St Matthew's C.E. (Aided) Primary School and Nursery Centre

Admissions Policy

2026 - 2027

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1. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at the school
- Set out the school's arrangements for allocating places to the pupils who apply
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place

2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- School Admissions Code 2021
- School Admission Appeals Code

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at the school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

Looked after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

4. How to Apply

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

A supplementary form is available to be completed by families who are regular worshippers at St Matthew's Church or who, not being regular worshippers at St Matthew's Church and having moved into their current home within one month of the application, were regular worshippers at another church prior to that move. In either case, the term "regular worshippers" shall mean attending church services at least twice in each calendar month during the preceding six calendar months. Such attendance shall be confirmed by the written evidence of the minister concerned. This form can be downloaded from our website or families can request a form from the school office.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority.

Please note, pupils already attending our nursery will not transfer automatically into the main school. A separate application must be made for a place in reception.

5. Requests for Admission Outside the Normal Age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group. Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The headteacher's views

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

6. Allocation of Places

6.1 Admission Number

The school has an agreed admission number of 40 pupils for entry in Reception.

6.2 Oversubscription Criteria

All children whose education, health and care plans (EHCP) name the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

If the school receives more applications than the number of places it has available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order until all places are filled.

Highest priority will be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children who apply for a place at the school.

Priority will next be given to children on the basis of social or medical need. The school requires supporting evidence if you are making an application based on social or medical need.

- **Priority 1:** Children in or previously in public care*
- **Priority 2:** Children previously in state care outside of England and who have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
- **Priority 3:** Children who live in the school's defined attendance area
- **Priority 4:** Children who live outside the schools defined attendance area

6.3 Tie break

In the event of the school being oversubscribed, all priorities of the above admission policy will use the following criteria, as a tie breaker to differentiate children:

- **Tie Breaker 1**: Those children who have exceptional health reasons where there is written medical evidence that admission to the school is essential for their medical wellbeing;
- **Tie Breaker 2:** Those children who will have on the day of admission a sibling** who attends the school;
- **Tie Breaker 3:** Those children whose families are regular worshippers at St Matthew's Church or who, not being regular worshippers at St Matthew's Church and having moved into their current home within one month of the application, were regular worshippers at another church prior to that move. In either case, the term "regular worshippers" shall mean attending church services at least twice in each calendar month during the preceding six calendar months. Such attendance shall be confirmed by the written evidence of the minister concerned.
- **Tie Breaker 4:** All other children

6.4 Challenging Behaviour
We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these pupils to the Fair Access Protocol. We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked after children, previously looked after children and children with EHC plans listing the school.

6.5 Fair Access Protocol
We participate in Telford and Wrekin Council's Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

7. In-year Admissions

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plans name the school will be admitted.

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place.

If there is no space available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available, it will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.3 of this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Applications for in-year admissions should be made through the Telford and Wrekin Council website Introduction - Applying for a school place - Telford & Wrekin Council

Parents will be notified of the outcome of your in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

8. Appeals

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the admissions team at Telford and Wrekin Council.
You can find details of the school's appeals timetable on our website.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body every year.
Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.