



Admissions Policy 2026-2027

ADMISSION AT AGE 11

St Bernard's High School is a six form, 11-16 school for girls with a co-educational Sixth Form. The school serves the Catholic community of Southend, South East Essex and its surrounding areas. The partnership between home, parish and school is the basis of the school's existence as a centre for the education of all Catholic girls of secondary age in the area.

The aim of the school is to recognise and develop the potential of each student. The school provides a full and balanced curriculum which encourages the intellectual and personal development of all students.

The staff are committed to the progress of all students, setting targets with them and supporting achievement through active learning and teaching.

Students are encouraged to enter wholeheartedly into the life of the school; to work hard, to respect the needs of others; and develop those skills and competencies that will be essential in their future lives.

St Bernard's is a forward-looking school with a strong and successful tradition of Christian education and inclusive ethos where all students participate in the religious life of the school.

Published Admission Number: 175

THE ALLOCATION OF PLACES

Selective places:

Up to 30 selective places will be offered to girls who have passed the 11+ Exam Selective Test as administered by the Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex and whose normal place of residence lies within the priority area (see map in section 11, below). If two or more girls tie for the final selective place, then it will be awarded using the oversubscription criteria.

Non Selective Places:

To enable the school's Governing Body to apply its admissions criteria, it will be necessary for parents to complete the school's Supplementary Information Form (SIF) in addition to the Local Authority form. SIF's need to be with the School Office by 31st October.

The school may take reasonable steps to track SIF with local/feeder primary schools and where possible update rankings against the admission criteria however, any SIFs received after this date may be ranked under the 'remaining applications' criterion, in distance order until after National Offer Day in March. Any updated ranking due to submitted SIFs will be passed on to the local authority who manage the waiting list until August.

Where no SIF has been provided applications will be automatically ranked under criterion 8, remaining applications.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs:

The admission of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Girls 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. (See note 1)

If at any time of admission there are more applications than there are places the Governors will apply the following oversubscription criteria to rank applications in priority order. Non-Selective places will be offered to bring the total intake for the year to 175.

Oversubscription Criteria

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after girls.
2. *Catholic girls who attend a feeder Catholic primary school, namely: Our Lady of Lourdes, Leigh- on-Sea; St. Helen's, Westcliff-on-Sea; Sacred Heart, Southend- on-Sea; St. Teresa's, Rochford; St. George's, Shoebury; St. Peter's, Eastwood; St. John Fisher, Prittlewell; Holy Family, South Benfleet; Our Lady of Ransom, Rayleigh and Our Lady of Canvey, Canvey Island.
3. Other Catholic girls.
4. Other looked after and previously looked after girls.
5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church.
6. Girls of other Christian denominations
7. Girls of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion or other religious leader
8. Remaining applications

Notes:

Preference will be given within each of the above categories according to the following criteria:-

- i. girls with a sibling* at the school or at St. Thomas More High School, Westcliff at the time of admission.
- ii. proximity of the child's home to the school, as measured by the shortest route; those living closest to the school being accorded the highest priority. Where a child resides at more than one address the distance will be measured using the address where they reside for the majority of the time.

Definition:

A sibling is defined as the full, half, step, adopted and long term fostered siblings at St Bernard's High School

Admission Arrangements

1. Catholic children in public care or who were previously in public care (see explanatory note 2)
2. '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 a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of 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 laws of the Church.
3. A Catholic student who attends a different Catholic other school other than our feeder schools or who attends a Non Catholic primary school.
4. Other children in public care or who were previously in public care (see explanatory note 2)
5. '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. 'Eastern Christian Church' includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church.

6. Girls who have been baptised in church and/or have a letter of practice from their minister.
7. Girls who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations'
8. Remaining applications

Explanatory Information

1. Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) and Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

A Statement of Special Educational Need is a statement made by the local authority under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996, specifying the special educational provision required for that child. If the school is oversubscribed, the admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan where the school is named in the Statement or Plan, is mandatory.

2. Looked after children and previously looked after children

Children who are in the care of local authorities as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of 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. Previously looked after children also includes those children who appear (to the governing body) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Looked after and previously looked after children are given the appropriate priority for each relevant age group in line with the admission criteria.

3. Distance where parents have separated

The distance is measured the same for all applications. Only one application can be received. The LA should not have the details of both parents or know of the marital status of the parents. If more than one application is received from parents, applications will be placed on hold until such time that:

- an application is made that both parents agree to; or
- written agreement is provided from both parents; or
- a court order is obtained confirming which parent's application takes precedence'.

Details on address checks and which address is relevant are also provided in the admission booklet. In all cases the child's normal place of residence is applicable for the purposes of the application

4. Tie Break

Priority will be given to girls living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance in each category. Distances are calculated [on the basis of a straight-line measurement between the front door of the child's home address (including the community entrance to flats) and the main entrance of the school. 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

5. Waiting Lists

Lists for each intake year are kept for students wishing to remain on our waiting list. Admission, if a vacancy becomes available, is strictly in the order of the admissions criteria. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. The waiting list is refreshed every academic year and parents/carers are asked to contact the school if they wish to remain on the list otherwise their application is removed from the next academic year. Example if you are on the Year 7 waiting list, you will be removed in September for Year 8 unless you contact the school in writing by the end of August.

6. Over and Under Age Applications

Parents may seek 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. In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

To request admission out of normal age group during the transfer process of year 6 to 7:- To request admission out of usual age group applicants must write to the local authority with their request. The local authority will share the details of the request with the school. Parents will be notified of the outcome before the allocation of places and must apply during the main round for the usual age group.

To request admission out of normal age group in-year: To request admission out of usual age group applicants must write to the Head Teacher with their request. The Head Teacher will advise accordingly and will ensure that a formal written outcome is provided.

7. Home Address

For all applications the address used will be the child's habitual normal place of residence as at the closing date for applications, i.e., 31st October. Changes to address will be updated after all on time applications have been processed.

8. In-Year Admissions

To apply for a Year 7 school place after the normal admission cycle or for admission into Years 8-11, parents will need to complete an In-Year Application Form (available from the school and school website).

9. Appeals

Appeals against a decision of the Governors should be addressed to the Correspondent to the Governors within 2 weeks of the receipt of the decision. These appeals will be considered by an Independent Appeals Committee, before which parents are entitled to attend. 523 applications were received for the Year 7 places for September 2025. 8 on-time appeals were lodged and the Appeals Committee 0 were unsuccessful.

10. Single Sex School

Admission to St Bernard's High school is governed by statutory, i.e., legal, regulations. The principal document is the School Admissions Code (2021) under the terms of which, governors/trust have proposed the school's Admissions Criteria/Determined Admission Arrangements

The school is also subject to the provisions of all other relevant legal frameworks including current equality legislation. St Bernard's High School is recognised by the Department for Education as a 'single-sex Girls school'. Their school admissions policy makes provision for only girls to enter the school into Years 7 - 11. Legal advice provided on this matter is clear. This provision is dependent on the legal definition of a 'girl', which – as it stands – is a matter of biological sex, as at birth.

There is no provision in law, under the age of 18, for self-identification to override this prescription. St Bernard's High School as a 'single sex girls' school' - is unable, at present, to admit a transgender male at age 11.