

ST JOHN'S CE VA FIRST SCHOOL, FROME

School admission arrangements for the academic year 2024-25

The Governing Body of St John's CofE VA First School are consulting on their 2024/25 admissions arrangements. The main proposed change is to the way home to school distances are measured. The proposal is that distances will be measured as a straight line rather than as a walking route.

ST JOHN'S CE VA FIRST SCHOOL, FROME

School admission arrangements for the academic year 2024-25

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 8:35am until 3:15 pm. There is a fifteen minute break in the morning and also in the afternoon for children in reception and Key Stage 1. The lunch break is staggered by year group and takes place between 11.45am and 1.15pm.

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

St John's First School has a published admission number of 60 for entry in the reception year in 2024.

The school will accordingly admit this number of pupils each year if there are sufficient applications. Where fewer applicants than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year group are received, the Governing Body will offer places at the school to all those who have applied.

Part Two: Over subscription criteria

When the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) naming the school, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:

1. Looked After Children. Children in the care of a Local Authority or who have been previously and are now formally adopted or subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order. Children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (see note 1).
2. Children who will have a brother or sister on roll when they start school (see note 2).
3. Children, or children whose parents are practising members of:
 - a) St John's Church, Frome then,
 - b) any Christian church (see note 3)
4. 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 as of the application closing date.
5. Children living closest to the school.

Tie Breaker

If in categories 1-5 above a tie-break is necessary to determine which child is admitted, the child living closest to the school will be given priority for admission. Distance is

measured in a straight line by a Geographical information System (GIS) method from the geocoded point of the school site to the geocoded point of the pupil's home.

Random allocation by drawing lots supervised by someone independent of the school, will be used as a tie-break in categories 1-5 above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between a child's home and the school is equidistant in any two or more cases.

However, if children of multiple birth (twins and triplets) are tied for the final place, those siblings will be admitted over PAN as permitted by infant class size rules.

Additional Notes

Note 1

A "Looked After Child" means any child who is in the care of a local authority in accordance with Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989. A child who was "a previously Looked After Child" means a child who after being Looked After became subject to an Adoption Order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, a Residence Order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 or Special Guardianship Order under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 as well as those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Relevant evidence will be required to be submitted.

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 or children of the same household. Please see the information on shared residency arrangements which will apply if necessary in order to determine the sibling's permanent home address.

Note 3

Practising members in point 3 means children and/or at least one parent who regularly attend public worship at a Christian church at least once a month in the six months preceding the application.

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship, the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admission arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

In order to be considered under this criteria a supplementary information form must be sent to the Local Authority by the school place application deadline.

Note 4

A 'parent' in education law includes natural parents, whether they are married or not and a person other than the natural parent(s) who has parental responsibility or care of a child or young person. Having 'care' of a child or young person means that person who looks after the child and with whom the child lives, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child.

Part Three: Starting school for the first time

Applications must be submitted to the home LA. If this is Somerset applications can be made on-line at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions. Paper applications are available to download from the Somerset County Council website at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions, or upon request by telephoning Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224.

Applications must be received by 23:59 hours on 15 January 2024, otherwise the application will be recorded as late. Late applications will be considered after those received on time. Please see the Somerset LA co-ordinated scheme for full details.

Outcomes for on time applications will be sent out by email (for on line applicants) or second class post on 16 April 2024 (or next working day if this falls on a weekend or bank holiday).

Part Four: Admission to any year group during the 2023-24 academic year (in year admission)

In year applications must be submitted directly to the school using the in-year application form which can be obtained on the school website or by request to the school office.

The governors' admissions committee will consider batches of applications on a weekly basis with a 4pm deadline every Friday (term time only) for receipt of applications. If more applications are received than there are places available, the over-subscription criteria will be applied

A decision will be notified in writing to the applicant within ten school days.

Proof of address may be required to be submitted with the application. This will be either the formal 'exchange of contracts' letter from the solicitor for a house purchase, a recent utility bill or the signing of a minimum of a six month tenancy agreement. The Governing body reserve the right to seek further documentary evidence to support a claim of residence.

Where there are more applications than places available within a particular year group, applications will be considered against the published oversubscription criteria and allocated up to the admission number/ limit.

Places will not be allocated more than six school weeks or half a term in advance of being required. The only exceptions are children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and other crown servants (including Diplomats) returning to the UK with a confirmed posting to the area (see Children of UK service personnel).

Part Five: Appeals procedure

All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

Details of how to appeal are included in the outcome email or letter.

Information on the timetable for the appeals process is published on our website by 28 February each year.

