

ST JOHN'S CE VA FIRST SCHOOL, FROME

School Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2017-2018

This statutory policy is implemented within the context of our vision of government aims and our values as a Church of England School.

Part One: General Information

1(a) About the School

We are a voluntary aided first school and the governing body is the admissions authority. Our ethos is firmly grounded in our foundation as a church school:

- * ensuring that we are inclusive and welcoming
- * serving and working with our local community
- * providing a happy place to learn, where individuals are valued and enabled to develop a sense of wonder and curiosity.

The school provides education for children aged four to nine years (Foundation Stage through to National Curriculum Year Four). There are two classes in each year group and ten classes in all. There are no mixed age classes and children are taught in their classes for the vast majority of time each week: however, children are occasionally organised in groups appropriate to their ability across year groups to help us in meeting their learning needs. A key feature of our school is the provision of nurturing support to focus specifically on the social and emotional development of a small number of our children.

In addition to our classrooms we make extensive use of our grounds and the local community as a stimulus for learning.

The school takes full account of the legislation relating to equality and diversity. However, the school is a two storey building with no lifts, and this limits wheel chair access to the ground floor. Accessibility is under regular review by the governing body but the present situation may affect suitability of access for individual children and adults.

The school day runs from 8:55am until 3:15 pm. There are fifteen minute breaks in the morning and in the afternoon and the lunch hour begins at 12:15pm.

Our uniform colours are red, white and grey. Most uniform can be purchased in local shops but we sell sweatshirts, polo shirts and fleeces with our crest for those who wish to buy them.

We work in partnership with St John's Church, with the sixteen other schools within the Frome Learning Partnership, and also with our wider family of schools within the diocese of Bath and Wells.

1 (b) Contact Details

The Headteacher oversees all issues relating to admissions and is always willing to meet prospective families and to take them around the school during the working day so that they can gain a sense of our community first hand.

Parents should contact the school office to arrange an appointment on 01373 462251 or email the school at StJohnsFrome@educ.somerset.gov.uk

In addition information about St John's is available on our school website www.stjohnsfrome.co.uk

1 (c) The Published Admission Number

The Admissions Authority has published on the school website an admissions number of 60 for 2017-2018, indicating the maximum number of places available in this year group.

The governors will consider all applications received for the 2017-2018 year group in accordance with these published admission arrangements and places will be offered until the Published Admission Number is reached, at which point all further applications will normally be refused.

The governors may review the Published Admission Number at any time. If this is altered, the change will be notified on the school website.

Admissions limits apply to all other year groups. These may occasionally vary from the Published Admission Number set for the year of entry and are posted on the school website. They may also alter from time to time and parents are advised to check the school website www.stjohnsfrome.co.uk for up to date information.

1 (d) Important: Please Read this Information before Proceeding

These published Admission Arrangements comply with the requirements of the School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code, issued by the Department for Education. The current edition of these codes came into force on 01 December 2014: www.education.gov.uk

All admission applications received in connection with St John's CE VA First School will be administered in accordance with these published arrangements.

Important documents published by Somerset Local Authority will apply to some areas of admissions procedure. Where applicable, this is indicated in the relevant section of the governors' admission arrangements. Applicants are strongly advised to ensure that they read and understand the information contained in the relevant documents before proceeding with an application for a school place. The Local Authority website is www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions

Related documents of particular importance are:

- The Local Authority Coordinated Admissions Scheme (this applies to starting and transferring school for the first time)
- Advice from the DfE on the admission of summer born children
- The Local Authority Fair Access Protocol
- The Local Authority School Transport Policy
- Free School Meal entitlement

Part Two: Over Subscription Criteria

The Special Educational Needs Code requires governors to admit any children with an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) naming this school before the consideration of any other applications.

Following the admission of any children with a EHC Plan naming this school, the governors will consider all other applications received by the relevant closing date and, where there are fewer applications than places available within the Published Admission Number or admission limit set for the required year group, will normally admit the children concerned.

Where there are more applications received than there are places available within the required year group, the governors will consider all the applications received on time against the following over subscription criteria. This will enable the governors to rank children according to priority and identify those children who should be allocated a place within the Published Admission Number or admission limit and those who should be refused.

1. **Looked After Children.** Children in the care of a Local Authority or who have been previously and are now formally adopted.
2. Children whose school placement has been identified as St John's by a multi-agency professional team.
3. Siblings who will have an older brother or sister on roll when they start school.
4. Children, or children whose parents are practising members of churches, in the following order:
 - i. St John's Church
 - ii. another Anglican Church in the Frome Town Ministry Group
 - iii. any other Church in Frome which is a member of Frome Area Christians Together
 - iv. any other Christian Church
5. Children whose parent or carer is a member of the school staff, employed by the governing body on a permanent contract for a minimum of two consecutive years.
6. Children living closest to the school, measured by the safest walking route.

