



# St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School

## Admissions Policy 2024

### Responsibility

The Governing Body is the Admissions Authority for St Bernard's, which is a Roman Catholic, Voluntary-Aided, Co-educational Grammar School. The Governing Body will, therefore, give priority in the consideration of applications to baptised Roman Catholic children who have a written reference from their Roman Catholic priest. The criteria set by the Governing Body are designed to preserve the character of the school. This policy has been agreed after consultation with the Diocese of Northampton and Slough Local Authority.

The Governors aim to offer a Catholic education. The Governors expect that parents applying for places will accept and uphold the Catholic character and ethos of the school. Nevertheless, the school fully respects the beliefs of parents and children from all denominations and faith backgrounds. Children are taught respect and tolerance for others and there is provision in the religious education programme for the study of different faiths.

### Number

The Planned Admission number for admission at age 11+ for the academic year beginning September 2024 is 150.

### Application to the School

Owing to the school's strict admissions criteria it is very important that all parents are aware, that if they want to be considered under the over subscription criteria, they will need to fill out a Supplementary Form as well as a Common Application Form (CAF) from their Local Authority. The Supplementary Form collects essential information to allow the Governing Body to put all applicants in order of priority for admission, using the school's oversubscription criteria. The Supplementary Form must be completed online by 31st October 2023. If Supplementary Forms are not returned, then the child will automatically be considered as "Any Other Children" in the oversubscription criteria (see below). In place of the Priest Reference, the school will accept the Bishops Conference of England and Wales' Certificate of Catholic Practice, as an equivalent document.

### Admission

The Governing Body will only consider for admission those children who have gained a mark of 111 or above in the Slough 11+ Consortium tests. Where the number of pupils gaining 111 or more in the tests exceeds the number of places available, the Governors will apply their oversubscription criteria.

A standardised score of 111 or above in the entrance tests means that an applicant is eligible for consideration for admission to the school. There is, however, no guarantee of a place, even for those children who have attained the eligibility score, if there are more applications than places available. If

the number of eligible applications is greater than the Planned Admission Number, then the Governors will apply the Oversubscription Criteria (see below).

Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Need or an Education Health and Care Plan where the school has been named by the Local Authority will be admitted automatically [see note a] and the number of places available to other applicants will be reduced accordingly.

## **11+ Examination Arrangements**

St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School is part of the Slough Consortium of Grammar Schools and operates the GL Assessment 11+ entrance examination to assess eligibility of students through ability. A standardised score of 111 is the minimum score required to be eligible for consideration for admission, as described above.

Full details of the examination arrangements, including key dates and an examination familiarisation booklet can be found on the school website.

For September 2024 entry, the 11+ entrance examination will be held at one of the Slough Grammar Schools in Autumn 2023, for children born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013. Applicants will be advised at which school their examination will take place.

If an applicant is unable to sit the entrance examination on the designated day owing to the child's sickness, parental sickness, transport failure, the school should be advised before 5pm on the designated day, by emailing the Office Manager on [m-parker@st-bernards.slough.sch.uk](mailto:m-parker@st-bernards.slough.sch.uk) explaining the reasons for the applicant missing the examination. Relevant evidence will be required before an alternative test date will be granted. Other circumstances, such as a religious observance, must be advised to the Consortium by the deadline of registration.

An alternative testing date will be set, for applicants unable to take the test on the original designated date.

The GL Assessment 11+ Entrance examinations are targeted at the expected age range for Year 6 children. If applicants are out of the normal age range, where pupils are too young or too old for Year 6 because of, for example, being accelerated through primary school due to exceptional ability or being held back a year due to poor health, an explanation of the circumstances must be provided. The tests are intended to be administered in Year 6, sat on the main test date or as close to that date as possible, and within the academic year of the test.

Candidates with a date of birth outside of the expected date range for Year 6 children will have their age adjusted through the standardisation process.

