



Shaftesbury Abbey CE VA Primary School,

Admissions Policy 2025-2026

Introduction

This document sets out the Policy of Shaftesbury Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, with respect to Admissions. For the purposes of this policy, the Governing Body of Shaftesbury Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is the admission authority.

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the churches at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the daily Christian act of worship and from Religious Education.

Parents who wish their children to be admitted to the school's Reception Class in September 2025, must complete the Common Application Form in line with the Local Authority Co-ordinated Admission Scheme and state Shaftesbury Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as one of their preferences. Application can be made online at <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/school-admissions/apply-for-a-school-place>. Parents or guardians will receive written notification of the outcome, from the Local Authority, on a date determined in the Dorset Council Co-ordinated Primary School Admission Scheme. An offer of a school place should be accepted by the deadline date, which is also set out in the Scheme.

Parents who wish their children to be admitted to the school at any other time should contact the school direct for an admission form and further details. An application may also be made through the Dorset Council Parent Portal - <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/apply-for-a-school-place/apply-for-a-school-place.aspx#/>

Every year the governing body will review the Shaftesbury Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Admissions Policy. This will confirm the maximum number of children to be admitted to the school as a whole, the Pupil Admissions Number (PAN) which is currently 30 and explain how places will be allocated.

In accordance with government legislation, the governing body will consult with the Diocesan Board of Education, the Local Authority and other local schools in respect of the admissions policy.

Aims

The overriding aim of this policy is that it should work for the benefit of all children and parents/guardians in our area. It should be simple to use and assist parents/guardians to take the best decisions on the preferred school for their children. It should contribute to improving standards for all pupils.

The school aims to provide a place for all children whose address is within the designated area, defined as being the area within the ecclesiastical boundaries of the parish of St James' and Enmore Green, Shaftesbury. Designated area means the area of benefit as defined in the school's Trust Deed (a map of the designated area can be viewed at the school). The school's catchment area is part of

Shaftesbury including St James and Enmore Green and the villages of Cann, Melbury, East and West Orchard, Guy's Marsh, Hartgrove, Margaret Marsh and part of Twyford.

The address is the place where the child is permanently resident with his or her parent or parents or legal guardians. Evidence may be requested to show the address, for example: to which any Child Benefit is paid or at which the child is registered with a medical GP together with recent utilities bill, council tax bill or tenancy agreement. This evidence will be used when reaching a decision on the child's home address for admissions purposes (including where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility for each part of the week). Parents should not assume that a place will automatically be allocated to their child.

A full-time school place in the Reception class is available for children from the September following their 4th birthday. Parents can request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Where an offer of a place is made to a child below compulsory school age, parents have the right to defer their child's entry to school until later in the school year. The place is held for that child and is not available to be offered to another child. Entry may not be deferred beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the academic year for which admission is sought.

Deadline for application

Applications for Reception Year entry for the academic year starting September 2025 need to be formally registered with the Local Authority by the date stated on the Common Admission Form for consideration by the admission authority – 15 January prior to the September of admission to reception.

Shaftesbury Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School cannot guarantee places for children when there are no places available as a result of late applications for the normal year of entry, or any application that relates to a different year group.

The Governors have set a maximum class size of 30 pupils in Key Stage 1 and 32 pupils in Key Stage 2. Legislation states that no infant class may exceed 30 pupils.

A decision on the admission of new entrants will be made on the 16 April 2026 (or the next working day should it fall on a holiday or weekend). The parents or guardians will receive written notification of the outcome from the Local Authority on the date determined in the Dorset Council Co-ordinated Primary School Admission Scheme.

Late applications, i.e. those received after the deadline for the normal admissions round will not be considered until after all of those which were received on time have been processed. Further information can be found online at <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/school-admissions/apply-for-a-school-place>.

Waiting Lists

During the normal admissions round it is always necessary to complete a Local Authority Common Application form to apply for a school place. Registering interest with the school on a "waiting list" before the admissions round guarantees neither a place nor priority within the Oversubscription Criteria. Offers of places will be made by the Local Authority on the school's behalf.

If the school is oversubscribed for children due to start in 2025-2026 a waiting list will be maintained. The position on the list will be determined by applying the published over-subscription criteria and not by date of receipt. This will mean a position will change if a later application is received from someone with higher priority according to the Oversubscription Criteria. The existence of a waiting list does not remove the right of appeal against any refusal of a place from any unsuccessful applicant.

