

# Thomas More Catholic School



## ADMISSIONS POLICY & CRITERIA

September 2021 – July 2022

### Mission Statement

**To Care** for, respect and value all people and our environment.

**To Learn** that justice and love are the foundations of our Faith.

To make these the guiding principles of our community in its commitment to academic excellence and personal integrity.

**To Achieve** beyond our highest expectations, creating challenging opportunities, which take us all confidently through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Autumn Term 2020</b>
<b>Review Confirmed by</b>	<b>Full Governing Body</b>
<b>Statutory / Non Statutory</b>	<b>Statutory</b>
<b>Review Frequency</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Next Review Due</b>	<b>Autumn Term 2021</b>

## ADMISSIONS POLICY AND CRITERIA FOR ENTRY SEPTEMBER 2021 – JULY 2022

Thomas More Catholic School (TMCS) is a voluntary aided school in the Archdiocese of Southwark and is located within the London Borough of Croydon. It is in the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Southwark.

The admitting authority at Thomas More Catholic School is the Governing Body. The school is conducted by its Governing Body as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its Trust Deed and Instrument of Government.

The school exists primarily to serve the Catholic community and Catholic children always have priority of admission. As a Catholic School, when referring to entry for Roman Catholic children, this means children who have been baptised in accordance with the Rites of the Roman Catholic Church or baptised into a church which is in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. The Governing Body also welcomes applications, particularly from those of other denominations and faiths, who support the religious ethos of the school.

### ENTRY TO YEAR 7 IN SEPTEMBER 2021

**The admitting authority to the school is the Governing Body of the School which will admit 150 pupils into the school for September 2021.**

TMCS welcomes applications from throughout the community, regardless of faith or background, where the applicant supports Thomas More Catholic School's ethos and aims.

In this policy the term "**Candidate**" refers to the child for whom a place at Thomas More Catholic School is being sought; "**Applicant**" refers to the parent or carer of the Candidate. The expression 'Roman Catholic child' means children who have been baptised in accordance with the rite of the Roman Catholic Church or in accordance with the rite of another Church that is in full communion with the See of Rome. (See Appendix 1).

### ADMISSION CRITERIA

Where the number of applications exceeds 150 the Governors will rank applications using the following criteria in the order stated:

**1. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

All children who have an EHCP and choose the school will be offered a place at the school without reference to any other criteria.

**2. 'Looked After Children' (including Baptised Catholic Children)**

**Looked after children** are defined as children in public care at the date on which the application is made.

**Previously looked after children** are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, immediately after being looked after.

If an application is made under the 'looked after' criterion, it must be supported by a letter from the relevant Local Authority Children's Services Department. If applying under the previously looked after criterion a copy of the adoption or special guardianship order must also be supplied.

*Definition: "A child in care, (LAC) is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority" (Code 1.57).*

*"Children in public care at the date on which the application is made. If an application is made under the 'looked after' criterion, it must be supported by a letter from the relevant Local Authority (Children's Services) Department"*

**3. Baptised Catholic children.**

*Evidence of Baptism or enrolment in the catechumenate will be required.*

*Definition: Catechumen means a member of the catechumenate of the Roman Catholic Church. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.*

**4. Children who are Baptised members of Eastern Orthodox Churches (in communion with the See of Rome).**

*Evidence of Baptism (or dedication) provided by a priest or minister will be required.*

**5. Children who are baptised members of other Christian denominations that are part of Churches Together in England.**

*Evidence of Baptism (or Dedication) provided by a priest, minister or religious leader, will be required.*

**6. Children of other faiths. Evidence of religious commitment provided by a religious leader of a designated place of worship will be required.**

*Evidence of Dedication/commitment provided by a religious leader will be required.*

**7. Any other children.**

*Including children for whom parents/guardians are unable to provide any evidence of religious commitment.*

## **ORDER OF PRIORITY FOR CANDIDATES**

The following order of priorities will be applied when applications within any of the above categories exceed the places available and it is necessary to decide between applications.

### **1. For Catholic Candidates**

The strength of evidence of commitment to the faith as demonstrated by Baptism and the level of the child's Mass attendance on a Saturday/Sunday.

