



ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR 2026 (Bedfordshire Area)

Welcome to Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust.

We are a large Catholic Multi Academy Trust situated in the northern half of the Catholic Diocese of Northampton. The Trust currently leads ten Catholic primary schools and two Catholic secondary schools located across the geographical area of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. Our schools cover Bedford, Northampton, Wellingborough, Corby, and Kettering.

The Directors of the Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust are responsible for determining and administering the policy relating to the admission of pupils to the schools within the Trust. It is guided in that responsibility by the requirements of the law, the advice of the Duns Scotus Trust and the Diocesan trustee, and its duty to the schools and the Catholic community.

We aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. We welcome applications from those of all faiths and none and hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the schools. This does not affect the right of an applicant who is not Catholic to apply for and be admitted to a place at the school in accordance with the admission arrangements.

OLICAT Directors will consider all applications made in accordance with the criteria set out without reference to the aptitude or ability of the child. All applications will be considered on an equal preference basis.

Children with a Statement of Educational Needs naming the school will be admitted in accordance with Bedfordshire Borough Council policy and regulations.

St John Rigby Catholic Primary School

Polhill Avenue

Bedford MK41

9DQ

<https://www.stjohnrigby.org/>



We are a family-orientated thriving community with extremely talented and dedicated members of staff, supportive parents and carers, and inspirational children who strive to live out our Gospel Values of Faith, Love, Hope, Trust and Forgiveness in every aspect of their school life.

As a Catholic community, we share a desire to see each individual, precious child, grow and develop in a loving, safe and inspiring environment. All of the children are encouraged to grow in the love of God and one another, to develop their unique and God-given talents, to form lasting friendships and to strive for excellence in everything they do.

St John Rigby Catholic Primary School is located in the Putnoe area of Bedford and is situated in beautiful, spacious grounds which provide the children with excellent open-air facilities for exercise as well as a natural resource for the environmental work in the school.

The school primarily serves the parishes of Holy Cross and SS Philip and James, St Frances Cabrini and other parishes in the Bedford Deanery.

For 2026 St John Rigby's Published Admission Number is set at 60 into Reception.

In case of over subscription, the Directors will give priority to children in the following order:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children.
2. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission.
3. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice
4. Catholic children who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission
5. Catholic children for whom the school is the nearest Catholic school.
6. Other Catholic children.
7. Children of staff who have either
 - a. been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application for admission to that school is made.
 - b. or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
8. Siblings of other children whose siblings will be in attendance at the date of admission.
9. Children from other Christian denominations whose parents wish them to receive a Christian education whose application is supported by a Christian minister.
10. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion or other religious leader.
11. Any other children.

In the event that any category is over-subscribed priority will be given to applicants in order of geographical proximity to the school (priority being given to the children who live closer to the school). The Governing Body will use Bedford Borough Council's GIS computer system to determine the distance between the applicants address and the main school entrance. Distance measurements are carried out using a straight-line basis.

St Joseph's and St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Chester Road

Bedford

MK40 4HN

<https://www.stjosephsandstgregorys.com/>



Our vision is that every child who leaves us knows they have a definite service to do; are not afraid to follow God's call in their lives; through education discovers their unique vocation and, in discovering that, find fulfilment in life.

We successfully combine a well-resourced, nurturing environment with the challenge of high aspiration - all that is the hallmark of excellent Catholic education.

Our curriculum is designed to reflect the rich cultural diversity of our community, enrich and broaden the experiences of our children and ensure access to a balance of high quality knowledge and skills.

For 2026 St Joseph's and St Gregory's Catholic Primary School Published Admission Number is set at 60 into Reception.

1. Looked after and previously looked after children.
2. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission.
3. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice
4. Catholic children who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission
5. Catholic children for whom the school is the nearest Catholic school.
6. Other Catholic children.
7. Children attending St Joseph's and St Gregory's Nursery who will be of Reception age.
8. Children of staff who have either
 - a. been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application for admission to that school is made.
 - b. or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
9. Siblings of other children whose siblings will be in attendance at the date of admission.
10. Children from other Christian denominations whose parents wish them to receive a Christian education whose application is supported by a Christian minister.
11. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion or other religious leader.
12. Any other children.

In the event that any category is over-subscribed priority will be given to applicants in order of geographical proximity to the school (priority being given to the children who live closer to the school). The Governing Body will use Bedford Borough Council's GIS computer system to determine the distance between the applicants address and the main school entrance. Distance measurements are carried out using a straight-line basis.

St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School

St Thomas More Catholic Teaching School
Tyne Crescent
Bedford MK41
7UL
<https://www.st-thomasmore.org.uk/>



St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School is built on Christian values that are lived out daily and inspire the warmth, kindness and happiness that are such an obvious characteristic of the school.

Students at St Thomas More achieve very highly in their academic studies and this is an important focus on our work. We also cherish our responsibility to provide an education that is fully rounded and enables each child to develop their God given talents.

Our school is a vibrant, well-ordered and friendly environment. Our students are happy and confident; our staff are experts in their field. Together we work hard to make St Thomas More a truly excellent school.

For 2026 St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School's Published Admission Number is set at 150 into year 7.