Tie Breaker

Where two or more children are assessed as exactly equal against the published over subscription criteria and they are a multiple birth, both or all the children in that family will be admitted. In all other cases where it cannot be otherwise determined which child has the higher priority for a school place or a position on a waiting list, the order of priority will be determined by the drawing of lots. This will be undertaken in the school building by a person entirely independent of the Admissions Committee and with no current connection to the school. The Chair of Governors, or Vice Chair of Governors, will observe this process.

Additional Notes

Note 1

Criterion 1 means a 'looked after' child or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. 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 functions (see the definition in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989). Adoption is defined under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002

Note 2

Siblings includes a full brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister or the child of the parent's/carer's partner of the same household.

Note 3

Practising members in point 5 shall be taken to mean those with a significant involvement in the worship and life of the church, evidence of which may include:

- regular attendance at public worship by the child or at least one parent at least once a month in the six months preceding the application
- being on the relevant membership roll of the church for at least six months prior to the application: in the case of the Church of England this refers to the electoral roll
- involvement in the wider life of the Church through a commitment of time and energies in its committees or other activities

Generally a practising member, unless otherwise prevented by reason of illness or other reasonable cause, should be able to evidence at least two of the above three aspects of involvement in the worship and life of their church.

Relevant evidence should be sent with the application for a place and should come from the minister of the relevant church or a lay officer of the church. Where families have recently relocated, evidence of commitment in their previous location will be admitted in support of an application.

Note 4

Parents include all those people who have parental responsibility for a child, including carers.

Note 5

Place of residence is the address where the child permanently resides. Where there is divided custody, if the address of residence is not clear, it is the address which is named on the child benefit forms. If in doubt, verification may be requested.

Note 6

If admission applications exceed this limit parents have a legal right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel is an independent body and arrangements for appeal hearings are the responsibility of the Governing Body. Appeal hearings are provided and conducted in line with the National Admissions Appeals Code.

Part Three: Starting School for the First Time

Please note that the following information should be read in conjunction with the 2017 Coordinated Admissions Scheme published by the Local Authority in which area the child subject to the application lives, ie the **home** Local Authority. Additionally applicants should read the information contained in the Local Authority's Primary guide for parents, which will explain the admission process in detail. These documents should be available on the home Local Authority's website or by request to that Local Authority.

In line with Somerset LA's policy, we admit children to school in the academic year they become 5, so children whose 5th birthday is between 1st September 2017 and 31st August 2018 will be able to start school in September 2017.

September is the normal time for starting school, but if parents wish a child to start later in the year, they should approach the Headteacher to discuss deferring their child's entry.

In recognition of the needs of all young children, the school makes arrangements for a gradual induction, which includes part-time schooling at the beginning of the school year. These arrangements may be amended from time to time and the detail will be shared with parents in the Summer Term prior to their children starting school. However, it is the expectation that all children will be attending school full-time before the end of the first half-term, ie by the middle of October.

If any of the above applies and the application for a place is successful, the child's name will be entered on the school roll from September to secure the place.

Application forms and any Supplementary Information Forms relating to starting school in September 2017 must be submitted directly to the **home** Local Authority to arrive no later than 23:59 hours on 15 January 2017.

The home Local Authority will forward applications directly to the Local Authority in which the preferred school is located and the school Governing Body will be notified of all applications received for the School. At this stage the criteria stated in Part Two above will be applied by the school to every application for a place and the Governors' Admissions Committee will rank every application received on time against the governors' published oversubscription criteria.

The Local Authority will then take this information from the school and allocate places on behalf of all admissions authorities. Applicants need to state preferences for up to three schools of their choice and places will be allocated by an "equal preference" system. Wherever possible the parents' first preference will be given. Places will be allocated in strict order up to the Published Admission Number and all other applications will be refused.

The governors' final allocation decision will be notified to Somerset Local Authority in accordance with the authorities Coordinated Admissions Scheme timetable and the home Local Authority will then inform parents of individual decisions on 16 April 2017 by email or second class post.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age

Parents are entitled to a part-time or full-time place at school for their child in the September following their fourth birthday. Where the parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. A child becomes of compulsory school age when they reach the age of five and, where a parent has elected to register their child at school; they must start school on a full time basis in the term following their fifth birthday.

Deferred Entry

Parents offered a place for their child have a right to defer entry, or to take a place up part-time, until the start of the term beginning immediately after their child has reached compulsory school age. However, places cannot be deferred until the next academic year.

Summer Born Children

Parents of summer born children may request that they are admitted into reception rather than year one when they become of compulsory school age. The parent is required to make an on-time application for the child's normal age group but can submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time. The Local Authority will then ensure that the parent receives a response to the request before primary national offer date.

