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ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHELTENHAM

ADMISSION POLICY 2024-2025

MISSION STATEMENT

As a Catholic school, God is at the heart of all we do. We believe that each person is made in His image, deserving to be treated with respect and dignity. Showing respect, love and care for everyone and everything, we aim to develop harmony between pupils, parents, the school and Parish and grow as a Christian community. Pupils will share in God's love, whilst receiving a broad and balanced education. We aim to enable each individual to realise their full potential, spiritually, academically, physically, socially and emotionally.

I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full - John 10:10

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School was founded to provide education for children of Catholic families. Catholic schools are inclusive, and we welcome applications from children who are not Catholic. However, where there are more applications than places available, allocations will be made in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below.

We aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils and that Catholic teaching and practice permeate every aspect of school life. We therefore hope that all parents will fully support the aims and Catholic ethos of the school.

The Governing Body is the admissions authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of

admission arrangements during the normal admission round (see note 5). The Governing Body has set its Admission Number at 30 for pupils to be admitted to the reception year in the school year which begins in September 2024.

Subject to compliance with Infant Class Size Legislation, the Governing Body will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's Published Admissions Number ("PAN").

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

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children 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 children.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority.

Within each of the categories listed below, priority will be given to children who will have a brother or sister at the school at the time of enrolment. (see note 6).

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children. (see notes 2 & 3)
2. Catholic children who are resident in the school's designated parishes St. Thomas More's Church, Cheltenham and St. Joseph's Church, Tewkesbury (see notes 3 & 9)
3. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)
4. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)
5. Children who are a Catechumen (see note 4)
6. Any other children.

Tie Break

Where children have identical ranking, priority within categories 1,2,3 and 5 will be determined by allocation (see below).

Priority within categories 4 and 6 will be given to those living closest to the school as measured by a direct line between the Ordnance Survey address point of the child's home to the Ordnance Survey address point of the school using Gloucestershire Local Authority's computerised system.

Where distances are equal, priority will be determined by random allocation (see below)

Random Allocation

Random Allocation is the drawing of lots, supervised by a person independent of the school. Each child will be allocated a number. All the numbers will be placed into a hat or other suitable container and will be drawn out and ranked in the order that they were drawn.

For children of a multiple birth, only the allocated number of one of the children will be entered in the draw. Where this number is drawn, the other child or children will be deemed to have also been drawn. Lots will then also be drawn for these children to decide their individual ranking. This process will also be applied to brothers or sisters who are not from a multiple birth but are applying for a place in the same year group.

Supporting Evidence

For categories 1, 2, 3 and 5 supporting evidence must be provided. If you do not provide the supporting documentation e.g. a certificate of baptism, or of reception into the Church, or of reception into the order of catechumens, (as detailed in notes 3 and 4 below), your child cannot be placed within any of those categories and this may affect your child's chance of being offered a place. To be considered in the first round of allocations, it should be submitted to the school (or Local Authority if* they will accept it) by 15 January 2024.

NB whilst some Local Authorities may accept supporting documentation, others do not. It is therefore recommended you send it to the school.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round (see note 5), you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live. For those living in Gloucestershire applications may be made online at:

https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-admissions/apply-for-a-primary-or-infant-school-place/ or on a paper form available from and sent to; Gloucestershire County Council, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TG.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 15th January 2024.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 16th April 2024 or the next working day, by the local authority in which you live, on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Late Applications

Late applications will be administered in accordance with your home Local Authority Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme (available from your Local Authority). You are encouraged to ensure that your application is submitted on time.

Admission of Children Below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

A child reaches compulsory school age in the term following their fifth birthday. Where offered a place, a child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1st April and 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to Reception rather than Year 1. Any such request should be made in writing to the school office (see above email and postal addresses) at the same time as the admission application is made on the Local Authority Common Application Form (for the child's chronological year group). The Governing Body will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to considering the views of the Head Teacher, including the Head Teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the Governing Body will consider the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

If the Governing Body agree in principle for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, it does not guarantee the child a place. The parent will again need to make an application on a Local Authority Common

Application Form (for the outside age group) and, if necessary, the oversubscription criteria will be applied to determine if a place may be offered.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful parents will be offered the opportunity for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above 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 school day of the summer term. Each child added to the list will require the list to be ranked again in line with the above published oversubscription criteria.

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 child at any time outside the normal admission round and the child will be admitted where there is an available place. Application should be made in writing to the school office (see above email and postal addresses) using the school's In-Year Application Form, that is available from the school.

