

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL, BLAYDON ADMISSION POLICY 2027-28

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 always be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its academy company 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 these admission arrangements.

Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round excluding admission to year 12. The admission authority has set the school's Published Admissions Number ("PAN") at 235, but enhanced to **250** subject to completion of building works for pupils to year 7 in the school year which begins in September 2026. The school will use its enhanced PAN at the point of admission and initial appeals. For all in year transfers the school will use its statutory PAN.

The admission authority will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's PAN.

Catholic Feeder Primary Schools

St Joseph's, Blaydon
St Agnes', Crawcrook
St Mary and St 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

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.

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. (see note 3)
3. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)
4. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)

5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 4&5)
6. Other children who attend a Catholic feeder primary school.
7. Other children who have an older sibling at the school at the time of admission (see note 9)
8. 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. (see note 10 & 12)
9. Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. (see note 6 & 7)
10. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader. (see note 8)
11. Any other children.

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions 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 11)

Tie Break

Where there are places available for some, but not all applicants within a particular criterion priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distance will be measured in a straight line (as the crow flies) from the front door of the child's address (including flats) to the main entrance of the school, (using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system) with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

In the event of distances being the same for two or more children where this would determine the last place to be allocated, random allocation will be carried out in a public place and supervised by a person independent of the school.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form, excluding admission to year 12, available from the local authority in which you live.

If you are required to provide supplemental evidence to support the application (e.g. a baptismal certificate), this evidence should be provided at the time of application. If not provided, evidence may be sought by the admissions authority following the closing date for applications. This information must have been correct at the date of closing for applications. If you do not provide the supplemental evidence, this may affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on **1 March 2027** 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.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is **31 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 the head teacher of the school at the same time as the admission application is made. The admission 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, including the head teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

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 and offer made 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. Applications should be submitted online via Gateshead Council. The school then receives the application details from Gateshead council. Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application in writing by Gateshead Council.

Right of Appeal

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria will be applied. If there are no places available, a request can be made that the child is added to the waiting list (see above). The parent has 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 admission authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The admission authority has this power even where admitting the child would mean exceeding the PAN.

False evidence

The admission authority 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 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 arrangements order, or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who 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 living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

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. '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.

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

6. "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.

7. 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.

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 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 home address as the child who is the subject of the application.
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.
11. To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the admission authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.
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 and who work at St Thomas More School.
13. For categories 2-11 parents will be requested to give the following information on the supplementary form:
 - Names of any older brothers/sisters in the School
 - Baptismal status
 - Copies of Baptismal certificates or other evidence of reception should be included with your supplementary form
 - Proof of address.
14. A child's "home address" refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form ("CAF"). 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 CAF, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.

ADMISSION TO SIXTH FORM 2027-28

Admission to the Sixth Form

The admissions authority has set its published admission number (PAN) at **175** pupils to year 12 in the school year which begins in September 2027.

Both internal and external pupils wishing to enter the sixth form will be expected to have met the same minimum academic entry requirements for the sixth form.

In addition to the sixth form's minimum academic entry requirements pupils will need to satisfy minimum entrance requirements to the courses for which they are applying. If either internal or external applicants fail to meet the minimum course requirements, they will be given the option of pursuing any alternative courses for which they do meet the minimum

academic requirements. Course requirements are published annually in the school's prospectus and on its website.

When year 12 is undersubscribed, all applicants meeting the minimum academic entry requirements will be admitted or permitted to progress.

When there are more external applicants that satisfy any academic entry requirements, priority will be given in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out below.

Where there is a space in year 13 i.e. where there are fewer than **175** pupils in the year group, the school will admit additional pupils up to this number using the oversubscription criteria set out below.

Entry requirements

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.

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.

Details of the specific entry requirements and courses available may be obtained from the School.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (see note 1)

See page 1.

Oversubscription Criteria (for external applicants)

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 students. (see notes 2&3)
2. Other Catholic students. (see note 3)
3. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 4&5)
4. Other looked after and previously looked after students. (see note 2)
5. Students of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. (see note 6)
6. Students of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader. (see note 7)
7. Any other students.

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

- (ii) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the student 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 10)
- (iii) 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 students in (i) above. (see note 8)

Tie Break

See page 2.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form, excluding admission to year 12, available from the local authority in which you live.

If you are required to provide supplemental evidence to support the application (e.g. a baptismal certificate), this evidence should be provided at the time of application. If not provided, evidence may be sought by the admissions authority following the closing date for applications. This information must have been correct at the date of closing for applications. If you do not provide the supplemental evidence, this may affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on **1 March 2027** 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.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is **31 October 2026**.

Late Applications

Late applications will be considered only after all those received by the date have been processed. Parents are advised to ensure that the application is submitted before the closing date.

Admission of Students Outside their Normal Age Group

See page 2.

Waiting Lists

See page 2.

In-Year Applications

See page 3.

Fair Access Protocol, False Evidence & Notes

See page 3.