Saint Bernard's
Catholic High School

ADMISSIONS POLICY

2027/2028

MISSION STATEMENT

Christ is our teacher.

At St Bernard's we believe that all persons are created by God, unique and equal. We strive to create a caring Christian community in which we provide education based on Gospel values where all people reach their full potential. We aim to develop positive relationships with every individual and family, the parishes and the wider community.

"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"

John 10:10

Reviewed by:	A Riding (Headteacher), St Francis MAT and The Diocese of Hallam Schools' Dept, September 2025
Approved at:	Local Academy Committee Meeting, October 2025
Consultation dates:	14th November 2025 – 9th January 2026
Signed:	S Kelly, Chair of Governors

St Bernard's Catholic High School

ADMISSION POLICY 2027-28

St Bernard's Catholic High School is part of the St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust (St Francis CMAT), a multi-academy trust based in the Diocese of Hallam. The vision for our Trust within the Diocese is:

- For all children to receive innovative, creative and personalised teaching and learning
- For all children to receive an outstanding curriculum which shapes them as people in God's image
- For all children to flourish in stimulating, highly effective, happy environments
- For the Trust to be the employer of choice for all staff through investment, recognition and progression.

St Bernard's was founded to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will always be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its governing body 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 Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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 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 school is fully inclusive and welcomes applications for the admission of children of all abilities and needs. The school fully complies with its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

The St Francis CMAT is the admission authority though responsibility for admissions to this school has been delegated to the School's Local Academy Committee. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round. The Local Academy Committee has set its admission number at 155 pupils to year 7 in the school year which begins in September, 2027.

1. **Pupils 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.

2. **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, St Bede's Catholic Primary School (Kimberworth), St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Dinnington), St Gerard's Catholic Primary School (Thrybergh), St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Maltby), St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Herringthorpe). (see notes 3&4)

3. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)

4. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)

5. Other children who attend a Catholic feeder Primary School (See note 3)

6. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 5&6)

7. Children of other Christian denominations and children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion or other religious leader. (see notes 7&8)

8. Any other children.

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

(i) The attendance of a brother or 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 children in (i) above. (see note 9)

(ii) Children of staff 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 children in (i) above where:

a. the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; or

b. the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. In St Bernard's, this will apply to the following groups of staff: Teaching and Support Staff.

Priority within (i) and (ii) above and for any other children being ranked within each category within the oversubscription criteria will be determined in line with the tie break set out below.

Tie Break

Priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance.

Distance is measured by means of a straight line on a horizontal plane. The local authority's Geographical Information System is used which applies seed points as determined by Ordnance Survey. Measurements are taken from the seed point of the ordinary place of residence to the seed point of the school. Where the school has more than one seed point, the seed point closest to the geographical centre of the school site is used.

Where places are being allocated based on the distance criteria or as part of the distance tie breaker, and there are insufficient places within the admission number for two (or more) children living in the same building (e.g., flats) or otherwise equidistant from the school, then any final place will be allocated by the simple drawing of lots which will be independently verified.

Child's Home Address

The child's home address will be the address at which they live and sleep with their parent (as defined below) for more than 50% of their time from Monday to Friday during term time at the application deadline. It will usually be the address at which the child is registered with their G.P.

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 given in the Common Application Form, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.

Where there is an issue over whether the home address stated in the Common Application Form is the child's main home address as defined by this policy, parents may be required to provide documentary evidence to resolve the issue.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you **must** complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live. You are also requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form ("SIF") attached to this policy if you wish to apply under oversubscription criteria 1 to 3 or 5 or 6. The Supplementary Information Form should be returned to the office of **St Bernard's Catholic High School, Herringthorpe Valley Road, Rotherham, S65 3BE** by the closing date of 31st October 2026.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on 1st March or the next working day, by the local authority 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.

If you do not provide the information required in the SIF and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child will not be placed in criteria 1 to 3 or 5 or 6, and this is likely to affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

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 2026.

Late Applications

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 Children Outside their Normal Age Group

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

Any such request should be made in writing to **Headteacher at St Bernard's Catholic High School, Herringthorpe Valley Road, Rotherham, S65 3BE** at the same time as the admission application is made. The Local Academy Committee 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 taking into account the views of the head teacher, including the head teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the Local Academy Committee will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate. The Local Academy Committee may also have regard to guidance issued to admissions authorities on the admission of children outside their normal age group.

Where the application is agreed in principle, the Local Academy Committee will write to the parents confirming this. Parents should note that an agreement in principle is <u>not</u> the same as an offer of a place in the desired year group - it is simply an indication that the Local Academy Committee will accept an application for admission of the child to the desired year group. Once an application for admission to the desired year group has been submitted, it will be processed with all other applications for that year group, with the oversubscription criteria being applied where more applications are received than there are places available. The application for admission <u>must</u> be accompanied by the letter confirming the Local Academy Committee's agreement in principle.

This means that even where the Local Academy Committee has agreed <u>in principle</u> to a child being admitted outside their normal age group, there is no guarantee that a place in the desired year group will be achieved for the child. This is particularly relevant in the case of "summer born children" for whom a place in Reception Year is being sought one year later than usual, as they could be left without a place in Reception Year at the school, and the child's parents will then need to decide whether to submit an application for admission outside normal age group to another school with a place available in Reception Year, or to seek a place in Year 1 at the school subject to their being any places available.

Children of UK Service Personnel and Crown Servants

In relation to families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, the school will allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area (as long as one is available), provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date. We will use the address at which the child will live when applying our oversubscription criteria, as long as the parents provide some evidence of their intended address. We will use a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria, where a parent requests this.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children 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 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 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 child at any time outside the admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Application should be made via Rotherham Local Authority Admissions.

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, 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 Local Academy Committee is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The Local Academy Committee has this power even where admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number.

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

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 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 and includes those children who appear to the Local Academy Committee 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. 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 who is part of a Catholic family where a letter from a priest demonstrates that the child would have been baptised or received if it were not for their status as a looked after child (e.g. a looked after child in the process of adoption by a Catholic family).

   For a child 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. For the purposes of this admission policy, attendance at a feeder primary school includes those who were prevented from attending a feeder school due to oversubscription of Catholics and whose application to attend was unsuccessful, normally evidenced by a letter of rejection from the feeder primary school.

5. '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.

6. 'Eastern Christian Church' includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.

7. "children of other Christian denominations" means children 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.

8. "children of other faiths" means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 7 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.

9. '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, whether or not they are living at the same address; and

   (ii) the child of a parent's partner with whom they have been cohabiting for a period of at least one year at the application deadline where that child for whom the school place is sought lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant.

   Parents must ensure that they have included full details of the sibling in the Common Application Form to be included in this category. Failure to do so will result in the child being placed into the next category that applies.

10. 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.