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Admissions Policy

This document sets out the admission arrangements for St Mark’s Academy (the School) for the year 2022/2023. The admission arrangements in this policy were determined on 11 February 2021.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how parents can apply** for a place for their child at the School
- Set out the School’s **arrangements for allocating places to the pupils** who apply
- Explain **how parents can appeal** against a decision not to offer their child a place

Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

As an academy, the School is required by its funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

Reference in the codes and elsewhere to admission authorities shall be deemed to be references to the Local Governing Body acting on behalf of Anthem. This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The School will participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by the local authority and will adhere to the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol. Notwithstanding these arrangements, the Secretary of State may direct the School to admit a named student on application from the local authority. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult the School.

How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round parents should use the application form provided by their home local authority (regardless of which local authority the School is in). Parents can use this form to express their preference for a minimum of three state-funded schools, in rank order.

Parents will receive an offer for a school place directly from their local authority.

Consideration of applications

The School will consider all applications for places. The School has an agreed admission number of 180 (the Published Admission Number – PAN) pupils for entry in Year 7. Where fewer than 180

¹ Changes have been made to this policy in line with the new 2021 Admissions Code to take effect from 1 September 2021

applications are received, the School will offer places to all those who have applied. We reserve the right to check any address and other information provided so we can apply the oversubscription criteria accurately and fairly. As an admission authority we have the right to investigate any concerns we may have about your application and to withdraw the offer of a place if we consider there is evidence that you have made a fraudulent claim or provided misleading information, for example if a false address was given which denied a place to a child with a stronger claim.

The School may set a higher PAN for any specific year. Before setting a PAN higher than its agreed admission number, the School will inform the local authority and reference this change on the School's website. Students will not be admitted above the PAN unless exceptional circumstances apply, and such circumstances shall be reported to the Secretary of State.

Procedures where the School is oversubscribed

If the School is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) where the school is named in the EHCP, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:

- Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- Children whose parent/carer is a regular and faithful worshipper in an Anglican or Christian Church² (see footnote 2), with a sibling attending the School at the time of application. 'Sibling' is defined in these arrangements as half, full, step, adoptive or foster brother or sister living predominantly in the same home as the child. In the event of there being more siblings than there are remaining places in a year, it is possible that a sibling under these circumstances would not be offered a place.
- Children of a parent/carer who is a regular and faithful worshipper in an Anglican or Christian Church (see footnote 2 above) and also staff at the School, in either of the following circumstances:
 - a) The member of staff has been employed at the School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the School is made, or
 - b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage

Tie-break

The oversubscription criteria are listed in the order we apply them. If it is necessary to distinguish between more than one applicant in any criteria, the next criteria will be applied until the tie-breaker is used. In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the School will use random allocation as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. This

² Written evidence of the parent/carer's commitment to their place of worship will be required at the time of application which must be returned to the School on the Supplementary Information Form at Annex 1; this evidence must be endorsed by your religious leader. A Christian Church is one that is a full member of a local Churches Together Group, Churches Together in England, The Evangelical Alliance, or Affinity or FIEC. Faithful and regular worshipper is defined as attendance of the parent/carer at worship, virtually or in-person, at least fortnightly for at least two years prior to application. In exceptional cases a parent/carer for whom unavoidable circumstances (which includes the coronavirus pandemic) have prevented his/her attendance at worship at least fortnightly for at least two years prior to application may be considered to be a faithful and regular worshipper; the relevant religious leader will determine whether, or not, there were unavoidable circumstances. Higher preference is not given to families where two parents worship. It is not a requirement that the child applying for a place has attended the place of worship with the parent/carer.

process will be independently verified by someone who does not work at the school or the local authority.

Multiple births and siblings in the same year

In the case of multiple births (e.g. twins, triplets) and where there is only one place available in the School, these will be considered together as one application and the School is authorised to exceed its admission number.

If brothers and sisters in the same year group are split by operation of the oversubscription criteria, the school will go above its published admission number to accommodate all children unless this would make the class too large and prejudice the education of the other children.

Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces)

In order to support the military covenant aimed at removing disadvantage for UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces), and Crown Servants returning from abroad the following arrangements will apply;

- If an application is supported by an official letter declaring a posting and a relocation date then an intention to move to a confirmed address or quartering within the UK will be accepted. The new address will be used to consider the application against the oversubscription criteria. A unit postal address can be used if the family are unable to provide an address or prefer to use the unit address.
- Where an application is not supported by an official letter, or is not being made due to a new posting then the current address will be used to examine the application against the oversubscription criteria until the family are formally resident in the new address.