This evidence must be provided by the applicants and be endorsed by a priest at the church where the candidate normally worships.

Candidates will be ranked according to their level of religious commitment and practice and that ranking will determine the order in which offers are made (see criteria below).

The level of religious commitment and practice will be determined from information requested as indicated on the **Supplementary Information Form** to be completed by the applicant and their Parish Priest. This will establish the extent to which the child is from a committed and practising Roman Catholic family, and that the parents are committed to raising their children in the Roman Catholic Faith.

Criteria for 'strength of commitment' to the Catholic faith:

<b>Order of Priority</b>	<b>Saturday/Sunday Mass Attendance</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Weekly for at least three years
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Twice a month for at least three years (fortnightly)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Monthly
4 <sup>th</sup>	Less than monthly

Where the Headteacher (acting under delegated authority from the Governing Body) considers that the evidence supplied is insufficient to indicate the level of religious commitment and practice, or where the Headteacher considers that the information supplied requires verification, he will, working with another member of the Admissions Committee, request documentary clarification from the parent(s) as may be required.

Support for Catholic applications will be required from the Parish Priest or another Catholic priest nominated by the applicants who must be able to confirm that he knows the practice and commitment of the family. The Admissions Committee reserves the right to seek independent verification of any information supplied by applicants.

The school will not interview candidates, so parents should ensure that they provide as much information as they can in support of their commitment to the Roman Catholic Church via evidence of Baptism and regularity of Mass attendance.

## **2. For Candidates of Other Religions**

The strength of evidence of commitment to their faith as demonstrated by Baptism (if applicable) and the level of the child's attendance at their place of worship.

This evidence must be provided by the applicants and be endorsed by a religious leader at the candidate's normal place of worship.

Candidates will be ranked according to their level of religious commitment and practice and that ranking will determine the order in which offers are made (see criteria below).

The level of religious commitment and practice will be determined from information requested as indicated on the **Supplementary Information Form** to be completed by the applicant and religious leader. This will establish the extent to which the child is from a committed and practising religious family, and that the parents are committed to raising their children in their respective faith.

Criteria for 'strength of commitment' to their faith for applicants who are not Catholic:

<b>Order of Priority</b>	<b>Attendance at place of worship</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Weekly for at least three years
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Twice a month for at least three years (fortnightly)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Monthly
4 <sup>th</sup>	Less than monthly

Where the Headteacher (acting under delegated authority from the Governing Body) considers that the evidence supplied is insufficient to indicate the level of religious commitment and practice, or where the Headteacher considers that the information supplied requires verification, he will,

working with another member of the Admissions Committee, request documentary clarification from the parent(s) as may be required.

Support for candidates who are not Catholic will be required from a religious leader nominated by the applicants who must be able to confirm that he or she knows the practice and commitment of the family. The Admissions Committee reserves the right to seek independent verification of any information supplied by applicants.

The school will not interview candidates, so parents should ensure that they provide as much information as they can in support of their commitment to their faith via evidence of Baptism (if applicable) and regularity of attendance at their place of worship.

### **3. Siblings**

“Children with a sibling\* who will be in attendance at the school at the time of enrolment of the new pupil.”

Normally this would mean a sibling through blood, marriage or adoption. They should be residing at the same address and/or have the same surnames. Proof will be required of the family relationship.

*\*Definition: A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister or adopted brother or sister, foster brother or sister whose main residence is at the same address.*

### **4. Social and Medical Needs**

Those needs which make the school particularly suitable for the child in question. Strong and relevant evidence must be provided by an appropriate professional authority (eg qualified medical practitioner, education welfare officer, primary Headteacher, social worker, priest, minister, religious leader) at the time of application.

### **5. Distance from Home to School.**

The Governors of Thomas More Catholic School have decided that applications will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the designated entrance of the school using a computerised measuring system (GIS) and geographical reference points as provided by the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). Those living closer to the school will receive higher priority. If a child lives in a shared property such as flats, the geographical references will determine the start point within the property boundaries to be used for distance calculation purposes.

Evidence of residence will be required.