## **Over-Subscription Criteria**

Should places be oversubscribed, the Governing Body will consider children for admission following the criteria set out below. These categories relate to the child, not to the parent(s)/guardians(s). Please refer to the endnotes indicated for the following terms: *Practising, Catholic and Looked After*.

1. Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children. [see note b]
2. Practising Baptised Catholic children with a Priest's reference or a Certificate of Catholic Practice. [see note c]
3. Other Baptised Catholic children.
4. Baptised or Dedicated Children of other Christian Churches with a religious leader's reference. [see note d]
5. Baptised or Dedicated Children of other Christian Churches
6. Children from Other Faiths [see note e] who attend a Slough Catholic Primary School within St Peter's Pastoral Area, (Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Our Lady of Peace Catholic Primary School, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School and St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School) and live in Slough with a permanent home address. [see note e]
7. Children from Other Faiths who attend a Slough Primary School within St Peter's Pastoral Area Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Our Lady of Peace Catholic Primary School, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School and St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School). [see note f]
8. Children of other faiths with a religious leader's reference. [see note g]
9. Children of other faiths
10. Any other children.

*Other Christian:*

If necessary, the Governing Body will determine an order of priority within the above categories based on the following criteria in this order of priority:

1. Children currently in receipt of the Pupil Premium. [see note h]
2. On the child's score in the Selective Tests.

In the event of one or more eligible pupils being tied for the final place or places at the school, priority will be decided by proximity to the school. [see note i]

## **Waiting List**

The school will keep a waiting list of the names of applicants who have qualified for admission but have not been allocated a place, ranked in descending order according to the above oversubscription criteria. The placing of a child's name on the waiting list does not remove the right of appeal. Parents will be informed if their child's name has been placed on this list.

A waiting list will be held for all those applicants who score 111 and above but who may not be offered a place initially due to over-subscription. This waiting list will operate until the end of December 2024.

## **Appeals**

The school will publish and establish arrangements for appeals against non-admissions, which will be independent of the school and will follow the School Admission Appeals Code 2022.

### **For Admission to Other School Years/ In year admissions**

In the event of there being vacancies in other school years, the Governing Body, in consultation with the Headteacher, will consider admitting students who have demonstrated their suitability for education in a Selective School, and their intention to respect the Roman Catholic ethos of the school. Should applications for places in these years be oversubscribed, the Governing Body will consider children in order of priority following the over subscription criteria listed above.

Applicants who have previously sat the Consortium 11+ test for entry into Year 7 but did not attain a score of at least 111 cannot be considered for in-year entry in Year 7.

Request for admission into the school, other than at the start of Year 7, should be made directly to the school by completing the In-Year Application Form online. Applications for in-year admissions may be submitted at any time during the school year.

Assessments of ability for in-year admissions will be held once per term. The school will notify a parent in writing, within 15 school days of their in-year application, of the next available date for the assessment of ability. Following ability assessments, parents will be informed of the pupil's eligibility for admission, in line with the school's admission policy within 15 days.

Where the school has no space available, the application will be refused. Parents can apply to have their child's name placed on a waiting list for the rest of the academic year following refusal.

The position of each child on the waiting list is determined through the application of the over-subscription criteria. Each time an applicant joins or leaves the waiting list, the rank order of remaining applicants will be re-drawn. You may request your child's name be removed from the waiting list at any time. If a place is offered but refused, then the child's name will be removed from the waiting list.

### **For Admission of Children outside their normal age group**

If parents request for a child to enter the school outside the normal age group for that child, the school shall consider the application. The parents must adhere to the same admission requirements and process as for all other children and meet all the entry requirements and secure a place according to the oversubscription criteria. The decision as to whether to admit a child who is outside their normal age group lies with the governors who will make their decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parents' views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; and whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group. They will also take into account the views of the Headteacher.

## **For Admission to Sixth Form**

In place of GCSE, NARIC verified overseas equivalents will be accepted. Entry to the Sixth Form is also dependent upon a positive recommendation from the student's current Headteacher – this also applies to students in St Bernard's Year 11.

