

Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2024/2025

At St Michael's we strive to develop and inspire **courageous, respectful** and resilient learners encouraging them to **serve with kindness, respect** and tolerance guided by our Christian values so that they can flourish, living 'life in all its fullness'. (John 10:10)

Introduction

St Michael's Church of England Aided First School welcomes children from all backgrounds, faiths and no faith. The Governors of the School are committed to developing an inclusive school that reflects the diversity of the local community.

School Ethos Statement

As well as being an inclusive neighbourhood school, as a Church school St Michael's First School has a distinctive character and ethos that reflects the teachings of Jesus Christ and Christian values. We ask all parents applying for a place here to respect this ethos and its importance to the school community. We hope that all children who come to the school will be able to participate "as appropriate" in the religious life of the school (including collective worship and religious education). This does not affect the right of parents who are not Christians to apply for a place. Indeed, through our commitment to inclusiveness, we actively welcome families from other faiths and no faith.

Applications for Admission

Full time places in the reception class will be available in September of the academic year within which your child becomes five.

If you wish to make an application for your child's admission to this school **please complete an admissions form, available online at <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/Admissions/> , even if you are resident within the school's catchment area.**

In consultation with Staffordshire Local Authority the School Governors determine the number of pupils that may be admitted to a school in each year; this is generally referred to as the school's Published Admission Number (PAN). The PAN agreed by Governors for the school year beginning 2024 is 30.

In line with the Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice, St Michael's will not discriminate against an educational or physical need in deciding whether to offer a place. Any child with an educational, health and care plan or disability that names the school must be admitted. This will reduce the number of places available to applicants.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any supporting information required in order for the application to be assessed against the published admissions criteria, the local authority will not seek to obtain this information on behalf of the applicant.

Oversubscription Criteria

If the total number of applications for admission to a school exceeds the school's Published Admission Number the following order of priority will be used to allocate the available places. In line with the SEND code of practice, St Michael's will not discriminate against an educational or physical need in deciding whether to offer a place. Any child with an educational health and care plan or disability that names the school must be admitted. This will reduce the number of places available to applicants.

- 1) Children in care and children who ceased to be in care because they were adopted (or became subject to child arrangements order or special guardianship order), including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. See Appendix 2
- 2) Children who satisfy both of the following tests:
 - a. **Test 1:** the child is distinguished from the great majority of other applicants either on their own medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances. Medical grounds must be supported by a medical report (obtained by the applicant and provided at the point of application). This report must clearly justify, for health reasons only, why it is better for the child's health to attend St Michael's rather than any other school. Exceptional circumstances must relate to the choice of school and the individual child, i.e. the circumstances of the child, not the economic or social circumstances of the parent/carer. They should be supported by a professional report (obtained by the applicant and provided at the point of application), e.g. social worker. This report must clearly justify why it is better for the child to attend the St Michael's school rather than any other school.
 - b. **Test 2:** the child would suffer hardship if they were unable to attend the St Michael's school. Hardship means severe suffering of any kind, not merely difficulty or inconvenience, which is likely to be experienced as a result of the child attending a different school. Applicants must provide detailed information about both the type and severity of any likely hardship at the time of application.
- 3) Children who have an elder sibling in attendance at St Michael's First school and who will still be attending the school at the proposed admission date; (For admission purposes, a brother or sister is a child who lives at the same address and either: have one or both natural parents in common; are related by a parent's marriage; are adopted or fostered by a common parent or are unrelated children who live at the same address, whose parents live as partners.)
- 4) Children who live in the catchment area who themselves are, or whose families are, faithful and regular worshippers of any Christian denomination (as recognised by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and/or the Evangelical Alliance). Written evidence of the applicants' commitment to their place of worship will be required, (see appendix 1). Definition of regular attendance is set out on page 6.

- 5) Children living within the catchment area of the school, as defined by the Local Authority.
- 6) Children who are outside the catchment area and who themselves are, or whose families are, faithful and regular worshippers of any Christian denomination (as recognised by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and/or the Evangelical Alliance). Written evidence of the applicants' commitment to their place of worship will be required (see appendix 1).
- 7) Children who are themselves, or whose families are, committed members of another religious faith. Written evidence will be required from the faith leader, *using the attached form*.
- 8) Other children arranged in order of priority according to how near their home addresses are to the main gate of the school, determined by a straight-line measurement as calculated by the local authority's geographical information system. The local authority uses a geographical information system (GIS) to calculate home to school distances in miles. The measurement is calculated using Ordnance Survey (OS) data from an applicant's home address to the main front gate of the school. The coordinates of an applicant's home address are determined and provided by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and OS address point data.

If there are limited number of spaces available and St Michael's cannot distinguish between applicants using the criteria listed, such as in the case of children who live in the same block of flats, then the child or children who will be offered the available spaces will be randomly selected. This process will be independently verified.

All children will be granted places using the above criteria regardless of ability, race or gender.

