

## LORETO COLLEGE

### PROPOSED IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS CRITERIA SEPTEMBER 2023

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.

Section 124 of the Education Act 1996 required the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school.

- Priority 1      Baptised Catholic looked after girls and previously looked after girls, including those 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 or became subject to a Child Arrangement Orders or special guardianship order) immediately following having been looked after.
- Priority 2      Baptised Catholic girls with a sibling who is, or was, a pupil at the school.
- Priority 3      Baptised Catholic girls who have a compelling social or medical reason for attending the school. Governors will decide the outcome of all social/medical applications.
- Priority 4      Baptised Catholic girls.
- Priority 5      Looked after girls and previously looked after girls including those 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 or became subject to a Child Arrangement Order or special guardianship order) immediately following having been looked after.
- Priority 6      Girls with a sibling who is, or was, a pupil at the school.
- Priority 7      Girls who have a compelling social or medical reason for attending the school. Governors will decide the outcome of all social/medical applications.
- Priority 8      Any other girl.

## Explanatory Notes

- (a) Section 124 of the Education Act 1996 required 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.
- (b) Places are allocated to looked after girls 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 5. 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.

The following definitions shall apply:

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

- a) in the care of a local authority, or
- b) 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 5.

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 5.

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 5. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under Priority 3 (if Baptised Catholic) or Priority 7 (if not Baptised Catholic).

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.

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.

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Priority 1 or 5 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 –

- a) a public authority;
- b) a religious organisation, or

c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

- (c) Applications under Priority 3 or 7 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 Priority 3 or 7 are agreed.

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

- a) specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or
- b) professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs.
- c) if the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate
- d) 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 Priority 3 or 7 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 Priority 3 or 7 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.

- (d) '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 states 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).
- (e) 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 and in every case living permanently 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.

- (f) 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 which the child lives at for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, the address of the parent/carer that claims Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit will be considered as the child's main residence.

If a family is not in receipt of Child Benefit/Tax Credit alternative documentation will be requested.

If a child's residence is in dispute, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes.

If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address, e.g. containing different preferences, the application from the parent in receipt of child benefit will be processed if the applications cannot be reconciled.

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.

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.

In the event of oversubscription in any of the priorities distance, using the home school measurement system used by Hertfordshire County Council 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 AddressBasePremium 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.

- (g) In the case of multiple births the Governors, as the admitting authority, will admit over the school's published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated the last place at the school. However, no further places will be allocated from the continuing interest list until the total number falls below the published admission number.
- (h) Because the school is part of the HCC scheme for in year admissions, to remain on the Continuing Interest list a new in year application will need to be made to HCC at the end of each academic year. The Hertfordshire County Council measurement system will continue to be used.
- (i) 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 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".

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, 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.

- (j) Loreto College is part of the In-Year Applications scheme co-ordinated by Hertfordshire County Council . Parents can make an online in year application via the Hertfordshire County Council website [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions) or contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 for a paper application. Parents should return the application form direct to the County Council. Parents are also requested to complete the Governors Supplementary Information Form (Loreto Form A) in order to supply the necessary information to establish eligibility under the In Year Admissions criteria. Failure to return this form to the school will mean that the school will only be able to take into account information included on the CAF (HCC Form) and therefore may be assigned to a lower priority.

The county council will write to you with the outcome of your application and, if you have been unsuccessful, will include registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals).

- (l) When considering In-Year Applications Loreto College will comply with the Hertfordshire County Council Fair Access Protocols, details of which can be found in their published literature. Children admitted under HCC's Fair Access Protocol will be prioritised before children on Continuing Interest and can be admitted over PAN.