

Consultation on Proposed Changes to School Admissions Policies
from September 2026

Background

1. The School Admissions Code 2021 requires an admission authority to consult each time it proposes to make significant changes to its admission arrangements or if it has not consulted on its admission arrangements for seven years. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult.
2. The Archdiocese of Liverpool is co-ordinating a consultation process on behalf of the Governing Bodies that are the admission authorities of the schools listed in paragraphs 7 - 14 of this document (on page 4).
3. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, a consultation period must run for a minimum of six term time weeks and take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. The process allows parents, other schools, other admission authorities, local authorities and other interested stakeholders to raise comments or concerns about the proposed arrangements. **This consultation will run between 2nd December 2024 and 31st January 2025.** Information on how you can respond can be found from paragraph 11 below.

Catholic Schools in the Trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool

4. It is expected that all schools within the Trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool - and those under other trusteeship that wish to do so - adopt a common admissions policy to fulfil the objectives of:
 - Ensuring that all of school Governing Bodies, as admissions authorities, are compliant with the current Admissions Code;
 - Supporting schools in admissions processes;
 - Ensuring that schools provide clear and consistent information to parents seeking a place at a Catholic (or Joint Faith) school for their child, and;
 - Seeking to maximise the opportunities for Catholic siblings to access places in schools.
5. The oversubscription criteria in the common policy for admissions to schools in 2026 are being included as a formal consultation with regard to the requirement for the seven year period as identified in the Admissions Code. As such, for primary schools (including those named in paragraph 7 of this document unless specifically stated otherwise) the proposed oversubscription criteria remain as follows:

Oversubscription Criteria

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. Looked after children and previously looked after children.
2. Catholic children who are resident in the parish(es) of [name] or former parishes of [name] (see notes 3&11)
3. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)
4. Catechumens in the Catholic Church and members of an Eastern Christian Church **not** in full communion with Rome (see notes 4&5)
5. Children of other Christian Ecclesial Communities whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. (see note 6)

6. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader. (see note 7)
7. Any other children.

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

- (i) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can most appropriately be met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 10)
- (ii) 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 8).

For secondary schools (including those named in paragraph 8,9 of this document unless specifically stated otherwise) the proposed oversubscription criteria for 2026 are as follows:

Oversubscription Criteria

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. Looked after children and previously looked after children.
2. Catholic children who are resident in the parishes **[name]** or former parishes of **[name]** and for whom **[Insert name of school]** is the nearest Catholic school. (see notes 3&11)
3. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)
4. Children attending one of the following Catholic Partner Primary Schools in the parishes or former parishes named in criterion 2 above:
[Insert partner primary school names]
5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church **not** in full communion with Rome . (see notes 4&5)
6. Children of other Christian Ecclesial Communities whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. (see note 6)
7. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader. (see note 7)
8. Any other children.

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

- (iii) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can most appropriately be met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 10)
- (iv) The attendance of a brother or sister at the school (not including the Sixth Form where there is one) 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).

For all schools, interested parties are invited to review admissions policies on school websites in case of minor school-specific variations to the common policy. Any such variations have, where appropriate, been subject to prior consultation.

Schools Consulting on Changes to Admissions Policy

6. The Archdiocese of Liverpool is undertaking this statutory consultation process with all interested parties on behalf of the following schools:
- I. St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Warrington
 - II. Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Academy School, Woolton
 - III. St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Academy, St Helens

Specific Proposals

7. The Governing Body of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School Warrington wish to consult on a reduction in the school's planned admission number (PAN) from 30 to 15.
Since September 2022, St Vincent's Catholic Primary School has been gradually restructuring classes towards a mixed-class structure (2 year groups per class) due to lower pupil numbers resulting from a falling birth rate locally. This pattern of low birth rate is continuing and so we are consulting on reducing PAN to 15 as this now reflects the intake for the school over recent years, and the structure of classes moving forward.
8. The Governing Body of St Francis Xavier Catholic Academy School in Woolton wish to consult on a reduction in the school's planned admission number (PAN) from 196 to 180
The Trust (Governing Body) believe that it would be prejudicial to the efficient education of boys in the year group if they were to admit more than 180 pupils. The current PAN of 196 is not a logical admission number, as it sits between six and seven form entry, and does not allow for efficient curriculum design. The logical PAN should be either 180 i.e. six form entry, or 210 i.e. seven form entry. The number of classrooms across the school estate efficiently accommodates 180 pupils per year group; there would not be sufficient capacity to accommodate 210 pupils per year group. In recent years, the academy has been able to expand beyond 180 by making use of space that would otherwise be used by Sixth Form classes. Moving forwards, it is the ambition to grow Sixth Form admissions, and therefore this approach would not be possible.
9. The Governing Body of St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Academy in St Helens wish to consult on a reduction in the school's planned admission number (PAN) from 125 to 120
The Trust (Governing Body) are proposing to reduce the planned admission number from 125 to 120 pupils from 2026/2027. We are proposing this in order to provide a more consistent provision for students by maintaining a more uniform size for year groups and minimising mobility of students within year groups. This will enable us to plan and deliver a quality curriculum with an optimum number of pupils with regard to form sizes.
10. If you require a hard copy of the document please ask for one at the school. The document will also be made available on the school's website and the Archdiocesan website.

<https://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/departments/education/admissions-and-appeals>

How to Return Your Comments

11. This consultation is co-ordinated by the Archdiocese of Liverpool on behalf of each of the individual schools named in this document. The consultation period will run between 2

December 2024 and 31 January 2025 and you are invited to submit comments in writing about the proposal above to: The Archdiocese of Liverpool, Education Department, St Margaret Clitherow Centre, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, L17 1AA. Alternatively, you may wish to e-mail admissions@rcaol.org.uk Comments should also be copied to the Chair of Governing Body at the school address.

12. Please submit any comments no later than 31 January 2025. Following the consultation period each Governing Body will then need to meet before 28 February 2025 in order to formally determine the Governing Body's admission arrangements for the academic year commencing September 2026. Any subsequent objections will need to be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May 2025.