Definition: “Home” is defined as the address where the child normally resides as their only or principal residence. Addresses associated with child-minding (professional or relatives) are excluded. Parents will be asked to provide documentary evidence to confirm an address and parental responsibility. The Authority must be notified of changes of address immediately. Failure to do so could result in the child being denied a place

In the event that the distances are the same for two or more candidates the order of ranking will be determined by random selection independently scrutinised.

## **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE**

In addition to the Common Application Form (CAF) supplied by the Local Authority, the appropriate Supplementary Information Form (SIF) (available from the school), must be completed and sent to Thomas More Catholic School by October 31<sup>st</sup> of the year preceding entry.

This should be done even if the CAF is completed online. If the SIF is not completed, the Governing Body of the school will only be able to consider the application after all applicants / candidates who have completed a SIF have been considered.

You are advised to retain two copies of the forms. You should keep one copy and pass the second copy to the school or your priest, minister or religious leader, as indicated.

Offers of places will be sent to parents on the common offer date as notified by the Local Authority usually at the beginning of March.

### **Appeals**

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Committee set up in accordance with sections 88 and 94 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and must set out the reasons on which the appeal is made. Appeals should be made to the Admissions Appeal Clerk at the school address. Parents/Carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Committee.

### **Waiting list**

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at TMCS may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. TMCS will hold its waiting list for one term, during this time the candidate must remain on the roll of another school. When a place becomes available, all current applications for a place in the year group will be considered in accordance with the criteria of the TMCS Admissions Policy.

TMCS will not, therefore, maintain an ordered waiting list. Information can be provided to parents about the order of priority of applications being held at a particular time but no guarantee can be given that higher priority applications will not be received by the time a place becomes available. Children will be ranked in the same order as the published oversubscription criteria

### **Late Applications**

Any late applications will be considered by the Governors' Admissions Committee after on time applications, in the event of there being any available places using the above criteria. If all places have been filled, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

This admissions procedure, although primarily relevant to children for whom a place is sought at the normal age of transfer to secondary education (Year 7), applies also to succeeding years, subject to availability of places.

### **Tiebreak**

In the event that the number of applications exceeds the places available within any of the above categories, **distance** will be used to decide between applications at Thomas More Catholic School. A final tiebreak, should two applicants be equidistant from the school, will be made by drawing lots.

## **Application for a place outside the normal age group.**

It is the expectation of Croydon Council that a child is educated alongside his/her age equivalent peers, in almost all cases. It is strongly advised that all children enter into their normal year group. The responsibility for addressing individual educational needs lies with the school through an appropriately differentiated and enriched curriculum.

Parents may request that their child is exceptionally admitted outside their normal age group. The admission authority of a school will decide whether or not the individual child's circumstances make this appropriate on educational grounds

The Governing Body is the admission authority for Thomas More Catholic School. The admission authority of Thomas More Catholic School is mindful of Croydon Council's policy and will normally advise that children enter their normal year group.

All requests to educate a child outside their normal year group should include evidence of the child's circumstances detailing the child's educational need which makes education outside the normal age group necessary. The Governing Body of Thomas More Catholic School will decide on the year group that the child enters and will advise parents of the impact of a child being educated with children of a different age at secondary school where admissions outside the cohort cannot be guaranteed.

Decisions are made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interest of the child. This includes taking account of the following:

- Parents' views
- Information relating to the child's academic, social & emotional development, where relevant
- Medical history
- Any previous history of being educated outside of their normal age group
- Views of the Headteacher of the school(s) concerned

## **In-Year Admissions**

In-year applications for a place at TMCS must be made using the

- a) Common Application Form of the local authority (LA) where the child resides. This form must be returned to the LA
- b) Supplementary Information Form to enable the Governors to rank the application in the event of there being more than one application for a place. This form must be returned to TMCS.

The Governors will use the same criteria to rank in-year applications to TMCS as that listed above for Year 7 entry. The offer of a place at the school will be made by the school. If a place cannot be offered, parents/carers will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

## **Fair Access Protocol**

'The school participates in the local authority's Fair Access Protocol to allocate places to vulnerable and other children in accordance with Appendix A of the School Admission Code 2014. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the planned admission number for the relevant year group'.