

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



EYFS Pre-school Admissions Policy and Oversubscription Criteria

Policy Updated: July 2025

Policy Review Date: July 2026

As part of a Multi Academy Trust, the Local CAST Board is the admission authority and has responsibility for setting these admission arrangements and for making decisions regarding admissions applications.

These arrangements seek to comply with the government's School Admissions Code, the Local Conditions of Funding the Early Years Education for two-, three- and four-year-olds and the Early Years Pupil Premium, the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2014 and the Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes of Devon County Council, the local authority (LA) for this area.

1. The Ethos of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Buckfast

The school community at St. Mary's seeks to provide all children with a stimulating learning environment, permeated by the Gospel values. We hope to recognise, develop and celebrate all that is unique in each individual and strive to help all attain their full potential in academic achievement, confidence, co-operation and responsibility.

Our school community seeks to build on Gospel values to:

- Nurture and respect the talents and abilities that God has given to each unique individual.

- Enable everyone to aspire to and realise their potential through perseverance, resilience and integrity
- To grow in love and to be loved, unconditionally

2. Early Years Funding

- 2.1. All three and four year-olds are entitled to a free early years' education place for 570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year. Three year olds can be admitted from the start of the term in which they have their third birthday but free funding will be available from the following term.
- 2.2. We expect to admit children who will be using their Early Years Education Funding as well as children whose parents are buying additional hours and those that are both funded and buying hours. There may be some children who are only attending for bought hours and some that only attend for funded hours. The minimum amount of funded time in a day is 2.5 hours.

3. Admissions to the nursery/preschool

- 3.1. St Mary's Catholic Primary School admits:

- Early Years funded three- and four-year-olds from the start of the funding period following their third birthday.
- Non-funded three- and four-year-olds from the start of funding period following their third birthday.

- 3.2. 30 Hours Free Childcare

Some working parents may be eligible for an extended entitlement of up to 30 hours of free childcare per week. This is available to families who meet the government's eligibility criteria. Parents can check their eligibility and apply for an eligibility code via the Childcare Choices website (www.childcarechoices.gov.uk). We ask that eligibility codes are submitted to the school before the start of each term. It is important to ensure that eligibility is renewed when prompted to avoid gaps in funding.

4. Patterns of attendance available

- 4.1. We are required to offer the Early Years Education Funding in a flexible way. Our school makes a core offer of:
 - Morning sessions of 9.00am to 12.00pm (term time only) and
 - Afternoon sessions of 12.00pm to 3.00pm (term time only) and
 - All day sessions of 9.00am to 3.00pm (term time only)
- 4.2. The Foundation Stage Unit is open during school term times.
- 4.3. If you choose an afternoon or an all-day session this includes the lunchtime period that is 12.00 – 1.00pm. This time is considered to be part of the day when children continue their learning and will be funded as part of the Early Years Education Funding.
- 4.4. If you want to buy additional hours on top of the 15 funded hours you can do this during any of our opening times. We sell additional hours at a rate of £5.50 per hour.

5. Charging

- 5.1.** There is no charge for applying for a EYFS Pre-school place, for admission or for the provision of the 15 hours Early Years' funded education (although additional hours may be purchased – please see details below). We will not request donations before or during the admissions process and any donations made to the school following admission are entirely voluntary. No bought activities, such as visits, are compulsory.
- 5.2.** The school must comply with Devon County Councils Local Conditions of Funding¹. A charge cannot be made if a child is only attending the EYFS Pre-school as part of their Early Years Education Funding.
- 5.3.** Details about buying additional sessions/hours in the EYFS Pre-school are set out in the school's charging policy. A policy on charging for activities is available on request from the school and can be viewed on our website.

6. Childcare Vouchers

- 6.1.** Our school accepts childcare vouchers.
- 6.2.** The table below sets out our session times. When applying for a place please tell us what sessions you need. We only consider requests for sessions AFTER the oversubscription criteria have been applied.

Session choices	Hours	Funded/bought hours
8:30am – 9:00am	3	Funded by the school.
9.00am – 12.00pm	3	As part of the Early Years Education Funding or bought.
12.00pm – 3.00pm	3	As part of the Early Years Education Funding or bought.
12.00 – 1.00pm Lunchtime session	1	As part of the Early Years Education Funding or bought.
9.00am – 3.00pm	6	As part of the Early Years Education Funding or bought.
3.00 – 3.30pm	½ hour	Funded by the school. <i>*Pupils will need to be collected at 3.10pm unless they have an older sibling who attends the school.</i>

¹ The Local Conditions of Funding are continually being updated to please make regular visits to the document.

- 6.3. Parents only wishing to use their 15 funded hours with us need to choose sessions carefully so that they can access the full 15 hours e.g. sessions of 6 + 3 + 3 + 3 hours = 15 OR 9 + 6 hours = 15. **NB** The funding can only be taken between 9.00a.m. and 3.00p.m.

7. School Lunches

- 7.1. Free school meals (FSM) can be provided for children (whose parents meet the eligibility criteria) and if their child attends **both** before and after the lunch time period. This generally means an all-day session. A free school meal will be provided whether the child is attending for funded or bought time and regardless of their age.
- 7.2. Children who do not meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals are offered the opportunity to either buy a school lunch or bring a packed lunch.

