



La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School

Admissions Policy

for entry in the academic year commencing September 2020

The Governors wish to maintain the Catholic ethos of La Retraite RC Girls' School as set out in the Instrument of Government and the Mission Statement and also to maintain a comprehensive ability intake. The published admission number is 165. The organisation of the School to admit 165 pupils will ensure the efficient education of the pupils and seek to ensure that the education of no individual pupil is jeopardised.

Admissions to the school are overseen by the Board of Governors

Parents must make an application for admission to Year 7 by completing the Common Application Form (CAF) provided by the Local Authority in which the applicant lives. The closing date set nationally for the return of the forms to the Local Authority (LA) is **Thursday, 31st October 2019**. Applications for places in other year groups can be made at any time.

The Governors will also require parents/carers wishing their applications to be considered under categories 1-3 to complete an online supplementary form by **Thursday, 31st October 2019**. The supplementary form is available on the school. Its purpose is to establish Catholic practice and commitment. It will seek information not available on the common application form relating to the evidence set out in the Notes for Guidance below. It will require a reference from a parish priest. Completion of a supplementary form is not mandatory. However, if one is not received, the Governors will not be able to apply the admission criteria, and the application will be considered under the 'Other Girls' category.

The Governors wish to encourage applications from Catholic girls of all abilities and to maintain a comprehensive school with a balanced spread of ability. In order to achieve this, all applicants will be tested before admission, using a standardized cognitive ability test. The date of the test will be published well in advance. All applicants will be allocated an ability band according to the results of the test. The governors will give first priority to Catholic applicants, whatever their ability and then make offers to others to achieve as far as possible an ability spread of 25% of the highest achievers (band 1), 50% from the middle (band 2) and 25% of the lowest achievers (band 3).

In making their decisions the Governors will take into account the information from the supplementary form and the Priest's reference where applicable and for non-Catholic girls, the results of the tests.

Oversubscription criteria

Where the number of applications exceeds 165, the Governors will offer places using the following criteria in the order stated below:

1. Baptised Roman Catholic girls and girls who are baptised members of Eastern Rite Churches in communion with Rome who are *looked after* and previously *looked after* girls who have been adopted.
2. Baptised Roman Catholic girls and baptised girls who are members of Eastern Rite Churches in communion with Rome and where La Retraite is in possession of a completed supplementary form.
3. Other *looked after* girls and previously *looked after* girls who have been adopted.
4. Baptised Eastern Orthodox girls.
5. Christian girls baptised in other denominations who are enrolled on and participating in a formal course of preparation for the First Sacraments in a Roman Catholic parish at the time of application and where La Retraite is in possession of a completed supplementary form.
6. All other girls

Tie-breaks

The following order of priorities will be applied when applications within any of the above categories exceed the places available and it is necessary to decide between applications.

Within each category 1 to 6 priority will be given to:

- I. Girls who have a sibling in years 7 to 12 at the time of application
- II. Girls who are students at St Bernadette Junior School, Clapham Park

Within categories 1, 2, 4, and 5 applicants will be:

- I. Ranked according to Sunday Mass attendance in the following order: those who attend weekly, fortnightly, monthly, occasionally, never
- II. Allocated to an ability band according to the outcome of the tests. Where there is oversubscription by Catholic applicants to a particular band, applicants will be allocated to the adjacent band for the purposes of the admissions procedure

Within category 6 (other girls):

- (i) Where places remain after all applicants in (i) to (iv) have been considered, governors will take account of the outcome of the tests and the places still available within the ability bands. Applicants scoring test results within one of the three ability band score ranges will be awarded places until all places within the bands have been allocated.