If their request is agreed, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If their request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

Please see the link below for advice from the DfE on the admission of summer born children

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389448/Summer_born_admissions_advice_Dec_2014.pdf

Retained or Accelerated Entry

The Admission Authority will consider applications for retained or accelerated entry (a year group other than the child's chronological age) to a Community or Voluntary Controlled school on a case by

case basis. The reasons for the request should be fully explained on an application form, to be submitted at the same time as the school place application. The Governing Body will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The Governing Body will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

The process for requesting such an admission is as follows;

- The parent/carer is required to make an application for their child's normal age group but can submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time.
- The parent/carer is required to submit a request for admission out of the normal age group and attach supporting evidence as necessary. The Governing Body have the right to request further evidence that may be required.
- The Governing Body will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.
- The Governing Body will write to the parent with the outcome and set out clearly the reasons for their decision.
- In the case of applications for summer born children to be admitted out of their normal age group the parent will receive the outcome before the primary national offer day.
- If their request is agreed, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If their request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.
- Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.
- One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

Part Four: Admission to any Year Group During the 2017-2018 Academic Year

(In Year Admission)

Parents seeking admission for their children to any year group outside the normal admissions round (other than at the start of the Foundation Stage in the year children become five years of age) should complete a standard admission form. The form is available on the school's website (www.stjohnsfrome.co.uk) and should be emailed to the school office (StJohnsFrome@educ.somerset.gov.uk), handed in to the school or returned to the school office by post. The school will respond to the application for a place within ten working days of its receipt. The school will also notify the Local Authority of the application and its outcome.

If there are spaces in the year group, then a space will automatically be given to the child. The child will be able to register at the school and start attending at the earliest convenience of both parties.

However, if the year group is full, the Governors' Admissions Committee will need to give careful consideration to the request. If, following application of the over-subscription criteria it is concluded that a place cannot be offered, the parents will be informed in writing of:

- the reason for the refusal
- information about the right to appeal
- the deadline for lodging an appeal
- the contact details for making an appeal
- how to set out the grounds for an appeal in writing

The admissions authority will give consideration to admission outside the normal year group on an individual basis. However, the Governors' policy strongly favours children being taught alongside their chronological peers and they require that such requests are supported by a report from an educational psychologist. Parents have a right of appeal if such a request is refused.

Part Five: Appeals Procedure

Where parents/carers are refused a place for their child at St John's they have a right of appeal.

The Local Authority conducts appeals on the school's behalf and each appeal is heard by an independent panel. Documentation for completion of an appeal is available on the school website (www.stjohnsfrome.co.uk). A clerk manages the appeal hearing and then informs the parents and the school of the outcome. The result of the appeal is binding.

The process and timetable is as follows:

- Parents/carers have at least 20 school days from the notification of refusal of a place to prepare and lodge an appeal.
- For all appeals, including those for children starting school for the first time and in year admissions, appeals will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- Clear and reasonable deadlines will be given for appellants to submit additional evidence, for the admissions authority to submit their evidence and for the clerk to send appeal papers to the panel and both parties.
- At this stage the appellant may indicate the wish to call additional witnesses or indicate that they will be represented at the hearing. It will also be made clear to the appellant that further evidence submitted after a set deadline may not be heard by the appeals panel.
- At this stage the admissions authority must submit documentation indicating how the application came to be refused and how admitting an additional child would cause prejudice to the provision of efficient education and use of resources. The presenting officer for the school who will answer appropriate questions at the appeal will be named.
- Appellants are given at least 10 school days' notice of their appeal hearing, including the date, venue and general arrangements for the meeting.
- Decision letters giving the outcome of the appeal will be sent to both parties within five school days of the hearing wherever possible.

Where an appeal is upheld for an in year admission, the child must be admitted as soon as possible, ideally within five school days from the receipt of the appeal decision letter.

Appellants may complain about maladministration of an appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman at PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH or make contact via the LGO's advice line on 0300 061 0614.

Date established by governing body:

Date for full implementation:

Date for review:

APPENDIX A

Church of England Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools in the Diocese of Bath & Wells

School Admission Supplementary Information Forms

Notes for those applying for places at Church of England Voluntary Aided or Foundation Schools

If you wish for your application to be considered under any criteria relating to church attendance, you must ensure the following:

- 1. That the attached form is completed by you and signed by the relevant church representative (vicar, priest, minister, pastor, church warden)**
- 2. That the information on the form matches and fulfils the requirements set out in the specific admissions arrangements of the school for which you are applying.**
- 3. That the completed form, signed by both you and the clergy, reaches your home Local Authority by the closing date for applications. This is 15th January 2017 for first admission to school.**

4. That a separate supplementary form be submitted for each church school for which you are applying as each is likely to have differing admissions criteria.
5. If you have recently, or are about to move to a different area, that you ensure that the appropriate church representative of the church where you have been regularly worshipping signs the supplementary information form for your application. **Please ensure that they have seen the admissions requirements for the school/s for which you are applying and are satisfied that you meet the necessary criterion/criteria.**

Please Note:

- Failure to send the correctly completed supplementary information form to your home Local Authority by the closing date will mean that your application cannot be considered under any church attendance criterion.
- The need to obtain the signature from a previous member of clergy/church after moving house cannot be considered as a reason for a late application to be accepted.