8. Visiting

- 8.1. We welcome visits from parents and children who are considering applying for a place here. This is an opportunity for you to see what we have to offer. Visits are not a compulsory part of the admissions process and will not affect decisions on whether a place can be offered at our EYFS Pre-school. If you would like to visit the school, please contact the school office on 01364 642389 or via email at admin@st-marysrc.devon.sch.uk to make an appointment.
- 8.2. Most children will start at the EYFS Pre-school at the start of the term or half term. Other children join us “in-year” at other times. This may be because they are new to the area or would like to transfer from another school or early years provider.
- 8.3. To apply for a place here you must use the EYFS Pre-school Application Form.
- 8.4. Places are not allocated to a child automatically, even where:
- there is an older sibling attending here;
 - a child attends a particular toddler group or Children’s Centre attached to the school;
 - a parent has expressed an interest at any time in the school; or
 - the child has always lived close to the school.
- 8.5. No places will be held in reserve for a child who applies late; the school cannot hold places empty if another child applies for admission. We will publicise the need to apply but the responsibility for making an application will be with you as the parent.

9. How to apply for a EYFS Pre-school place

- 9.1. **Parents must complete the EYFS Pre-school Application Form and return it to the school.**
- 9.2. The closing dates for applications for the EYFS Pre-school intake are: 1 April, 1 July and 1 January. You can apply after these dates but your application may not be considered until after all of the applications that were on time. If you couldn’t apply before because, for instance, you moved to this area, you should make sure that you inform the school. If the reason for applying after the closing date is accepted,

your application will be considered at the same time as everyone who did apply on time if this is still possible.

Information provided in an application

- 9.3.** We would like all applications to be fully and honestly completed. It is important that where we offer places to some and refuse others we do so fairly and consistently. Where we have reason to believe that information is false and has been provided knowingly we may withdraw the offer of a place. This is particularly relevant where an address is given which is not the one from which a child will actually attend nursery/FSU and this disadvantages another child. If necessary, we will ask for evidence of a child's home address before admission.
- 9.4.** If you know or believe that your child's address will change before admission, you must inform the school as this may affect your application.
- 9.5.** You will be asked to provide date of birth evidence so we can check your child's age.

10. What happens next

- 10.1.** If there are fewer applications than places then no application will be refused. Only if there are more applications than there are places available, the local governing body prioritise applications according to the oversubscription criteria below.
- 10.2.** By 1 May, 1 October and 1 February we will contact successful parents to welcome them to the school and to make arrangements for admission itself. You will also be contacted if we do not have a place available so that you can apply to another provider.
- 10.3.** If you need help finding a place at another provider please contact DISC, Devon's Family Information Service by e-mail discinfo@devon.gov.uk, telephone 0845 155 1013, or search for [childcare online](#).

11. Points of Admission to EYFS Pre-School for funded hours

- 11.1.** Generally children will start at the EYFS Pre-school at the beginning of a term. Eligibility for all three-years-olds to receive the Early Years Education Funding is at the start of the term following their third birthday. This funding will be paid up until the time when the child reaches statutory school age if the parent chooses to defer or delay entry into school.

Children who are eligible at 3 years old		
On or after	And on or before	Funding starts:
1 September	31 December	Spring (after Christmas)
1 January	31 March	Summer (after Easter)
1 April	31 August	Autumn (after Summer)

- 11.2.** There is a legal requirement that all children begin full time education by the beginning of the term following their **fifth** birthday. All places offered in reception at the normal round are for full-time admission in the September following the **fourth** birthday. This is a legal requirement on schools but not on parents who retain a right to defer admission or send their child part time.

12. The admissions process

1) Children become eligible for a place when they were born:	On or after 1 April and on or before 31 August	On or after 1 September & on or before 31 December	On or after 1 November & on or before 31 March
2) Visit the nursery in:	Spring term	Summer term	Autumn term
3) Apply by:	1 May	1 September	1 January
4) Admissions Committee meet in:	May	September	January
5) Receive a letter about your application before:	May half term	October half term	February half term
6) Reply to the letter	Reply to the letter within 2 weeks to accept a place (or ask why you did not get a place). You can telephone, email or write to the school		
7) Start at Nursery/FSU (or at the start of term closest to that month)	September Autumn Term	January Spring term	April Summer term

13. Published Nursery Admissions Number (PNAN)

- 13.1.** This is the number of places we intend to make available for our normal EYFS Pre-school intake. Once we set this number, we will not refuse admission for applications below the PNAN. If there is unexpectedly high demand and we believe we could admit more children, we inform Devon County Council's Early Years and Childcare Team and either some children will be admitted above the PNAN or we will increase the PNAN. The number of children that can be admitted will depend on their age, the amount of floor space we have and whether additional staff will be required.
- 13.2.** The governing body also factor in the local demand for places and the age ranges of the children wanting a place. If there is a change to the PNAN part way through the year this must be published.
- 13.3.** If there is an increase in the demand for places the governors may decide to increase the PNAN at the start of the following term in order to accommodate children on the waiting list and conversely reduce the PNAN if there is a very low demand.

