SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2026 27

Approved by:	LGC	December 2024
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SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, FENHAM

ADMISSION POLICY 2026 - 2027

Sacred Heart Catholic High School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for girls of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic girls in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed on p3. The school is conducted by Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust (BBCET) as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and Articles of Association and always seeks to be a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our girls. 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 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 these admission arrangements.

BBCET is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round[1] (excluding admission to year 12). The admission authority has set the school's Published Admissions Number (PAN) at **225 girls** to the school year which begins in September 20**26.** The admission authority will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all sisters from multiple births where one of the children is the last girl ranked within the school's PAN.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan *(see note 1)*

The admission of girls with an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Girls with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school must be admitted. Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other girls.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round[2], you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live. If you are required to provide supplementary information to support this application, for example a baptismal certificate, this evidence should be provided at the time of application. If not provided, evidence may be sought by the admission's authority following the closing date for applications. This information must have been correct at the date of closing for applications. If you do not provide the supplementary information, this may affect your daughter's chance of being offered a place.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 1st March 2026 or the next working day, by the local authority on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your daughter gained a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed below, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

[1] This is for admission to the school at the start of the school year in September and not for applications made in-year.
[2] This is for applications to the school at the start of the school year in September and not for applications made in-year.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 31st October 2025.

Late Applications[3]

Late applications will be administered in accordance with your home Local Authority Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. You are encouraged to ensure that your application is received on time.

Admission of Girls Outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a girl to be admitted outside 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 at the same time as the admission application is made. The admission 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, including the headteacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful girls 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 on p3 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 in 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 normal admission round and the girl will be admitted where there are available places. Application should be made by contacting Mrs Maill 0191 2747373. [www.sacredheart-high.org]

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out on p3, will be applied.

If there are no places available, the child will be added to the waiting list (see above).

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Fair Access Protocol

The school is committed to taking its fair share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the admission authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a girl where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The admission authority has this power even where admitting the girl would mean exceeding the PAN.

False Evidence

The admission authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where the girl is already attending the school the place itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or the place was obtained by deception.

Oversubscription Criteria

At any time where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children. (see notes 2 & 3)
2. Catholic children who attend a feeder Catholic primary school, namely,

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		

(see note 3 & 14)

3. Other Catholic girls. (see note 3)
4. Other looked after and previously looked after girls. (see note 2)
5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 4 & 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. (See note 9*)*
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. (See note 10)
8. Other girls who attend a Catholic feeder primary school (see notes 14 & 15*)*
9. Girls of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion or faith leader. (see notes 6)
10. Any 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 sister 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 8)

Tie Break[4]

Where there are insufficient places to meet all applications within a category, the school will allocate places using an electronic random allocation process, where applicant names are run through computer software and are re-run whenever places are offered. This is independently monitored by a representative from Clennell Education Solutions. 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 school's admissions criteria. Within each criterion, girls will be ranked by computer in random order.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. 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 child.
2. A 'looked after child' has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child 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. children with foster parents) at the time of making an application to the school.

   A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because she was adopted, or became subject to a child arrangement order, or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admission 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 child living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

   For a girl to be treated as Catholic, evidence of 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 laws of the Church.
4. 'Catechumen' means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. 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.
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

[4] This paragraph may need to be amended depending on whether there are any local arrangements with the local authority.

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 baptismal is not practised, a letter confirming their church membership from their minister or faith leader.

7. 'Girls of other faiths' means girls who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 6 above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

    - A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
    - A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

    Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in that supreme being through worship.

8. 'Sister' includes:

    (i) all natural sisters, half sisters, adopted sisters, stepsisters, foster sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and

    (ii) the daughter of a parent's partner where that girl for whom the school place is sought lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same home address as the girl who is the subject of the application.

9. 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.

10. A member of staff includes all school staff who are under the direct employment of the Trustees of the school.

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.

12. To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the girl which can be most appropriately met at this school, the admission authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

13. A girl's home address refers to the address where the girl usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form (CAF). Where parents have shared responsibility for a girl, and the girl lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the CAF, provided that the girl resides at that address for any part of the school week.

14. 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		

15. 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. All applications for school places must be made to your home local authority, that is the local authority where the parent pays Council Tax to, even if you are applying for a place in a school located in a different local authority area.

Applicants applying through Newcastle City Council can apply online via the Citizen's Portal (www.newcastle.org/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en)

A paper application form is available as an alternative; this is available from the School Admissions Team at admissions.information@newcastle.gov.uk and must be returned to Newcastle City Council.