1. Looked after and previously looked after children.
2. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission.
3. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice who attend an OLICAT Primary School designated as a feeder school.
4. Other Catholic children.
5. Children of staff who have either
 - a. been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application for admission to that school is made.
 - b. or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
6. Children who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission.
7. Children who attend an OLICAT Primary School designated as a feeder school.
8. Children from other Christian denominations whose parents wish them to receive a Christian education whose application is supported by a Christian minister.
9. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion or other religious leader.
10. Any other children.

In the event that any category is over-subscribed priority will be given to applicants in order of geographical proximity to the school (priority being given to the children who live closer to the school). The Governing Body will use Bedford Borough Council's GIS computer system to determine the distance between the applicants address and the main school entrance. Distance measurements are carried out using a straight-line basis.

St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School

Sixth Form

St Thomas More Catholic Teaching School
Tyne Crescent
Bedford MK41
7UL
<https://www.st-thomasmore.org.uk/>



The school operates a sixth form for a total of 300 pupils. For 2025 our published admission number for external applicants is 10.

Both internal and external pupils wishing to enter the sixth form will be expected to have met the same minimum academic entry requirements for the sixth form. These are that pupils will have achieved at least 32 points from their best 8 GCSEs.

In addition to the sixth form's minimum academic entry requirements pupils will need to satisfy minimum entrance requirements to the courses for which they are applying. If either internal or external applicants fail to meet the minimum course requirements, they will be given the option of pursuing any alternative courses for which they do meet the minimum academic requirements. Course requirements are published annually in the school's prospectus and on its website. Courses have a minimum number required to run and may not always be available.

When year 12 is undersubscribed, all applicants meeting the minimum academic entry requirements will be admitted or permitted to progress.

When there are more external applicants that satisfy any academic entry requirements, priority will be given in accordance with the oversubscription criteria below.

1. Looked after and previously looked after children.
2. Catholic children with a Certificate of Catholic practice who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission.
3. Other Catholic children.
4. Children of staff who have either
 - a. been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the application for admission to that school is made.
 - b. or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
5. Children who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission.
6. Children who attend St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School.
7. Children from other Christian denominations whose parents wish them to receive a Christian education whose application is supported by a Christian minister.
8. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion or other religious leader.

9. Any other children.

In the event that any category is over-subscribed priority will be given to applicants in order of geographical proximity to the school (priority being given to the children who live closer to the school). The Governing Body will use Bedford Borough Council's GIS computer system to determine the distance between the applicants address and the main school entrance. Distance measurements are carried out using a straight-line basis.

Additional Information

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at any of these schools in the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live. Applications can also be made online at www.bedford.gov.uk . You will be advised of the outcome of your application, by the local authority on our behalf in accordance with the timetable published on their website. 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, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

If you do not provide the information required and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, (such as the Certificate of Catholic Practice) your child will not be placed in criteria to which this refers and this is likely to 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 (please see the website at www.bedford.gov.uk)

Late Applications

Late applications will be administered in accordance with your home Local Authority Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. You are encouraged to ensure that your application is received on time.

Appeals

Parents/carers who may wish to appeal against non-admission will have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be binding. Details of admissions and appeals arrangements will be published each year on the Local Authority website.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and *not* in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Waiting lists for admission will be held by the Local Authority and operate throughout the school year.

Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

Feeder Schools

For the purposes of this admissions document the OLICAT Primary Schools designated as a feeder schools are:

School	URN
St John Rigby Catholic Primary School	139515
St Joseph's and St Gregory's Catholic Primary School	139547

SEND

Pupils who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are required to be admitted to the school which is named, even if the school is full.

Fair Access Protocol

We are committed to taking our fair share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the directors are empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol, even where admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number (subject to the infant class size exceptions).

Tie Break

In any situation where the application of the above criteria results in more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, the tie-break will be made by a lottery. The names of all those with an equal right to admission will be allocated to numbered counters. These will then be drawn and the order in which they are drawn will give the order of priority for the allocation of the places available. The places will be allocated, in order, up to the number of places available. Random allocation will be carried out and supervised by a person independent of the Trust.

Transport

Generally as a parent or carer you are responsible for your child's journey to and from school. Bedford Borough Council may provide free transport in certain circumstances. Please check the website at www.bedford.gov.uk on the local authority's statutory duties and eligibility criteria.

In Year Admissions

An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Application should be made to your local authority. Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied.

If there are no places available, the child will be added to the waiting list (see above).

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

In year admissions for sixth form places should be made directly to the school.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry (Primary)

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the

parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1st April and 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to reception rather than year 1.

Any such request should be made in writing to the headteacher(s) of the school(s) to which you are applying at the same time as the admission application is made. The governing body will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher, including the head teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the governing body will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

Definitions

1. 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 educational provision required for a child.
2. A '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.
3. A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order, 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.
4. '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 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 laws of the Church.
5. '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.
6. For the purposes of this admission policy, attendance at a feeder primary school includes those who were prevented from attending a feeder school due to oversubscription of Catholics and whose application to attend was unsuccessful, normally evidenced by a letter of rejection from the feeder primary school.
7. "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 CYTÛN 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.

8. "children of other faiths" means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 7 above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- a. A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- b. 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.

9. 'brother or sister' includes:

all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and the child of a parent's partner where that child for whom the school place is sought lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same home address as the child who is the subject of the application.

10. 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.

11. A child's "home address" refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form ("CAF"). Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the CAF, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.