St Alban's Catholic Academy
First Avenue, Harlow, CM20 2NP Tel: 01279425383
Email: adminstalbans@ourladyoffatimatrust.essex.sch.uk
Executive Headteacher Mr I Kendal B.Ed(hons), MA, NPQEL
Head of School Mrs AM Black B.Ed(hons)

St Alban's Catholic Academy

Admissions Policy – 2026-2027

St Alban's Catholic Academy is a place where, we live our Mission Statement. "Through God's love we learn together, grow together and achieve together."

As a Catholic school, we provide a distinctive education for all our pupils. We welcome applications from all members of our local community. All children are welcome at St Alban's Catholic Academy. We ask all families successful in their application to give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of our school.

The Local Governing Body 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.

For normal start date: September 2026

The Trustees has set its published admission number ('PAN') for Reception class at 30 pupils. We can only accept 30 children into the reception year in the school year, which begins in September 2026.

If there are more applications than places available, priority will be given in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below.

Oversubscription

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. Children with a Catholic Baptism Certificate who are resident in the parishes of Our Lady of Fatima and St Thomas More and Assumption of Our Lady. (see notes 3 & 4)
3. Children with a Catholic Baptism Certificate who are resident in other parishes in Harlow. (see note 3)
4. Other children with a Catholic Baptism Certificate. (see note 3)
5. All other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)
6. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church (see note 5 & 6)
7. Children of other Christian denominations who have been baptised (evidenced by a certificate of baptism) or whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion. (See note 7)
8.
9. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a religious leader. (see note 8)
10. Children whose parents wish them to share in the religious experience of the school.

The governing body 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.

Children with a sibling at the school at the time of application and admission shall take precedence in the category in which they fall. (see note 8)

Tie-break

Priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distances are calculated as stated in the Primary Education in Essex booklet. 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 and supervised by a person independent of the school. All the names will be entered into a hat and the required number of names will be drawn out.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs (see note 1)

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

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form available from the local authority in which you live. You are requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) attached to this policy if you wish to apply under oversubscription criteria 2 to 4 and 6 to 9.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on or around 16th April 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.

If you do not provide the information required in the SIF and return it by the closing date, together with all supporting documentation, your child will not be placed in criteria 2 to 4 or 6 to 9 and this is likely to affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the Local Authority closing date for admissions.

Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. In exceptional circumstances, a child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

SUMMER BORN CHILDREN DEFERRED ENTRY (outside their chronological year)

If a parent wishes his/her summer born child to start school in Reception in the September following his/her 5th birthday (i.e. a child born between 1st April – 31st August being admitted to Reception at 5 years of age), they should make the school aware of this by writing a letter to the Chair of Governors at the time of application. Parents must then submit an application in the normal way for that year of entry. This application will be treated in the same way as all other applications and there is no guarantee that an offer will be made.

Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

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. In addition, the parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1st April and 31st August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to reception rather than year 1.

Any such request should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors, St Alban's Catholic Academy, First Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2NP at the same time as the admission application is made. The governing body will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interest 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 governing body will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

Continued Interest Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a Continued Interest list. The waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Continued Interest lists for admissions will operate throughout the school year.

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Inclusion in the school's Continued Interest list does not mean that a place will eventually become available or that you will be automatically offered a place if it does.

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. Application should be made to the school by contacting Application should be made to the school using the Mid-Year Application Form on the school's website.

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out above, will be applied. If there are no places available, the child will be added to the Continued Interest list (see above).

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Nursery

For children attending the school's nursery, application to the Reception class of the school must be made in the normal way, to the home local authority. Attendance at the school's nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered to the school.

The governing body 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.

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Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. 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. 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 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.
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 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).

Note: 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 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 law 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. '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 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.

8. 'brother or sister' includes:

   (i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, step-brothers 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 lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant.

9. 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.