

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025 26

Approved by: LGC 14TH December 2023

Last reviewed:

Next review: December 2024

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, FENHAM ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-26

Sacred Heart Catholic High School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for girls of Catholic families. The school is conducted by the Catholic Education Trust as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and articles of association, and seeks at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic girls in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below.

As a Catholic school, 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. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. We, therefore, hope that all parents (see note 11) will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school. 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.

The admission policy criteria will be dealt with on an equal preference basis.

Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust is the admissions authority and is responsible for determining the admission policy. The local authority coordinates the admissions process on behalf of the Trust. The administration and operation of the admission policy is delegated by the Trust to the Local Governing Committee.

Catholic Feeder Primary Schools

Sacred Heart, Fenham	St Bede's, Denton Burn	English Martyrs, Fenham
St George's, Bells Close	St Oswald's, Gosforth	St Charles', Gosforth
St John Vianney, West Denton	St Cuthbert's, Kenton	Our Lady and St Anne's
St Cuthbert's, Walbottle	St Michael's, Elswick	St Mark's, Westerhope
St Joseph's, Benwell		

Published Admission Number

The admissions authority has set its admission number at 225 pupils to year seven in the school year which begins in September 2025.

Girls with an Education, Health and Care plan or a statement of Special Educational Need (Read Note 1)

Girls who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or a statement of Special Educational Need, where the school is named as the most appropriate educational setting for the girl, will be admitted.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round (not in-year applications), a Common Application Form (CAF) must be completed. This is available from the local authority in which the girl lives.

The parent will be advised of the outcome of the application on 1 March 2025 or the next working day, initially by a letter or email from the local authority on behalf of the admissions authority.

If the parent is required to provide supplemental evidence to support the application (e.g. a baptismal certificate), this evidence should be provided at the time of application. If not provided, evidence may be sought by the admissions authority following the closing date for applications. This information must have been correct at the date of closing for applications.

Late Applications

Any applications for September admissions received after the closing date will be accepted but only considered after those received by the closing date, which is 12 noon 31 October 2024.

Late applications will be administered in accordance with the home local authority coordinated admissions scheme. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their application is returned on time.

Admission of Girls outside their Normal Age Group

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

Any such request should be made in writing to the headteacher of the school. The admissions authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the girl. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the admissions authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, applicants 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 below and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Waiting lists for admission will operate throughout the school year. The waiting list will be held open until the last day of the summer term. Inclusion on the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

In-Year Applications

An application can be made for a place for a girl at any time outside the admission round and the girl will be admitted where there are available places. Applications should be made to the school by contacting Mrs Maill 0191 2747373. [www.sacredheart-high.org]

Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application in writing. Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria will be applied. If there are no places available, a request can be made that the girl is added to the waiting list (see above).

Right of Appeal

Where a parent has been notified that a place is not available for a girl, every effort will be made by the local authority to help the parent to find a place in a suitable alternative school. Parents who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the chair of governors at the school address.

Fair Access Protocol

The school is committed to taking its fair share of girls who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the admissions authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a girl where admission is requested under any local protocol

that has been agreed by both the diocese and the admissions authority for the current school year. The admissions authority has this power, even when admitting the girl would mean exceeding the published admission number.

False Evidence

The admissions authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place where false evidence is received.

Oversubscription Criteria

The school will admit students in the order of priority listed below.

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after girls. *Read Notes 2 and 3*
2. Catholics who attend a Catholic feeder primary school. *Read Note 3&13*
3. Other Catholic girls. *Read Note 3*
4. Other looked after or previously looked after girls. *Read Note 2*
5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. *Read Notes 4 and 5*
6. Up to 10% of the annual intake of girls who demonstrate an aptitude for Performing Arts. An objective method of determining aptitude and not of general ability will be used. *Read Note 8*
7. Daughters of a member of school staff who has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of which application for admission to the school is made. *Read note 7*
8. Other girls who attend a Catholic feeder primary school. *Read Notes 13&14*
9. Girls of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader. *Read Note 6*
10. Other girls

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.

- (i) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the girl which can be most appropriately met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 12)*
- (ii) The attendance of a sibling at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after girls in (i) above. (see note 10)*

Tie Breaker

Where there are insufficient places to meet all applications within a category the school will allocate places using an electronic random allocation process, which will be independently monitored. In the instance of multiple births, and one sibling is chosen by random allocator both or more siblings will also be admitted.

If your daughter is unsuccessful in gaining a place, you may request that your daughter is placed onto the school's waiting list, which will be maintained according to the schools admissions criteria. Within each criterion, girls will be ranked by computer in random order.

Notes and Definitions

1. A **Statement of Special Educational Needs** is a statement made by the local authority under section 324 of the Education Act 1996, specifying the special educational provision for a girl. 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 girl.
2. A **looked after girl** has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any girl 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. girls with foster parents) at the time of making application to the school.

A **previously looked after girl** is a girl who was looked after, but ceased to be so because she was adopted, or became subject to a girl arrangements order or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those girls who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

3. **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 girl who is part of a Catholic family where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the girl would have been baptised or received if it were not for their status as a looked after girl (e.g. a looked after girl in the process of adoption by a Catholic family).

For a girl to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic 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 law of the Church.

4. **Catechumen** means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. For the purposes of admissions this refers to the girl on whose behalf the application is being made. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.
5. **Eastern Christian Church** includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception should contact the Diocese who will decide how the question of baptism or reception is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.
6. **Girls of other Christian denominations** means girls 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.

Applicants must provide a baptismal certificate or where child baptism is not practised, a letter confirming their church membership from their minister or faith leader.

7. A **member of staff** includes all school staff who are under the direct employment of the Trustees of the school.
8. As a Specialist School we are allowed by law to select up to 10% of the intake based on our specialism. Judgement on aptitude will be made from independent evidence provided by the parents. If the number of applicants exceeds 10% students will take part in workshops in Performing Arts set by the school, designed to establish aptitude. This will lead to the creation of a rank order. There will be a maximum of 22 places available under this criterion depending on how many places are available after the other criteria 1 - 5 have been applied. The assessor will have skills in the Performing Arts, be independent of the school, and will have no family connection with any applicant. The assessor's judgment on aptitude on the day is final. Any independent evidence that the parents wish to submit must be sent to the school.
9. **Home address** is the primary parental address which will be used in applying the admission criteria. This means that, when stating the choice of school, the parental address at the time of application should be given. The address of childminders or other family members who may share in the care of the girl must not be used as the home address. Documentary evidence may be requested.
10. **Sibling** includes:
 - (i) all natural sisters, half sisters, adopted sisters, step sisters, foster sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and
 - (ii) the child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant.
11. A **parent** means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a girl, and any person who has care of a girl (having care of a girl means that the girl lives with and is looked after by that person).
12. To demonstrate an **exceptional social, medical or pastoral need** of the girl which can be most appropriately met at this school, the admissions authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

13. Catholic Feeder Primary Schools

Sacred Heart, Fenham	St Bede's, Denton Burn	English Martyrs, Fenham
St George's, Bells Close	St Oswald's, Gosforth	St Charles', Gosforth
St John Vianney, West Denton	St Cuthbert's, Kenton	Our Lady and St Anne's
St Cuthbert's, Walbottle	St Michael's, Elswick	St Mark's, Westerhope
St Joseph's, Benwell		

14. Girls who are not Catholic attending a Catholic feeder primary school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the local authority's admission guidance for parents.