



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Admissions Policy 2025-2026

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Admission Arrangements for St Thomas More Catholic School in September 2025

St Thomas More Catholic School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by the Catholic Education Trust 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 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.

Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust is the admissions authority and is responsible for determining the admission policy. The local authority coordinates the admissions process on behalf of the Trust. The administration and operation of the admission policy are delegated by the Trust to the Local Governing Committee.

1. The Admission Authority

- 1.1. St Thomas More Catholic School is a member of The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.
- 1.2. The governing body is the Admissions Authority. The Admissions Authority for St Thomas More Catholic School is therefore The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust who are responsible for determining the school's admissions arrangements. The administration and operation of the policy is delegated to the Local Governing Committee of the school.

2. Published Admission Number

- 2.1. The admissions authority has set its Published Admission Number (PAN) at 235 pupils to Year Seven in the school year which begins in September 2025.

3. Applications for entry into Year 7

- 3.1. To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round (not in-year applications), a Common Application Form (CAF) must be completed. This is available from the local authority in which the child lives. Alternatively, you can apply via the online portal on the website of the local authority in which the child lives.
- 3.2. Applications procedures and timetables will follow the locally agreed co-ordinated scheme with Gateshead Local Authority.
- 3.3. If there are more places than applicants then all applicants will be accepted.



- 3.4.** If there are more applications than places available then the Governors will apply the oversubscription criteria as outlined in Section 12 of this policy.
- 3.5.** If there are more applicants than available places the School will treat all applications equally, regardless of the order of preference given by the parents. All the applications are placed in order using the oversubscription criteria. Allocation of places is then coordinated by the Local Authority.
- 3.6.** Late applications can be made and will be handled as in the Co-ordinated Scheme. Parents are advised to ensure that the application is submitted before the closing date.
- 3.7.** The Governors reserve the right to declare an application null and void or to withdraw an offer of a place if any of the information submitted is false.
- 3.8.** Applicants refused admission to Year 7 are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the Chair of Governors at the school address.

4. Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

- 4.1.** 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. Any such request should be made in writing to the Head Teacher of the school. The admissions authority 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 who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management, and control of the school, the admissions authority will take into account the views of the parents and appropriate medical and education professionals.

5. Fair Access Protocol

- 5.1.** 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 admissions authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any local protocol that has been agreed by both the Diocese and the admissions authority for the current school year. The admissions authority has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number.

6. Waiting List

- 6.1.** If the school has reached its admission number a Waiting List will be maintained from 3rd April 2025.
- 6.2.** Any parent can request that their child be placed on the waiting list
- 6.3.** Children will be placed on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria.
- 6.4.** The date of the application, and the date the child is placed on the list, will not be used in any selection process.



- 6.5.** The school will continue to maintain the waiting list during the corresponding school year and outside the normal year of entry.
- 6.6.** Pupils who are allocated a place at the school under the Local Authority's Fair Access protocol must take precedence over all those on the waiting list.
- 6.7.** Inclusion on the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

7. Repeat Applications

- 7.1.** Repeat applications for entry into a particular year group in the same academic year will not be considered unless there is a material change in the circumstances of the child or parent. An application may be made for a subsequent academic year.
- 7.2.** A material change in circumstance may be a change of address or a change in the baptismal status of the child.

8 In year applications

- 8.1.** 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. Applications should be made to the school by contacting the Admissions Officer at the school. www.stthomasmore.org.uk Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application in writing.
- 8.2.** Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out below, will be applied.
- 8.3.** If there are no places available, a request can be made that the child is added to the waiting list.
- 8.4.** The parent has the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

9. Right of Appeal

- 9.1.** Where a parent has been notified that a place is not available for a child, every effort will be made by the local authority to help the parent to find a place in a suitable alternative school. Parents who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the Chair of Governors at the school address.

10. Children with an Education, Health and Care plan or a statement of Special Educational Need

- 10.1.** The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Educational Needs is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs 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.



11. Oversubscription Criteria

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

Order of Priority	Oversubscription Criteria	Notes
1a	Catholic looked after and previously looked after children with a sibling link - see note (ii)	See note 12.2
1b	Catholic looked after and previously looked after children without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See note 12.2
2a	Catholic Children who attended a catholic feeder primary school with a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.3 & 12.4
2b	Catholic Children who attended a catholic feeder primary school without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.3 & 12.4
3a	Other Catholic Children with a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.4
3b	Other Catholic Children without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.4
4a	Other looked after and previously looked after children with a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.2
4b	Other looked after and previously looked after children without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.2
5a	Catechumens and members of an eastern Christian Church with a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.7 and 12.8
5b	Catechumens and members of an eastern Christian Church without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.7 and 12.8
6a	Other children who attend a catholic feeder primary school with a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.3 and 12.5
6b	Other children who attend a catholic feeder primary school without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.3 and 12.5
7a	Children of a member of school staff who has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which application	See notes 12.12



	for admission to the school is made with a sibling link - see note (ii)	
7b	Children of a member of school staff who has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which application for admission to the school is made without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.12
8a	Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader with a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.9 and 12.10
8b	Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.9 and 12.10
9a	Children of other faiths whose memberships is evidenced by a minister or faith leader with a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.16
9b	Children of other faiths whose memberships is evidenced by a minister or faith leader without a sibling link - see note (ii)	See notes 12.16
10a	All other children with a sibling link - see note (ii)	
10b	All other children without a sibling link - see note (ii)	

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provision will be applied.

