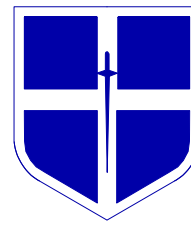


## **Determined Admissions Policy 2025/26** **St Paul's Church of England Combined School**



### **School Year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2025**

The Governing Body of the School, not the Buckinghamshire Local Authority (LA), is responsible for deciding on admissions to the school, though the LA administers the applications for the Reception Year and Year 3 under its Coordinated Admissions Scheme. This policy contains the information you require to apply for a place at St Paul's Church of England Combined School; should you need additional information please contact the School Office during school hours on 01628 521553.

St Paul's Church of England Combined School endeavours to operate its admissions policy in line with the LA in-year fair access protocol, and all relevant legislation covering infant class sizes and equal opportunities and will endeavour to act within the mandatory requirements of the Schools Admissions Code 2021. Under the Fair Access Protocol, the Governing Body would prioritise a place at the top of the waiting list and make a place available as soon as possible without prejudicing the children already in attendance at St Paul's Church of England Combined School.

The Published Admission number for Reception is 30 and for Year 3 is 2. This means class sizes are 30 in Reception Y1 and Y2 and 32 in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 September 2025 and 31 March 2026 may request that their child is not admitted until later in the school year 2025/26 (no later than the term [using three term year] after the child's fifth birthday, when s/he reaches compulsory school age). The school will hold any deferred place for the child, although in the majority of cases, we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 1 April 2026 and 31 August 2026 (summer-born children), parents who do not wish them to start school in school year 2025-26, but to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2026, should proceed as follows. They should apply at the usual time for a place in September 2025 together with a written request that the child is admitted outside his or her normal age group to the Reception year in September 2026. NB parents would need to provide supporting reasons for seeking a place outside the normal age group and should discuss the position with the Headteacher as early as possible. If their request is agreed, and this should be clear before the national offer day, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before any place is offered and they should reapply in the normal way (no later than 15 January 2026) for a Reception place in September 2026. If their request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any offer of a place in September 2025 (NB it will still be subject to the over-subscription criteria below) or to withdraw their application and apply in the second half of the summer term 2026 for a Year 1 place in September 2026. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full with children transferring from the 2025-26 Reception Year group.

Admission to or attendance at the school's Nursery does not guarantee a place in the Reception Year or confer a higher entry priority to those children not attending the Nursery. In all other cases pupils will be admitted provided there are places available in the relevant year group in accordance with our oversubscription criteria. We do not consider applications for earlier admission to the Reception Year. For details of the current year group sizes please contact the School Office (tel. no: 01628 521553). There are two additional places available for admission into Year 3. Places are allocated in line with our oversubscription criteria and the procedure is in accordance with and through the LA coordinated admissions scheme. For admission to any other year group parents should complete the In-Year application form on the Buckinghamshire Council Admissions website and decisions on whether to offer a place will be taken by the Admissions Committee of the Governing Body in line with this agreed policy.

Application forms for Reception and Year 3 admissions are available at the beginning of the autumn term prior to a child's admission year. Parents living outside Buckinghamshire should complete the application form of the local authority in whose area they live at the time of application (the home LA). The applications will be dealt with in accordance with the dates published by the home LA under its coordinated admissions scheme. Applications should be received no later than 15 January 2025. Applications received after the deadline for receipt will only be considered after all those received by the deadline. This means that if no places are left after considering all the applications received by the deadline, even if you fulfil a higher criterion than that under which places have been offered to other applicants, you will be unsuccessful. All applications are considered, without reference to ability or aptitude. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by the home LA on or about 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Parent(s) (see note 1) will be given a time limit by which to accept an offer. We do not reconsider applications in the same academic

year unless there is a major change in circumstances e.g. change of address when there is a right for parents to do so.

If there are more applicants than places pupils will be allocated places in the following order – all pupils in each criterion being offered places before pupils in the next criterion are considered.