Proof of intended occupation of the residential address such as mortgage statement, exchange of contracts or signed tenancy agreement will be required. For applicants participating in the Future Accommodation Model trial, a letter accepting an address under the scheme will be accepted if a signed tenancy agreement cannot be provided. An offer may be withdrawn if a child does not reside at the address listed on the application form if the school is oversubscribed and use of an incorrect address has resulted in a place being denied to another child who would otherwise have been offered the place.

In all cases where parents can demonstrate that the child is a child of a crown servant returning from abroad or is a child of a serving member of the armed forces, we will consider whether to offer a place at a school even if the school has reached its official PAN. When making the decision whether to offer over PAN we will consider the circumstances of each case including:

- If the applicant would have been offered a place had they applied on time in the admissions round of the year of entry.
- Whether there is any child on the reserve list with higher priority under the subscription criteria.
- Whether admission of a further student would prejudice the efficient education and efficient use of resources and this prejudice would be excessive.

The School has discretion to admit above the admission number in these circumstances but they are not obliged to do so. If a place is refused, parents will be informed of their right of appeal.

Sixth forms

The PAN for Year 12 is 25. This PAN is the minimum number of places for external students. The entry criteria and courses on offer can be found in the Sixth Form Prospectus and on the School website. The entry criteria for sixth form is the same for internal and external applicants.

Where the sixth form is oversubscribed, priority for admission will be given to those students meeting the entry criteria in the following order, after the admission of pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) where the school is named in the EHCP:

- Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- Children with a sibling attending the school at the time of application³. In the event of there being more siblings than there are remaining places in a year group, it is possible that a sibling under these circumstances would not be offered a place. Where siblings exceed the remaining places in a year group, places will be allocated by the drawing of lots.
- Children of staff at the School, in either of the following circumstances:
 - a) The member of staff has been employed at the School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the School is made, or
 - b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- Students with the highest average points score across all GCSE subjects taken by the applicant with priority given to students with the highest average score first.

Other students by distance from the Academy, with priority for admission given to students who live nearest to the Academy. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the Post Office Address Point of the home to the Post Office Address Point of the Academy, calculated electronically to three figures after the decimal point (e.g. 1.543 miles). The home address is considered as the address where the student lives for the majority of term time. This may be with a parent (as defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996) who has parental responsibility for the child (as defined in the Children Act 1989). Where a student lives normally during the Academy week with more than one parent at different addresses, the home address accepted for the purposes of Academy admissions will be the one where the child spends the majority of term time. If a student can show that they spend an equal amount of time at two addresses during Academy term time with a parent, they can choose which address to use on the application. If a student has more than one home, we will accept the address where the student normally lives for the majority of the Academy term time as the home address.

³ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to an Academy. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the 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 arrangements 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). ⁴ 'Sibling' is defined in these arrangements as half, full, step, adoptive or foster brother or sister living predominantly in the same home as the child at the time of application and/or at the time of admission.

The rules above on tie-break, multiple births and UK service personnel also apply to entry at sixth form. Any meetings held to discuss options or courses will not form part of the decision process as to whether to offer a place.

Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. It is important for parents to note that they will have the opportunity and responsibility to provide whatever evidence they wish to support their request. Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The Headteacher's views

If applying during the normal admissions round, parents must apply for a place in the child's normal age group at the usual time. At the same time, parents may make their application for admission out of the normal age group. Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents will be informed of the School's decision before April 16 and will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Once informed of the School's decision, parents may withdraw their application for the normal age group if their application for deferment is agreed or decide to accept the offer of the normal age range if they are refused. Alternatively, they could refuse this offer and make an in-year application (see below). Parents do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the School but it is not in their preferred age group.

Operation of waiting lists

Where years 7 to 10 the Academy receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate. There will be one list for Foundation places and one for Open places. This will be maintained by the Academy and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application. No waiting list is held for Year 11 as admissions into this year are coordinated by the local authority. Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out above. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list for admissions will be ranked again every time a child is added, in line with the published oversubscription criteria. For the intake year the list is held until the end of

August. After this the Academy admissions code requires that schools keep the reserve list until the end of the autumn term.

In-year applications

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to Merton local authority admission team. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHCP names the School will be admitted. If admission would cause prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources, it may be necessary to refuse a place.

If there are no spaces available at the time of the application, the child's name may on request be added to the waiting list for the relevant year group. Please see above for how the waiting list is operated.

Appeals

If an application for a place at the school is unsuccessful (whether made during the normal admissions round or in-year), parents will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If parents wish to appeal, they must set out the grounds for the appeal in writing and send it to school@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk

Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Anthem every year.

Whenever relevant changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the School will publicly consult on these changes in accordance with the Admissions Code.