If your application is unsuccessful you have the right to make an appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel, details available from the school.

Additional information

There is no charge or cost related to the admission of a child to a school.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any supportive information required in order for the application to be assessed against the published admissions criteria, the local authority will not seek to obtain this information on behalf of the applicant.

Children in care means children who are looked after by a local authority in accordance with section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 and who is (a) in care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. This includes

children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangement orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a special guardianship order as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Copies of school catchment area maps are available from the local authority or individual schools. See our [catchment areas page](#).

Attendance at a particular nursery or infant school will not guarantee admission to any particular primary or junior school. Parents must make a separate application for admission to primary or junior school at the appropriate time.

The requirement for the local authority to meet the infant class size legislation may result in the refusal of catchment area or sibling applications where a class has already reached its limit of 30 pupils. However, as an exception, the local authority will give careful consideration to offering places above the published admission number to applications from children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted even when there are no other vacant places.

Admissions for the normal age of entry are administered through a coordinated admission scheme and preferences for maintained schools will be processed centrally by the School Admissions and Transport Service. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that each child will receive only one offer of a place at a Staffordshire school on a prescribed date.

It is expected that parents will agree on school places before an application is made, and it may be necessary to request evidence from you to confirm that this is the case. The local authority is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.

Home address

The home address is considered to be the child's along with their parent/carer's main and genuine principle place of residence at the time of the allocation of places, e.g. where they are normally and regularly living. If

a child is residing with friends or relatives (for reasons other than legal guardianship) the friends or relative's address will not be considered for allocation purposes.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the school week then the home address will be determined as the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week (e.g. 3 out of 5 school nights available). Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes.

If a child's home address changes during the admissions process it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Local Authority immediately. Where there is a proposed house move taking place during the admissions process the Local Authority will only accept the revised address for purposes of allocation where parents/carers can provide documentary evidence of the move by 8th March 2023 before the Local Authority closing date. It will be necessary for sufficient evidence of a permanent move to be provided by the applicant by this date before it will be taken into account for allocation purposes at the national offer date.

If a place is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from the child's normal and permanent home address at the time of allocation of places, then that place is likely to be withdrawn.

Any Staffordshire child not obtaining a place at any of their parent's preferred schools will be allocated an alternative school place and advised about the independent appeals process.

Deferred Entry to Reception Class

Parents may request that their child be admitted to Reception Class on a part-time basis, or that their child be admitted to school later in the same academic year until the child reaches compulsory school age (i.e. beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday). The effect is that the place will be held for the child in Reception and is not available to be offered to any other child within the same academic year in which it has been offered.

Before deciding whether to defer their child's entry to school, parents should visit St. Michael's to clarify how they cater for the youngest children in Reception and how the needs of these children are met as they move up through the school.

Admission Outside of the Normal Age Group

Parents may seek to apply for their child's admission to school outside of their normal age group, for example if the child is exceptionally gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of summer born children may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted outside of their normal age group to Reception rather than Year 1.

These parents will need to make an application alongside children applying at the normal age which should explain why it is in the child's best interest to be admitted outside of their normal age which may include information such as professional evidence as to why this is the case and why an exception should be made

in the case of the child. A decision as to whether this is an appropriate course of action will be made by the Governing Body who will take into account the circumstances of the case and views of the headteacher. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year group.

Application on faith grounds

Regular attendance is defined as attendance at a church service (or an explicitly defined church activity) on a Sunday or weekday on at least two occasions per month for at least two years. In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, or the person has been unable to partake in such activities due to health restrictions, the requirement in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship and/or the person was able to partake in such activities.

Multiple-birth applications

The requirement for the Governing Body to meet the Infant Class Size legislation may result in the refusal of catchment area or sibling applications where a class has already reached its limit of 30 pupils. However, as an exception, the Governing Body will give careful consideration to offering places above the published admission number to applications from children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted even when there are no other vacant places.

Late Applications

Preferences received after the closing date will be considered alongside those applicants who applied on time wherever possible. Where it is not practicable because places have already been allocated, or are shortly to be allocated, then late preferences will be considered only after those that were made before this point.

A late application does not affect the right of appeal or to be placed on a school's waiting list.

For late applications made after the time that is practicable because places have already been allocated, are shortly to be allocated, there will be a period of two weeks after the national offer date whereby available places will not be reallocated. If places become available after this date they will be offered according to the child at the top of the waiting list.

Waiting Lists for Admissions & Normal Point of Entry

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria stated above and not based on the date their application was received. There will be a period of two weeks after the national offer date whereby available places will not be reallocated. If places become available after this date they will be offered according to the child at the top of the waiting list.

For cases where the Reception class size regulations apply, the waiting list will operate until the cohort concerned leaves Year 2 and parents will be written to each year by the Authority to ask whether or not they wish their child's details to remain on the list.

For all other cases, the waiting list will operate until 31st December 2024.

Inclusion on a school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available at St Michael's First school.