Names will only be removed from the list if a written request is received, or if the offer of a place that becomes available is declined. The waiting list will close on 31st December 2025. At that time parents of pupils on existing lists must confirm in writing their wish to be placed on a newly constructed waiting (or continued interest) list which will remain open until 31st March 2026. Looked after children and previously looked after children as defined within this policy, children who are the subject of a direction by a local authority or who are allocated to a school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over any child on the waiting list.

Applications outside the normal admissions round

Applications for 2025-26 entry outside the normal admissions round should be made directly to the school. The governors will process the application according to the following policy and will inform the parents and the LA of the outcome. An application may also be made through the Dorset Council Parental Portal - <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/apply-for-a-school-place/apply-for-a-school-place.aspx#/>

Policy

The admissions policy of the Shaftesbury Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is, while there are adequate places, to offer a place to all applicants irrespective of gender, religion, ethnicity or country of origin, disability or academic ability. This school participates in the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol.

Where this school is named in a child's Statement of Special Educational Needs, the governing body recognises a duty to admit the child to the school.

Over-subscription Criteria

Where more applications have been received than places available or where to admit would conflict with the school fulfilling class size legislation, the following priorities shall apply in order:

- I. Looked after children or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order¹. 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). **In accordance with the Admissions Code 2021, those children that are deemed as 'Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Children' (IAPLAC) will also be considered under this criterion with effect from September 2021.**
2. VULNERABLE CHILDREN
 - i. children of families with confirmed refugee status
 - ii. children with a medical condition or disability where written evidence is available from a senior clinical medical officer and the child's general practitioner or specialist showing that it would be detrimental to the child's health not to admit him/her to the school rather than any other. Details of this must accompany the initial application.
 - iii. Children where either parent has a disability which would make travel to a different school difficult. Evidence from a registered health professional such

¹ An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

A 'residence order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. 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).

as a doctor or social worker will be required. Details of this must accompany the initial application.

LIVING WITHIN THE SCHOOL'S DESIGNATED AREA AS DEFINED ABOVE:

3. SIBLINGS

A child is considered in this category if an older sibling is attending the school at the deadline date, **and will continue to do so when the sibling is admitted**, and where the child lives within the designated area at the same address as the older sibling. Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.

4. OTHER CHILDREN

Children resident within the designated area who do not qualify under one of the criteria above.

LIVING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL'S DESIGNATED AREA AS DEFINED ABOVE:

5. SIBLINGS

A child is considered in this category if an older sibling is attending the school at the deadline date, **and will continue to do so when the sibling is admitted**, and where the child lives outside the designated area at the same address as the older sibling. Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.

6. OTHER CHILDREN

Children resident outside the designated area who do not qualify under one of the criteria above.

If the school is oversubscribed within any category above, the straight-line distance from the child's home address to the school will be used as the determining factor. Distances will be measured according to the Ordnance Survey eastings and northings for the child's home address and the school. Those living closer to the school will be given priority.

If two or more children with the same priority for admission, live an indistinguishable distance from the school, but cannot all be admitted, then the available places will be decided by the casting of lots by someone independent of the school or the Local Authority.

Registration at any nursery or pre-school unit will **not** be considered as a criterion for over-subscription and no priority will be given to such children even if the pre-school is linked to the school.

Parents must accept the offer by the date set out in the Local Authority Co-ordinated Primary School Admission Scheme. Parents will be asked to reply to the Local Authority. If they do not respond by this date it will be assumed that the place offered has been declined.

Once an offer of a school place has been made, it may only be lawfully withdrawn in very limited circumstances, which include an offer of place based upon a fraudulent or misleading application. Where an offer of place is withdrawn, the application will be considered afresh, and a right of appeal offered if an offer of place is refused.

Appeals Procedure

Parents have a right of appeal to an independent panel against the decision of the Governing Body to refuse application for a school place. Details of the appeals procedure are sent out with all refusal letters.

Enquiries about this policy should be addressed to:

Chair of Governors, Shaftesbury Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, St James's Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8HQ.

Note: Subject to the above policy and the relevant appeals procedure, decisions regarding admissions will be the responsibility of the Governing Body. This policy is reviewed annually.

Equality

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Single Equality Policy. The general equality duty requires that, in the exercise of their functions, schools must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. This school endeavours to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations for all.