Students must come directly into the Sixth Form from Year 11; no student will be admitted to the school to repeat/restart Year 12. Any student that has previously repeated Year 11 will only be considered for admission to the Sixth Form once Governor's approval has been granted.

The planned admission number for Year 12 entry, includes all existing St Bernard's Year 11 students and a minimum of 20 external applicants.

No student will be admitted to Year 12 after 15 school days from the beginning of the Autumn Term; the beginning of the Autumn Term being defined as the first day of school for students.

There are a variety of Sixth Form courses on offer, each with different entry requirements. Full details of these are published annually in the Sixth Form Prospectus on the school website. Applicants should contact the school for further information.

All applicants to the Sixth Form must submit an application form by the date published on the school's website. Students must hold a conditional offer of a place which may be made following a Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) interview with the school. Once the eligibility criteria have been met and the applicant has completed the registration form (to be completed at the school on or immediately after results day) then the place in the Sixth Form is confirmed. At this stage, other conditions for admissions must be met in addition to academic achievement, such as NARIC certificates for overseas qualification equivalences, and eligibility to receive free education in the United Kingdom.

Where the number of eligible students reaching the required standards in GCSE or equivalent exceeds the number of places available in the sixth form or in the chosen subject classes; places on various courses will be decided according to the oversubscription criteria stated above (i.e. for entry to Year 7). Existing St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School students will be given priority for admission to a course.

### **Approved by the Full Governing Body in 30.11.2022**

Next Review: January 2024

Notes (these form part of the admission arrangements)

- a) A Statement of Special Educational Need is a statement made by the Local Authority under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 specifying the special educational provision required for that child. An Education, Health and Care plan is a plan made by the local authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special education provision required for that child.

Section 39(2) of the Children and Families' Act 2014 requires the Local Authority to consult the school before naming a school on the Education, Health and Care Plan. Section 39(4) gives the only reasons why a school should not be named as "(a) the school or to the institution requested is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs of the child or young person concerned, or (b) the attendance

*of the child or young person at the requested school or other institution would be incompatible with - (i) the provision of efficient education for others, or (ii) the efficient use of resources.”*

St Bernard’s Catholic Grammar School will therefore work with recognised authorities during the consultation process to ensure that a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan is of suitable ability to be successful in a selective school context.

- b) A ‘looked after child’ or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangement or special guardianship order including those who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child 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 function (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children act 1989).
- c) ‘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 a 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.

- d) Children of other Christian denominations” means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledge 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 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.

- e) Children on roll at one of the Catholic Primary Schools in St Peter’s Pastoral Area when the application is made and live in Slough (Verification may be requested to show you pay your council tax to Slough Borough Council). The Catholic Primary Schools are Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Our Lady of

Peace Catholic Primary School, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School and St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School.

f) Children on roll at one of the Catholic Primary Schools in St Peter's Pastoral Area when the application is made. These are Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Our Lady of Peace Catholic Primary School, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School and St Ethelbert' Catholic Primary School.

g) "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. Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a Supreme Being and an expression of belief in that Supreme Being through worship.

h) For the purposes of this policy, Pupil Premium refers to Pupil Premium and Service Premium. The pupil premium is additional funding paid annually to schools under section 14 of the Education Act 2002 for the purposes of supporting the attainment of disadvantaged children. The Service Premium is additional funding paid annually to schools under section 14 of the Education Act 2002 for the purposes of supporting the pastoral needs of the children of Armed Services personnel.

i) Proximity to the school means nearest first, measured 'as the crow flies' from the main entrance of the school to the front door of the child's home address (house or flat), using Slough's Geographical Information System (GIS), with those closer to the school receiving higher priority. The 'home address' is defined as the address where the child is normally resident. Where there is shared custody of the child or the child lives at more than one address in any given week, it is the address of the parent or carer who receives child benefit for that child, or in the absence of child benefit it is the address of the parent or carer with whom the child resides for the greater duration. In the event of a tie between two or more children with equal proximity to the school, lots will be drawn.