

Admissions – Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to attend an Open Session?

No. However, we strongly recommend that you do and that you stay for the Head Teacher's talk. You need to visit the school to see if it will suit your daughter. You also need to know as much about the admissions process as possible since admission arrangements change regularly in response to changes in the Code of Practice on admissions. You should not assume that the arrangements are the same as previous years or that your daughter will automatically get a place even if her sister is here.

I missed the Open Sessions – is it possible to come and visit the school?

We do not arrange tours or visits outside of the Open Day sessions.

What forms do I have to complete?

You must complete the **Common Application Form** (CAF) usually available from your Primary School and Local Authority and return it to your Local Authority by **Friday 24th October 2008**. You may also complete this on-line. You must also complete the school's own Supplementary Form. This is available with the brochure at the Open Session and also from the school website (www.sacredhearhighschool.org.uk). Return both parts of the form to Sacred Heart High School by **3pm on Friday 24th October 2008**. If you do not complete both the CAF and the school's Supplementary Form and return them by the closing date, the governing body may be unable to consider your application and it is very unlikely that your child will get a place at this school.

Do I need any other documentation?

A full list of required documentation is provided on page 4 of the supplementary application form. This includes a Baptismal Certificate for your daughter **and** for the Catholic parent or parents. Original copies of all documentation should be brought into school by **Friday 21st November 2008**. We will photocopy and return originals to you

What happens if the primary head doesn't sign my form?

Your application will still be considered. We recommend that you do seek advice and help over secondary transfer from your primary head since some people do find the process a daunting one.

I don't know where my baptismal certificate is. What should I do?

Advice on how to obtain a Baptismal certificate and what to do if the Church has been destroyed is in the brochure. Alternatives such as a certificate of Confirmation or proof of marriage in the Catholic Church are acceptable.

Do both parents have to be Catholic?

No. The Admissions policy refers to the Catholic parent or parents.

Should I give the supplementary form to my Parish Priest?

No. Complete the relevant sections and we will send the form to him for you. If your priest has recently moved, give us his new address and we will happily send it to him there.

Can I submit any other documentation or information?

The Supplementary form is clear what documentation is essential. You may submit any further documentation or information in support of your daughter's application but only where it is relevant to the admissions criteria.

My child has a Statement of Special Educational Need. What should I do?

Your primary school should advise you. Your Local Authority will consult with Hammersmith & Fulham which will then consult with the Governors of this school, to consider what reasonable steps the school would have to take to meet your daughter's needs. Hammersmith & Fulham will consider the Governors' response and decide whether or not to recommend that the school should be named in the statement.

Do I have to name this school as my first preference?

No. In common with all schools, we operate an equal preference system, and will not know where you have ranked us. Nor will we know which other schools you have named.

Do I have to use all six of my preferences?

We recommend that you use all six and that you are realistic in naming and ranking schools. If you name only the most popular schools, then you may not get a place at any of them. You should avoid naming only one school, even if you have a sibling present at it.

Can you tell me what my chances are of getting a place at this school?

No. No member of staff or Governor of this school is able to tell you this. We do not know how many applications we will receive or how many will be from baptized Catholics. You need to use the admissions policy to work out for yourself how likely it is that your application will be successful.

Will my application be unsuccessful on distance?

Distance is used only as a tie break in the event of oversubscription and to rank applications within the admissions criteria. It is impossible to say how far away is too far and the distance of the last successful candidate in each band may well be different. It will in any case differ from year to year. If your application is unsuccessful on distance alone, you may subsequently gain a place from the waiting list, though, of course, this cannot be guaranteed.

When will the non verbal reasoning test take place?

The test will take place on **Saturday, 15th November**. Shortly after the closing date for applications, we will write to you to give you the time of the test. You will be asked to bring a copy of that letter with you, with an attached photograph of your daughter as proof of identity.

What do I do if my daughter has a test at another school on the same day?

Your daughter should attend to take the test at the school ranked highest on the CAF or nearest to her home. Tell both schools. In the past we have simply shared results and placed the child in the appropriate band. We expect to do the same this year.

Does it make any difference if I apply to an independent school?

Not at all. However, you should be aware that if an independent school offers you a place, it will do so before your Local Authority contacts you with a single offer. You will be asked to accept the place and to submit a non refundable deposit of half a term's fees (c. £2,400). If you intend to apply for an independent school as insurance against not getting a place here, then be aware that it is expensive, though balanced against a minimum outlay of c.£14,500 per annum (not including text books) and more than £75,000 for 5 years, it is reasonable. The choice is entirely yours and we will not know.

I am not a Catholic and nor is my daughter. Can I apply for a place for her?

Yes. However, you should be aware that the school is very oversubscribed by baptized and practising Catholics and therefore it is highly unlikely that you will get a place. The Admissions policy gives information about previous applications. You will note that this states that no application from a non Catholic family was successful last year. This has been the case for many years.

Does the school by law have to admit 10% of non Catholics?

No. See highlighted extract from the Code of Practice on Admissions below.

2.41 It is unlawful under section 49 of the Equality Act 2006 for maintained, non-maintained or independent schools to discriminate against a child on the grounds of the child's religion or belief in the terms on which it offers to admit him as a pupil or by refusing to accept an application for a place at the school. *However, those schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character (faith schools) are exempt and are permitted to use faith based oversubscription criteria in order to give higher priority in admissions to children who are members of, or who practise, their faith or denomination. This only applies if a school is oversubscribed.*

I am a member of an Orthodox Church. Does this make a difference?

If the school is oversubscribed by baptized Catholics, then the Governors are obliged to offer places to these pupils first. Though there is a very close relationship between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, there is not yet 'full communion' between the two. For a list of those Churches and Rites in full communion with Rome, follow the link: www.rcdow.org.uk/education Click on the link for admissions and go to Annex 7 of Guidance for Governing Bodies. The admissions policy sets out the order in which members of other Churches and faiths will be admitted, should the school be under subscribed by baptized Catholics. This is very unlikely to happen.

When will I hear whether or not my application has been successful?

Your Local Authority will write to you on or about 1st **March 2009** with a single offer. If the offer is for this school, we will write very soon after that to confirm this. We will ask you to confirm to us within 5 working days whether or not you intend to take up the place. Places not accepted within that time frame will be offered to the next person within that ability band.