St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation

For the good of all through curiosity, creativity and love

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1.0	*06.02.23*	*Admissions Minutes 19.10.20* *FGB Minutes 19.10.20* *Admissions Minutes 07.10.22* *FGB Minutes 17.10.22* *FGB Minutes 06.02.23*	*Placed in federation format with new first paragraph added, date and data updates and changes to oversubscription criteria (the oversubscription criteria changes were agreed on 19.10.20 but not consulted on therefore not implemented at that point). FGB agreed to consult stakeholders-no comments received therefore approved.*	*Sept 2023*
1.1	*04.12.23*	*Admissions Minutes 02.10.23* *FGB Minutes 04.12.23*	*Reviewed by Committee and ODBE with minor amendment and date/data updates*	*Sept 2024*
	15.7.24	*AC minutes 24.6.24* *FGB minutes 15.7.24*	*Number items, update deadline dates, changes to oversubscription criteria items 3c, 3d, update figures item 10.*	*Sept 2025*
1.2				

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St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation

Admissions arrangements for St Nicolas C.E. Junior School 2025-2026

1: Introduction

At St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation, the vision is 'For the good of all – through curiosity, creativity and love.' This vision applies equally to the federation's admissions policies and the aim is for our policies to be applied as fairly as possible to meet the needs of all members of our schools' community.

We welcome applications from all members of the community without reference to ability or aptitude, and irrespective of whether they are of the Christian faith, another faith, or no faith, but we expect parents to respect the Christian ethos of our school.

The governors have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on equal opportunities.

2: Admission Arrangements to Year 3 in September 2025

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for a Year 3 place in September 2025 must complete the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA

is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than **13th January 2025**. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered **after** all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by the home LA on **15th April 2025**.

There are 64 places available in Year 3 in September 2026.

3: Over-subscription Criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan naming St Nicolas C.E. Junior School will always be offered places. If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

a. Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted. (See Note 2)
b. Families who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that their child attends St Nicolas C.E. Junior School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family. (See Note 3)
c. Linked Federated School Pupils, i.e. children who currently attend St John the Evangelist C of E Infant School.
d. Catchment Area Siblings, i.e. children whose normal home address is in the school's designated catchment area and with a sibling (see Note 4) living in the same family unit who is already on the roll of the school at the time of application and who is expected still to be on roll at the time of entry.
e. Catchment Area Pupils, i.e. children whose normal home address (See Note 5) is within the school's designated catchment area (as shown in Appendix 3 to the LA Booklet and available on the federation website). This is taken to be the address at the time of the application.
f. Siblings, i.e. children whose permanent home address is out of the school's designated catchment area with a sibling (see Note 4) living in the same family unit already on the roll of the school and who is expected still to be on roll at the time of entry.
g. All other children

Proximity of the child's home as measured by the straight line distance (See Note 6) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1-6 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.

4: All Other Admissions

Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. All year groups at the school have 64 places. Applications must be made using the West Berkshire Primary Admissions Form and West Berkshire Council will coordinate In Year Admissions. Admissions outside the normal age group will be dealt with as indicated below.

If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria 1-7 above) a place will be offered.

In-year admissions or admissions at the beginning of school years other than Year 3 will only be considered by the governing board up to half a term in advance of the desired date for entry. For example, for entry in January, the application will not be considered until after the October half term break.

If parents are moving house, the school will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces personnel are exempt).

If you are returning from elsewhere, to live in a home that you own, we will require evidence to show that you have returned. We will also ask for evidence that any previous house owned has been sold or is being sold. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

5: Admission Outside Normal Age Group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully, e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's best interests.

It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the executive headteacher in advance of applying for a place. The governors may ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

6: Waiting Lists

The school maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place, and the parents ask for the child's name to be added to the waiting list. The order and priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over-subscription, and does not depend on the date on which an application is received. No account is taken of length of time on a waiting list. The school periodically seeks confirmation that parents wish a child to be kept on the waiting list.

7: Multiple Births

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet etc., we would admit both twins (and all the children in the case of other multiple births) even if this meant exceeding the agreed admission number of 64 for Year 3 in 2026-27 or the number of places (64) in other year groups.

8: Fair Access
The school participates in West Berkshire LA's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

9: Appeals
Any parent not offered a place for their child at their preferred school has the right to appeal to an independent appeals panel. There are established arrangements for appeals against non-admission. Details are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. It should be noted, that in the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school does not consider any further application in the same school year (1st September – 31st August), unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment area to inside it.

Parents who wish their children to attend the school are most welcome to visit. Arrangements can be made through the school office.

10: Admissions in September 2023
The school received 71 applications expressing a preference for admission to Year 3 in 2024 by the closing date in January 2024. These were ranked as follows:

Children with statements or EHC plans naming the school:		0
Criterion 1:	Looked after children	1
Criterion 2:	Medical and Social Needs	0
Criterion 3:	Partner School Children	58
Criterion 4:	Catchment area siblings	0
Criterion 5:	Catchment area pupils	6
Criterion 6:	Siblings	1
Criterion 7:	All other children	5

63 places were offered, with the cut off coming under criterion 5 at a distance of 0.095 miles.

11: Further Information
Further information can be obtained from the school office (office@stnics.w-berks.sch.uk or 01635 41282)

12: Notes
Note 1 "Parent" is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

- Any person who has 'parental responsibility' (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or
- Any person who has care of the child or young person.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school for advice.

Note 2 By a LAC (Looked After Child) we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted, subject to child

arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A "child arrangements order" is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A "special guardianship order" is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). Evidence that a child from outside England was previously in state care will be required to come within this criterion. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Note 3 When applying under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs), you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring St Nicolas C.E. Junior School. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child's or your own case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

Note 4 By sibling we mean a 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 where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 5 By normal home address, we mean the child's home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place

- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with his/her GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are not sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the school must be informed.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

Note 6 The straight line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured using the West Berkshire Admissions Geographical Information System taking a straight line between the home address and the school using the unique property identification points within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). The West Berkshire Admissions Guide can be found on their website using the following address: https://info.westberks.gov.uk/catchment.

Appendix 1: St Nicolas Catchment area map

