



St Thomas More Catholic High School

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, NORTH SHIELDS SIXTH FORM ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-26

St Thomas More Catholic High School and Sixth Form College was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for students of Catholic families. The school is conducted by the Catholic Education Trust as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and Articles of Association and seeks at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic students in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. We, therefore hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school. This does not affect the right of an applicant who is not Catholic to apply for and be admitted to a place at the school in accordance with the admissions arrangements.

Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust is the admissions authority and is responsible for determining the admission policy. The local authority coordinates the admissions process on behalf of the Trust. The administration and operation of the admission policy is delegated by the Trust to the Local Governing Committee.

The admission policy criteria will be dealt with on an equal preference basis.

Published Admission Number

The sixth-form is available for all existing pupils subject to pupils fulfilling the individual requirements of suitable courses. Remaining places in the sixth-form of the school will be offered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria, subject to applicants fulfilling the individual requirements of suitable courses.

The admissions authority has set its admission number at 50 pupils to year twelve for external applicants to the sixth-form in the school year which begins in September 2025.

Entry Requirements

General and course specific entry requirements are detailed in the Sixth Form Prospectus.

Students with an Education, Health and Care plan

The admission of students with an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Students who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan where the school is named as the most appropriate educational setting for the student will 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.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered to students who meet the entry requirements according to the following order of priority.

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after students. (see notes 2&3)
2. Other Catholic students. (see note 3)
3. Other looked after and previously looked after students. (see note 2)
4. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 4&5)
5. Students of a member of school staff who has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which application for admission to the school is made (note 11)
6. Students of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader. (see note 6)
7. Students of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader. (see note 7)
8. Any other students.

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.

- (i) *Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 12)*
- (ii) *The attendance of a sibling at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above. (see note 9)*

Tie Breaker

Where there are places available for some, but not all applicants within a particular criterion priority will be given to students living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distance is measured in a straight line, from a single fixed central point of the parental home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and North Tyneside Council's Geographical Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority. In the case of flats if there is more than one home address with the same measurement the flat with the lowest number will be offered the place.

In the event of distances being the same for two or more students where this would determine the last place to be allocated, random allocation will be carried out in a public place and supervised by a person independent of the school.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school, the parent must complete a Sixth Form Application Form available from the school together with the Sixth Form Prospectus, which details the academic entry requirements for admission to individual courses. The parent will be advised of the outcome of the application by the school.

If the parent is required to provide supplemental evidence to support the application (e.g. a baptismal certificate), this evidence should be provided at the time of application. If not provided, evidence may be sought by the admissions authority following the closing date for applications. This information must have been correct at the date of closing for applications.

All applications will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is **Wednesday 5 March 2025**. Any applications received after the closing date will be accepted but considered only after those received by the closing date.

A provisional offer of a place, subject to confirmation of meeting the required academic entry requirements, will be made by Monday 24 March 2025.

Admission of Students outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a student to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the student is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be made in writing to the headteacher of the school. The admissions authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the student. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the admissions authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, applicants will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out below and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. The waiting list will be held open until the 31 December 2024. Inclusion on the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

In-Year Applications

An application can be made for a place for a student at any time outside the admission round and the student will be admitted where there are available places. Applications should be made to the school by contacting the Assistant Headteacher in charge of Sixth Form on 0191 2588340 or info@stmacademy.org.uk [www.stmacademy.org.uk/] Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application in writing.

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria will be applied.

Right of Appeal

Where a parent has been notified that a place is not available for a student, every effort will be made by the local authority to help the parent to find a place in a suitable alternative school. Parents who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the chair of governors at the school address.

Fair Access Protocol

The school is committed to taking its fair share of students who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the admissions authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a student where admission is requested under any local protocol that has been agreed by both the diocese and the admissions authority for the current school year. The admissions authority has this power, even when admitting the student would mean exceeding the published admission number.

False Evidence

The admissions authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place where false evidence is received.

Notes and Definitions

1. 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. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

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 living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

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. For the purposes of admissions this refers to the child on whose behalf the application is being made. 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. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception should contact the Diocese who will decide how the question of baptism or reception is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the 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.

Applicants must provide a baptismal certificate or where child baptism is not practised, a letter confirming their church membership from their minister or faith leader.

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.

Applicants must provide a letter of support to confirm their faith membership from their minister or faith leader.

8. A child's **home address** refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form ("CAF"). Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the CAF, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.

9. **Sibling** includes:

- (i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers 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 home address as the child who is the subject of the application.

10. 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 (having care of a child means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person).

11. A **member of staff** includes all school staff who are under the direct employment of the admissions authority of the school.

12. To demonstrate an **exceptional social, medical or pastoral need** of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the admissions authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the local authority's admission guidance for parents.