A child's position on a waiting list is not fixed and is subject to change during the year i.e. they can go up or down the list since each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the oversubscription criteria

Children who are subject to a direction by a local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

Appeals

Parents who are not offered a place for their child have the right to appeal to an independent appeals panel. Parents wishing to appeal should do so in accordance with Staffordshire County Council appeals process.

Repeat Applications

Parents do not have the right to a second appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the local authority has accepted a second application from the appellant because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission.

In-Year Admissions

Parents or carers seeking to transfer to St Michael's First School may make an application using the appropriate application form which can be obtained from the school website/office. This application will be processed in line with the procedure outlined in the determined admission arrangements and parents and carers need to be aware that any date set for joining the new school may be after the next term or half term holiday and those parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child continues to receive appropriate education in the interim.

Policy adopted:

Date for next review

Signed: _____ (CoG)

Appendix 1

Supplementary Information Form

To inform school about the commitment of the child's family to the Church as specified in the admissions criteria.

Child's name	
Permanent address	
Denomination of child	
Place of worship attended (including address)	

To be completed by the Parent/Guardian:

I can confirm that my child has been an attendee at a church service (or an explicitly defined church activity) on a Sunday or a weekday on at least two occasions per month for at least two years.

Signature _____

Full name _____

To be completed by the Church Officer:

I confirm that the above-named child has attended church as stated.

Yes /No

I confirm that the above-named child belongs to one of the denominations named in the policy.

Yes/No

I confirm that the information provided by the family is correct

Name Date

Signature.....

If the child has attended more than one church where a family has recently moved, please complete an extra copy of appendix 1.

Admissions priority for children adopted from state care outside of England – what it means for admission authorities

The 2021 School Admissions Code (the Code) requires children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted to be given equal first priority in admission arrangements, alongside looked after children (LAC) and children who were previously looked after by English local authorities (PLAC). This advice refers to these children as internationally adopted previously looked after children – “IAPLAC”.

The draft Code and associated regulations were laid before Parliament on 13 May 2021. The Code is laid in Parliament for a 40-day period during which both the House of Commons and the House of Lords have the opportunity to review the Code and any Member can pass a motion to not approve it.¹ This 40-day period is expected to expire on 1 July, and provided there is no such motion, the new Code will come into force on 1 September 2021.

What action must admission authorities take in order to comply with the new IAPLAC provision?

Paragraph 1.7 of the new Code will require that highest priority is given to “looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted”.

This new provision will necessitate variations to determined admission arrangements to take effect from 1 September 2021. Admission authorities will need to vary their admission arrangements for 2021/22 (which would have been determined by 28 February 2020) and their admission arrangements for 2022/23 (which would have been determined by 28 February 2021). Without these variations, admission arrangements that have already been determined will no longer comply with the Code from this date.

Therefore, we expect admission authorities to hold a meeting sometime between now and 31 August 2021 to determine the necessary variations to admission arrangements for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. Variations will be conditional on the Code passing through its Parliamentary process (i.e. a date on or around 1 July 2021). If any variations are agreed before then, they must be expressed to be conditional on the Code passing through Parliament. All such variations should come into effect on 1 September 2021.

As these variations will be necessary to comply with a mandatory requirement of the Code, it will not be necessary to refer a variation request to either the schools adjudicator (in respect of maintained schools) or the ESFA (in respect of academies).

How will the new IAPLAC provision affect admissions in 2021/22?

All applications received before 1 September 2021 will have been processed in accordance with the existing (2014) Code, and offers made and places allocated will be unchanged.

¹ Such a motion would prevent the Code from coming into force.

Any applications received on or after 1 September 2021 will need to be processed in accordance with the new Code. By way of example, when dealing with in-year applications for the 2021/2022 academic year, children who are determined as being IAPLAC must be given equal highest priority with LAC and PLAC.

Any child who is on a waiting list for a school before 1 September 2021 and meets the definition of an IAPLAC must be ranked again on 1 September 2021 following the new Code coming into force so that the child is given equal highest priority with LAC and PLAC.

How will admission authorities be able to verify that a child is an IAPLAC?

Responsibility for determining whether a child is eligible for IAPLAC priority rests with the admission authority. Subject to ministerial approval, we plan to publish non-statutory guidance on the admission of IAPLAC in time for the new Code coming into force. This guidance will aim to assist and support admission authorities in assessing evidence provided by parents who want their child to be considered under the IAPLAC criterion.

The guidance will recommend that admission authorities should request advice from their Virtual School Head (VSH), if they are in any doubt about the acceptability of evidence provided by the parent of an IAPLAC.

Other references to previously looked after children in the Code

All references to previously looked after children in the Code mean children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after **as well as** those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

This means that the other provisions in the Code which apply to PLAC (for example, in relation to the admission arrangements of schools with a religious character, selective arrangements, and boarding priority) apply to IAPLAC in exactly the same way as they do to PLAC.