- 13.4. The table below sets out our Published Nursery Admissions Number (PNAN) for 2025-26:

The maximum number of 3 and 4 year old children (this includes rising 3 year olds) that will be admitted at any one time:	15
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- 13.5. Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available in the EYFS Pre-school the local governing body will use the following oversubscription criteria to prioritise applications for both funded and bought hours:

13.5.1. A child with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming St Mary's Catholic Primary School will be admitted.

13.5.2. Looked After Children or those who were Looked After but ceased to be because they were adopted, made the subject of a child arrangements order or made the subject of a special guardianship order.

13.5.3. Children with an exceptional medical or social need to attend this setting.

13.5.4. Children who are baptised Catholic

13.5.5. Children with a sibling on roll at the school.

13.5.6. Children who are members of another Christian Church or other faith tradition.

13.5.7. All other children.

14. Waiting lists

Following allocation of EYFS Pre-school places the school will retain a waiting list. Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list, at the parent/ carer's request. The admissions criteria will be applied should a vacancy arise.

- 14.1. Parents with very young children, i.e. those that are not due to start within the next two terms, will be asked to complete a **Note of Interest** form and advised as to when they should submit the EYFS Pre-school Application form.

15. Increasing the hours attended

- 15.1. If a place becomes available part way through a term and there is a waiting list, priority for the place will be given to the child/children on the waiting list. If the parents on the waiting list do not want the places at the times that are available then the places can be offered to parents of children who are already attending the EYFS Pre-school. Similarly, if there is not a waiting list and there are parents of children that already attend the nursery who want to either take up additional funded hours and/or buy extra hours then a list of those parents will be made and the oversubscription criteria will be applied to determine who should be given priority for that place.

16. Admissions appeals

- 16.1. If a EYFS Pre-school place is refused, parents can go through the school's complaints process to express their concerns. The governing body will review the decision and decide whether the refusal was justified on the grounds that the EYFS Pre-school is full. Even if it is agreed that the EYFS Pre-school was full, it will also consider the impact on the child and family and may still award a place if there is both the physical space and sufficient staff available.

17. Transport

- 17.1. No transport is available for pre-school children.

18. Uniform

- 18.1. Children attending St Mary's Catholic Primary School EYFS Pre-school wear a uniform. Our school jumper and/or cardigan can be purchased from Brigade Clothing. The white polo shirt and grey trousers/skirt/or gingham pale blue dress and grey socks/tights can be purchased from most major retail outlets. Information will be given from the school office on receipt of an application. Parents unable to purchase items of uniform will not be penalised as we are able to assist families in need.

19. Claiming the Early Years Funding

- 19.1. The Early Years Education Funding can be taken at more than one provider. Although there is no upper limit on the number of providers a child can attend careful consideration must be given to ensuring that the child feels settled, safe and can form relationships with significant adults.
- 19.2. It is important that both the school and parent can see what time is funded and what time is being bought.
- 19.3. Parents must not claim more than the 15 hour entitlement (or 30 hours depending on eligibility), checks are carried out to ensure that over claims are not made.
- 19.4. You may also be asked to help complete a **Conflict Buster** if you want some funded time with us and some at another provider.

20. Changes to attendance

- 20.1. Changes to the times when a child is attending will generally only be agreed to take effect from the start of a term. The oversubscription criteria will be applied to both 1 and 2 below to determine within each group which children should be given priority. Order of priority for the consideration of unfilled places.
- 1) New applications from parents whose children do not yet attend the EYFS Pre-school.
 - 2) Requests by parents whose children attend the EYFS Pre-school and they want to increase OR change the times their child attends
- 20.2. It is expected that parents will ensure that their child will attend at the times agreed, so that children can establish a routine and be ready to start school.
- 20.3. If a child is sick the parent must inform the school. If a child does not attend the EYFS Pre-school for a period of more than two weeks without informing the school, that child's place may be offered to another child.

21. Induction and transition arrangements

21.1. Visits to St Mary's prior to starting in the EYFS Pre-school Unit are encouraged.

22. Contacts and further information

Head teacher Mrs Sophie Kerswell	E-mail:	admin@st-marysrc.devon.sch.uk
	Telephone:	01364 642389
	Website:	www.st-marysrc.devon.sch.uk

23: Additional updated information:

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Children who are eligible for EYPP receive additional funding to support their development, learning, and care. This funding is used by the school to enhance the quality of the early years experience for eligible children. Parents are encouraged to check their eligibility through the local authority or school office. EYPP funding may be used to provide targeted support, resources, or training that helps close developmental gaps.

SEND and Inclusion

We welcome children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names St Mary's Catholic Primary School will be given priority for admission. We are committed to inclusive practice and work closely with families and professionals to support children with emerging or identified needs. Our SENDCo is available to discuss any concerns or support needs.

We aim to make this policy accessible to all. Please contact the school office on 01364 642389 or admin@st-marysrc.devon.sch.uk if you require help in understanding any part of this document.

23.Policy Version This policy was determined by the Local CAST Board on 7th July 2025.