Part 6 – Important Information

Home Address

For the purposes of school admission, the governors' definition of a child's home address is considered to be where the child resides for the majority of their time with the person(s) who legally has/have care of the child. Documentary evidence of house ownership or a minimum six-month rental agreement may be required, together with proof of the child's residence at the property concerned. Places will not be allocated on the basis of a future house move unless this can be confirmed through the exchange of contract or a signed minimum six month formal lease agreement in place at the time of application. Please note private letting agreements may not be accepted as proof of residence. An address change due to a move to live with family or friends will not be considered until the move has taken place and suitable proof of residency has been obtained. Proof that a move from the previous address has taken place may also be required eg proof of exchange of contracts, a tenancy agreement showing the end date of the tenancy or a notice to quit from the landlord or repossession notice. The Governing Body reserve the right to seek further documentary evidence to support any claim of residence which could include contacting the estate agent, solicitor landlord or relevant professional.

An address used for childcare arrangements cannot be used as a home address for the purpose of applying for a school place. The governors may withdraw the offer of a school place if the child's home address is subsequently found to be fraudulent.

Where shared residence arrangements are in place and it is necessary to determine the home address, each parent may be required to write to the Governing Body and inform them of the number of days each week the child spends with them. Where the child spends equal time with both parents the Governing Body may ask for additional information including evidence of which parent/carer is in receipt of child benefit, and/or the name of the GP surgery at which the child is registered.

Waiting Lists

The governors operate waiting lists for every year group. Where a child is formally refused admission to any year group, parents may request that his/her child's name is placed on the appropriate waiting list. This is held in ranked order according to the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list. Waiting lists will be maintained until the end of the academic year. If a place becomes available within the Published Admission Number or admission limit this will be offered for the highest ranked child at that time.

Deferred entry for infants

Parents offered a place in reception for their child have a right to defer entry, or to take the 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 beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Children reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.]

Full-time schooling

Parents have a right to a full-time place at school for their child from the September following their fourth birthday.

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. Applications will be considered as set out below (see admission of children outside their normal age group)

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is admitted to a year group outside their normal age range, for instance where the child is summer born or where the child is gifted or talented or where a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting his or her schooling.

When such a request is made, the Governing Body will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking into account the views of the headteacher and any supporting evidence provided by the parent. If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group.

The parent is required to make an on-time application for the child's normal age group (if relevant) but can submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time. The LA will ensure the parent is aware of whether the request for admission out of age group has been agreed before National Offer Day and the reason for any refusal.

Requests for admission out of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time. An application from a child who would 'normally' be a year 1 child for a reception place will be considered alongside applications for reception.

If a request for delayed admission is agreed, the school place application may be withdrawn before a place is offered and a new school place application will need to be made as part of the normal admissions round the following year.

If a request for a child to be admitted to school a year early is agreed, the school place application will be processed and an outcome will be sent on the National Offer Day.

If a request for delayed admission is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a school 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.

If a request for a child to be admitted to school a year early is refused, the school place application will not be processed and a new school place application will need to be made as part of the normal admissions round the following year.

There is no right of appeal against the decision not to allow your child to be admitted outside of their normal age group.

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.

For further information and important things you should consider please visit;

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-learning-and-schools/choosing-a-school/starting-or-transferring-school-early-or-late/>

Children from Overseas

The Admission Authority will treat applications for children coming from overseas in accordance with Home Office rules for Foreign nationals.

This is the most recent guidance which takes account of the post-Brexit immigration system.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children>

Children of UK service personnel

The Admissions Authority endeavours to ensure that their admission arrangements support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. In year applications are usually considered for admission up to a maximum of half a term in advance of the place being taken up. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area where a place can be made available up to a year in advance of being required providing the appropriate documentation is provided as proof of posting (an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended posting.)

Usually, a place may be allocated prior to actual residency, only on receipt of exchange of contracts or a formal signed rental agreement. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area. This means that, providing the application is accompanied by an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended posting, the admissions authority will process the application. If proof of a home address is not available at this stage the admissions authority will accept a unit postal address or quartering area address.

If the parent/carer is moving to the area as a result of leaving the armed forces then no special consideration will be given to the application under the grounds of the application being made by a service family.

For further information please refer to the DfE explanatory note on Admission of Children of Crown Servants;

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/461481/Admission_of_children_of_crown_servants.pdf

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 2024 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.

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship, the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admission arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

Please only complete this form if you believe that you meet Criterion 3

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 2023-24 academic year, which is 15 January 2024

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 2024-25. 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.

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship, the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admission arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

Please return this form to the home Local Authority by the deadline for admission applications, which is 15 January 2024.

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:

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 2024 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.**