'*** *includes Orthodox Churches and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.*

(j) *The* ***home 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.*

A signed tenancy agreement showing that your tenancy began on or before 1 December 2026. Where the tenancy arrangement does not include a fixed term, or where additional evidence is required to confirm that the address is the child's normal place of residence, we may request further proof of address and verify this through the Shared Anti-Fraud Service where necessary.

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 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.

For the transfer application rounds, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received "on-time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before the "late deadline". If the amended joint application is received after the late date, it will be treated as "late". The late deadline for the 2027/28 transfer application process is 1st December 2026 for secondary and upper applications. If these dates change, amendments will be published on the admissions web pages at the start of the 2027/28 application process in September 2026.

*<u>Fradulent Applications</u>**:***

Hertfordshire County Council will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses, including referring cases to the Shared Anti-Fraud service for further investigation as necessary.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. Hertfordshire County Council will take action in the following circumstances:

- *When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school;*
- *When a child lives at a different address to the applicant;*
- *When the applicant does not have parental responsibility;*
- *When a family move shortly after the closing date of applications when one or more of the following applies:*
  - *The family has moved to a property from which their application was less likely to be successful;*
  - *The family has returned to an existing property;*
  - *The family lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than a year) over the application period;*
  - *Official/public records show an alternative address at the time of the application*
  - *When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application.*

Parents/carers will need to show that they have relinquished residency ties with their previous property and they, and their child(ren) are permanently residing at the address given on the application form.

<u>Address Visits:</u>

Where suspicions lie as to the validity of an address, the Admissions & Transport Team may make unannounced visits to the applicant's claimed address or any other address suspected to be the normal permanent residence of the child's primary carer or the address where the child resides for the majority of the week. The aim of these visits is to verify that the address information provided on the application form is accurate. All visits will be made by two members of the Admissions & Transport Team.

If an address appears to be unoccupied at the time of a visit, a letter will be left confirming that an attempted visit took place. This letter will ask the occupant to contact the Admissions & Transport Team within 24 hours to confirm receipt of the letter and details of the occupant. It is reasonable to expect that an applicant living at the address stated on the application form can respond within 24 hours. If contact takes longer than 24 hours, the applicant will be asked to explain why and provide evidence why they did not respond within the specified time.

If, following the initial investigation or any further investigation, the Admissions & Transport Team concludes that, on the balance of probability, a fraudulent address has been used on an application, correspondence will be sent to the applicant confirming this decision. This will outline the factors taken into account in making the decision as well as the action which will be taken with the application. It will also set out which address will be considered to be the child's permanent home address for the purpose of their application for admission to school.