Any supporting documentary evidence, for example, a Baptism Certificate or proof of a house move, should be provided with your application.

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

If your application is refused, you will be offered the opportunity for your child to be added to the waiting list (see above).

The Governing Body will consider your application and you will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing, and if refused a place, you will 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 Governing Body is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol (including over those on a waiting list). The Governing Body has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the Published Admission Number (subject to the infant class size exceptions).

Withdrawal

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

Notes

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 application to the school.

   A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because he or she was adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order including those who appear to the governing body to have been in state care outside of England and 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. For someone to be treated as Catholic, written evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the Church will be required. 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. Whilst a copy of the certificate may be accepted, the governors may request sight of the original. The governing body may request additional supporting evidence if the written documents that are provided do not confirm the fact that the person was baptised/received into a Catholic Church.

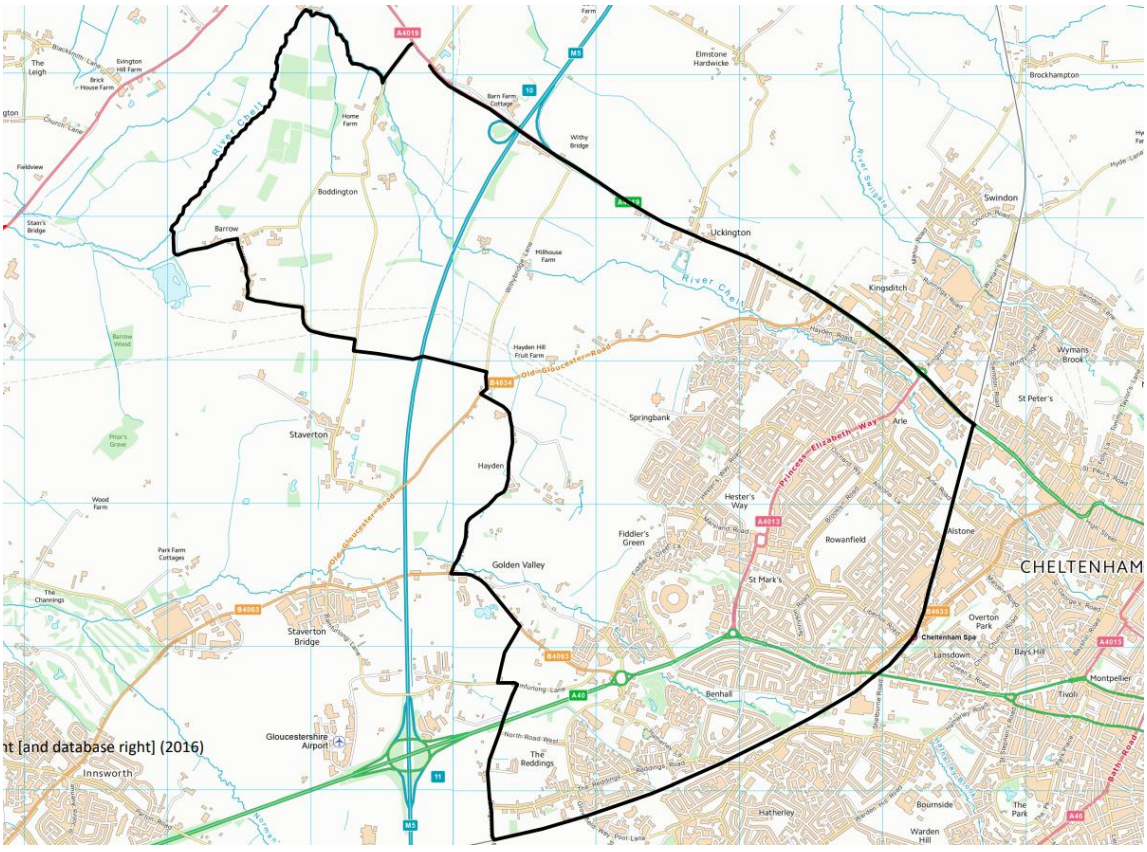
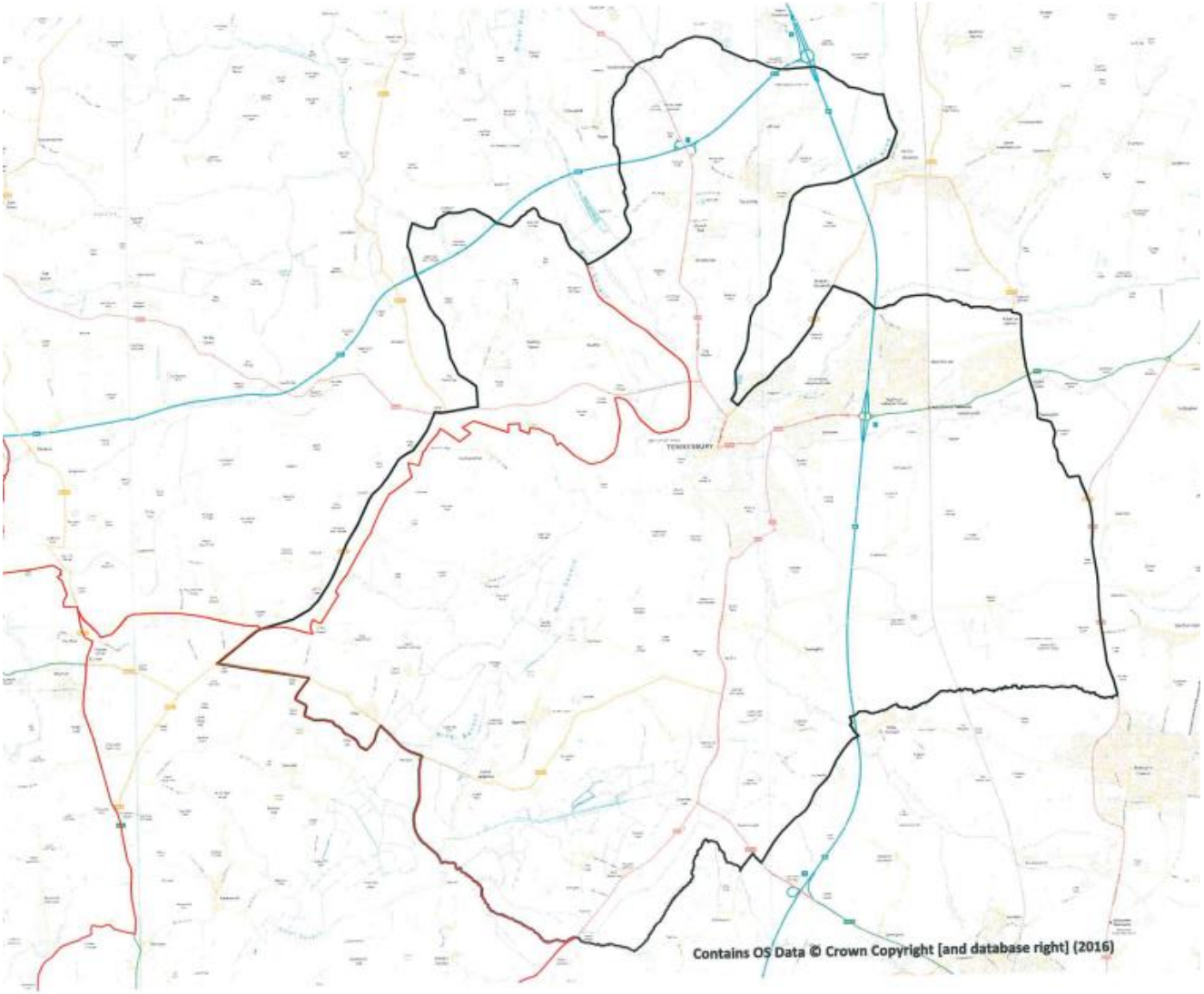
   There may occasionally be difficulty in obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception into the Church. In such cases, contact may be made with a Parish Priest for advice on how the question of baptism/reception is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church. The Priest may seek advice from Clifton Diocese.

   For the purposes of this policy, 'Catholic' includes a looked after child living with a family where at least one of the parents is confirmed as being Catholic.

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. Children must be at least 7 years old to be a Catechumen, so the Oversubscription criterion category no. 5, cannot be applied to any child less than 7 years old.

5. Within this policy, the 'normal admission round' means all new intake applications, submitted by the closing date and late applications received by the local authority up to 31st August, and so does not include In-Year applications (see above).
6. 'brother or sister' includes:
   (i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, 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 home address as the child who is the subject of the application.
7. A 'parent' means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child, and any person who has care of a child.
8. A child's 'home address' refers to the permanent address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer and should be the address provided in the Common Application Form (CAF) to the home Local Authority. Where parents have shared responsibility for a child and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address where the child lives for at least 50% of the time.
9. For the purposes of this policy, parish boundaries of St. Thomas More's Church, Cheltenham and St. Joseph's Church, Tewkesbury are shown in the maps below:

St Thomas More Parish Boundary



St Joseph's Parish Boundary