Children with a statement of Special Educational Need or with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming St Paul's Church of England Combined School, will always be offered places. If there is then greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. 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 because immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. (See Note 2)
2. Children (or a parent) with a normal home address (see note 3) in catchment area (as set out in the Buckinghamshire Council Admissions website) who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that they attend St Paul's Church of England Combined 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 5)
3. Children of members of staff at St Paul's Church of England Combined School provided they have been employed on a permanent contract for two or more years at the time of application.
4. Children who have a sibling at St Paul's Church of England Combined School who was admitted under the Church admissions criterion (from the criterion up to 2019/20 and is expected still to be in attendance at the school on the date of their admission and whose home is in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Wooburn (maps are available from the School Office).
5. Children whose home is (see Note 3) in the school's catchment area as set out in the Buckinghamshire Council Admissions website and who have a sibling at the school at the time of application and who is expected still to be in attendance at the school at the time of entry.
6. Children whose home is (see Note 3) in the school's catchment area as set out in the Buckinghamshire Council Admissions website.
7. Children who have a sibling (see Note 4) at the school at the time of application and who is expected still to be in attendance at the school on the date of their admission to the school, but live outside the catchment area as set out in the Buckinghamshire Council Admissions website.
8. Other children.

In the event of our not being able to offer places to all who meet a specific criterion, distance from the school by road will be used as the deciding factor. This will be from the front of the child's house to the nearest entrance gate to the school. This will be measured according to the LA's computerised measuring system using the routed distance. Should there be a tie in distance measurement the place will be offered using random allocation in the presence of an independent person.

**All other admissions:** Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. Applications should be made to the LA by completing the In Year Application Form. If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant continued interest list with a higher priority (according to the oversubscription criteria 1-8 above), a place will be offered.

In the event of a child not being offered a place Parents (see Note 1) have a statutory right to appeal against the Governors' decision. They are asked to write to the Chair of Governors within 20 school days of notification. An independent appeal tribunal will be arranged with the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, which Parents have a right to attend.

**Waiting list:** In the event of their child not being offered a place at the school we will advise parents that we hope their children will settle happily into an alternative school, but they can, if they wish, be put on a continued interest list maintained by the LA, which will be held for the remainder of the school year. If they wish to remain on the continued interest list for the next academic year, they will be required to complete a new In-Year application form on the Buckinghamshire Council Admissions website.

Pupils on the waiting list will be ranked according to the above admissions criteria applicable at the time a place becomes available. No account is taken of length of time on a waiting list. Decisions related to admissions will be taken by the Admissions Committee of the Governing Body.

**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 by the School Governors and relevant professionals that to do so would be in the pupil's interests. The Governors will 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 to appeal.

Below is a table showing the number of applications in the previous year. The table highlights how many, and under which criterion the applicants were successful, how many appeals were made and the number of successful appeals. This pattern of figures gives a guide for future years, but is not totally indicative.

For 2023/2024 these were:	Applications	Admissions	Withdrawn
Criterion 1 / EHCP	0 / 0	0 / 0	
Criterion 2	0	0	
Criterion 3	0	0	
Criterion 4	8	8	
Criterion 5	3	3	
Criterion 6	9	6	3
Criterion 7	3	3	
Criterion 8	44	10	
Total	67	30	
		Upheld	Withdrawn
APPEALS	0	0	0

*Note 1 by Parent, we mean any person who has parental responsibility for or is the legal guardian of the child.*

*Note 2 By a "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. An adoption order is one 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 by home, we mean your child's home address. This is your child's permanent address at the time you make your application for a place. It is where you and your child live. We regard a child's home address to be where he or she spends the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday, including nights). We will 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, you need to tell us this on the application form. If you do not declare any arrangements like this or use a relative's address for your application, we may consider that you have made a false declaration and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address. The school will check the validity of any address given by asking for evidence such as inclusion on the Electoral Roll, or a recent utilities bill confirming your name and address. If you are moving into the catchment area, we will ask for evidence of your move, before considering any application for a place. There are special arrangements for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting or crown servants returning from overseas. If the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares the relocation date, and if there is a place available, it will be offered even though there is not an intended address or the family is not yet living in the area.*

*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/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. In the case of twins, triplets etc. the school will admit both/all siblings even if these breach the infant class size of 30 i.e. if the siblings are placed 30 and 31 in order of oversubscription criteria. This is a permitted exception to the infant class size legislation.*

*Note 5 When applying under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs), you must include written supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for making attendance at St Paul's Church of England Combined School essential. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the only one 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 an NHS doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child's or your own case. All the evidence must be submitted at the time of the application. 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*