Final Tie Breaker

Within each category (i) to (v) in the event of an equal right to a place, priority will be given to the girl who lives nearest to the school as measured by Lambeth LA's computerized mapping system. In cases where applicants have exactly the same distance between their home and the school, Lambeth LA will randomly allocate places on behalf of the Governors.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

The admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or with an EHC Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of statements and EHC plans by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with a statement or EHC plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria

Appeals

Parents and Carers whose applications are unsuccessful may appeal to an independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with Section 85(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing and must set out the reasons why the appeal is being made. They should be directed to the Clerk to the Appeals Panel at the school (an independent clerk appointed under the terms of the relevant Education Act). The appeal will usually be on the grounds of maladministration by the school or because of the overriding need of the child and should be received at the school by 31st March 2020.

Waiting List

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list will be maintained throughout the year but names of girls in Year 6 hoping to start in September 2020 will be removed from the list on 30th September 2020, unless the parent has written to request it be kept on the list. The waiting list will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available. It does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

Late Applications

Applications made after the closing date will be processed once the allocation procedure for on-time applications has been finalised. Priority among applications will be given to those who have recently moved into the area, in accordance with the Admissions criteria.

In-year (casual) admissions

Applications for a place at the school in-year must be made using the common application form (CAF) of the Local Authority where the child resides. This form must be returned to the LA. The La Retraite online supplementary form (found on the school's website) should also be completed to enable the governors to rank the application in the event of there being more than one application for a place. The Governors will use the same criteria to rank the application as listed above. The offer of a place at the school will be made by the LA on behalf of the Governors, although it is the school Governors who will make the decision. In the event of the Governors deciding that a place cannot be offered, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

Fair Access Protocol

The school participates in the local authority's Fair Access Protocol to allocate places to vulnerable and other children in accordance with **Appendix A of the School Admission Code 2010**. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the planned admission number for the relevant year group.

Notes for guidance

Evidence of Catholic practice and commitment

Governors will give priority to Catholic girls irrespective of academic ability. The evidence of Catholic practice which governors will take into account will be:

1. The original of the applicant's baptism certificate or, where this is not available, the original of the First Communion certificate AND a self-assessment of Catholic practice and observance, to be counter-signed and stamped by the parish priest.
2. An applicant who has received sacramental baptism according to the rites of a church which is in membership of *Churches Together in England* and is either preparing formally for or has made her First Holy Communion in a Catholic church at the time of application shall be considered a Roman Catholic for the purposes of these criteria, as will an applicant baptised into an Eastern rite church which is in communion with the See of Rome.
3. Girls enrolled in the catechumenate will be considered as Catholics if a date for their baptism or reception into the Church (if already baptised) has been set.
4. If an applicant and her parents have lived in a parish for fewer than two months at the time of application, they may seek support from the parish priest of their previous parish.
5. In the event that a parish priest has been in post for fewer than two months before the time of signing/assessment or who is away from the parish long term, the governors will accept a signature from the previous parish priest, or from a parish worker (such as a Eucharistic Minister) who knows the applicant. In this case, the parish priest should countersign.

Siblings

A sibling is defined as a full sister or step/half-sister living at the same address, a child who is living as part of the family by reason of a court order or a child who has been placed with foster carers as a result of being looked after by the Local Authority.

Distance from School

Distance between the applicant's home and the school is measured by a straight line. This measurement will be made using a computerized mapping system. This measurement will be from a central point from the child's home as identified by the software to a central point in the school as profiled in the software, which will be that used by Lambeth LA. The child's home address will be the child's permanent home address and will not be the address of a relative or carer, unless they have legal custody of the child. Applications must be made from a single address.

If parents are separated and share custody of the child, the address given should be that of the parent with whom the child spends most of the school week, which will normally be the address where Child Benefit is payable. If the parent making the application lives at a different address to the child, a letter of explanation should be attached. It is not acceptable for a family to use a temporarily rented address to secure a place of their preference. In disputed cases, the Governors will make a judgment based on the evidence available to them.

Applications or offers under this criterion will only be valid once proof of address has been given and confirmed. Proof of address will be two utility bills dated within six months of the application.