School Admissions

Supplementary Information Form for Admission to St John's CofE VA First School PART A

In the event of oversubscription, priority will be given in Criterion 4 of the oversubscription criteria (as published) to children who themselves, or whose parent(s)/carer(s) regularly attend (minimum of once a month for at least 6 months before the date of application) the church(es) named within the school's admissions arrangements.

Please only complete this form if you believe that you meet Criterion 4

Please complete Part A, and give this form to your clergy leader (priest/minister/pastor), who will complete Part B and return it to your home local authority. The relevant clergy must return this form to the LA by the deadline for admissions application for the 2017 academic year, which is 15 January 2017.

Details of Child/Children

Surname:

First Name/s:

Address:

Tel:

Details of Church/Clergy

Name of Church:

Name of Clergy:

Address of Clergy:

Tel:

Signed:

Relationship to child/children:

Date:

PART B

To be completed by clergy.

The parent/carer identified in Part A has applied for a place for their child/children at St John's CofE VA First School for the academic year 2016. We ask that you confirm that either the child or the parent(s)/carer(s) regularly attends your church – at least once per month and has done for a minimum of 6 months prior to the date of application.

Please return this form to the home Local Authority by the deadline for admission applications, which is 15 January 2017.

Thank you for your assistance in completing this supplementary form.

Please note

If this form is not completed or does not reach the LA by the prescribed date, the applicant cannot be considered as eligible for consideration under any church attendance criterion.

I, (insert name of clergy) confirm that the child or parent(s)/carer(s) identified in Part A has attended

..... (name of church) at least once a month for not less than 6 months prior to the date of application.

Signed:

Date:

Church of England Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools in the Diocese of Bath & Wells

School Admission Supplementary Information Forms

Notes for clergy or those responsible and authorised to sign supplementary information forms for those applying to church schools under a church attendance criterion

Please note that the recommendation of the Bath & Wells DBE is that clergy do not work in isolation when looking at school admission supplementary information form requests. The DBE strongly recommends that it is best practice to have a sub-committee of at least three members, including clergy, church wardens and those with

responsibility for Sunday school to consider these requests and be authorised to sign the form if it is agreed appropriate.

Please also note that the completion of this form and its return in time to meet the admission application deadlines is critical for the applicant, and without it the child cannot be considered eligible under any church attendance criteria, even if they are regular attendees at church.

In order for the application to be considered under any church attendance criteria within the school's admissions arrangements, the following must be ensured:

- 1. That the attached form is completed by the applicant and signed by the relevant church representative (vicar, priest, minister, pastor, church warden)**
- 2. That the information on the form matches and fulfils the requirements set out in the specific admissions arrangements of the school to which the application is being made. Clergy must be clear that the specific criterion for each school is being met by the applicant and should see the admissions criteria so that they can check.**
- 3. The DBE recommends that schools use the criterion that either the child or at least one parent has attended worship at the church at least once a month for a minimum of 6 months prior to the time of the application. Please note that this does vary from school to school, with some having far more rigorous requirements.**
- 4. The DBE does recommend that the child or a parent has attended actual worship and that attendance at toddler groups or other activities that are held at the church does NOT meet the requirements.**
- 5. That the completed form, signed by both applicant and the clergy, reaches the applicant's home Local Authority by the closing date for applications. This is 15th January 2017 for first admission to school.**
- 6. That a separate supplementary form be completed for each VA or Foundation church school for which the applicant is applying as each is likely to have differing admissions criteria.**
- 7. For applicants who have recently, or are about to move to a different area, the supplementary information form should be completed by the clergy at the church where they have been regularly worshipping. It is the responsibility of the applicant to organise this and ensure that the SIF is completed and sent in on time.**

Please Note:

The application process is a legal one and every effort MUST be made to ensure that applications and any supplementary forms are completed accurately and on time. If applicants are unsuccessful, they have the right to appeal, and the information provided by clergy can be critical to the outcome of both the application and appeal, particularly where a school is very popular and oversubscribed. Competition for places at some schools can be fierce and it is vital that information supplied is accurate. Clergy should not be pressured into signing a form if they know that the applicant does not, or are in doubt as to whether the applicant does, meet the criteria laid down by the school. This is one reason why a committee should consider every

application. It is also particularly helpful where there is an inter-regnum or where clergy have been in post less than 6 months.