- (i) *Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 12)*

Sibling link description

- (ii) *The attendance of a sibling 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 8)*



12. Notes

12.1. 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. A Statement of Special Educational Needs is a statement made by the local authority under section 324 of the Education Act 1996, specifying the special educational provision for a child.

12.2. 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 an 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 arrangement order or special guardianship order. Previously looked after children also includes those children who appear (to the admissions Authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

12.3. Catholic Feeder Primary Schools

St Joseph's, Blaydon
St Agnes', Crawcrook
St Mary and Thomas Aquinas, Stella
St Philip Neri, Dunston
St Mary's, Whickham
St Joseph's, Highfield
Corpus Christi, Gateshead
Sacred Heart, Byermoor
St Matthew's, Prudhoe

12.4. Definition of Catholic: a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will 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 Catholic baptism or reception into the Church will be required. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception should contact their parish priest who, after consulting with the Diocese, will decide how the question of baptism or reception is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church. The school will require to see the baptismal certificate of all children claiming to be Catholic, please include a copy of the Baptismal Certificate with your application.

12.5. Children who are not Catholic attending a Catholic feeder Primary School

12.6. For a Catholic child to be considered "practising" they will: Have been baptised and be currently fulfilling the obligation to attend Sunday mass, which will be verified by the named



priest through the Certificate of Catholic Practice. This is a certificate issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of a child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions. Further details of these circumstances can be found in the guidance issued to priests. This can be found at www.edurcdhn.org.uk

- 12.7. Catechumen** means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. For the purposes of admissions, this refers to the child on whose behalf the application is being made. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.
- 12.8. Eastern Christian Church** includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception should contact the Diocese who will decide how the question of baptism or reception is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.
- 12.9. Definition of other Christian denominations:** 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 CYTŪN 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. **Applicants must provide a baptismal certificate or where child baptism is not practised, a letter confirming their church membership from their minister or faith leader.**
- 12.10. For a child to be considered "practising members of another Christian denomination" they will:** have been initiated into that church; the school will need to see documentary evidence of baptism/initiation; be verified by the named minister of religion as being a currently practicing member of the church.
- 12.11. Home Address** is the parental address that will be used in applying the admission criteria. This means that, when stating your choice of school, you should give the parental/guardian address at the time of application. The address of childminders or other family members who may share in the care of the child must not be used as the home address. For categories where the child must live within the catchment area, verification of address will be required.



12.12. A member of staff includes all school staff who are under the direct employment of the trustees of The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.

12.13. For categories 2-10 parents will be requested to give the following information on the supplementary form:

- Names of any older brothers/sisters in the School
- Baptismal status
- Whether your child is a practising Catholic or a practising member of another Christian denomination.
- Copies of Baptismal certificates or other evidence of reception should be included with your supplementary form.

12.15. Social, medical or pastoral need: To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the governing body will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

12.16 - 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 6 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 that describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by the belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in the supreme being through worship.

Applicants must provide a letter of support to confirm their faith membership from their minister or faith leader.

13. Tie Breaker

13.1. In the event of the School reaching capacity within categories 1-10, the School will use random allocation to determine the order of applications within a category. This will be carried out in a public place and supervised by a person independent of the school.

14. Admission into the Sixth Form

14.1. Planned Admission Number - Year 12

The school will admit 20 pupils into Year 12, in September 2025.

The projected number of pupils for admission into Year 12 in September 2025 is 175. This is made up of an estimated number of 155 pupils moving into Year 12 from St Thomas More School and 20 external applications from pupils in other schools.



- 14.2.** The minimum entry requirement for admission into Year 12 is dependent on the course of study that a student wishes to follow. In general, the minimum entry requirement for Year 12 is 6+ grades 6-9 at GCSE or equivalent. For a student to study a subject at A Level which they have previously studied at GCSE, and where previous study is required, they must have achieved at least a grade 6 in that subject at GCSE.
- 14.3.** For a 6 or 12-unit vocational course the minimum entry requirement is 5+ grades 6-9 GCSE or equivalent with a merit in a suitable Subject.
- 14.4.** Details of the specific entry requirements and courses available may be obtained from the School.
- 14.5.** Applicants refused admission to the Sixth Form are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel.
- 14.6.** For a student to continue a course of study in Year 13 they must pass the course in Year 12 at a suitable level. Details of this can be obtained from the school.

15. Tie Breaker

- 15.1.** In the event of the school reaching capacity within categories 1-7, the School will use random allocation to determine the order of applications within a category. This will be supervised by a person independent of the school

Oversubscription Criteria for external students

Order of Priority	Oversubscription Criteria	How verified
1	Catholic Looked after and previously looked after students.	See note 12.2
2	Other Catholic students	See note 12.4
3	Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church	See notes 12.7 and 12.8
4	Other looked after and previously looked after students	See notes 12.2
5	Students from other Christian Denomination whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith Leader	See notes 12.9 and 12.10
6	Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader	See notes 12.16
7.	All other students	

This policy should be read in conjunction with the local authority's admission guidance for parents.