



**St Bede's**

Roman Catholic High School

# **ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE 2026/2027**

St Bede's High School, Blackburn is an 11-16 co-education Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Salford. As a Voluntary Aided school, the Governing Body is the Admissions Authority and is responsible for taking decisions on applications for admissions.

The co-ordination of admissions arrangements is undertaken by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. For the school year commencing September 2026, the Governing Body has set its admissions number at 215.

Applications for admission to the school for September 2026 should be made on the common application form of your home local authority, available in the Local Authority's brochure and on their website. Applications for admission to Year 7 in September 2026 should be made between **1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025, which is the national closing date for secondary applications**. All applications received before the closing date will be processed at the same time. **ANY** applications submitted after the closing date will only be considered after all on-time applications have been processed.

Letters informing parent(s)/carer(s) of whether or not their child has been allocated a place at St Bede's will be sent out by the Local Authority on **2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026**. Parent(s)/carer(s) of children not admitted will be informed of the reason and offered an alternative school place by the Local Authority.

ADMISSIONS TO THE SCHOOL will be made by the Governing Body. Children who have an Education Health and Care Plan naming St Bede's will be given priority above all other children. All preferences listed on the Local Authority Preference Form will be considered on an equal basis with the following set of ADMISSIONS CRITERIA forming a priority order where there are more applications for admissions than the school has places available.

### Admissions Criteria

1. A 'looked after child' or 'previously looked after child (**see notes (a) (b) and (c)**).
2. Baptised Catholic children who have a sibling in the school at the time of application and admission (**see note (d) and (e)**).
3. Baptised Catholic children from the following Partner Primary Schools: St. Paul's, Feniscowles, St. Peter's, Mill Hill, St. Edward's, Darwen, St. Joseph's, Darwen and Feniscowles Primary School (**see note (d)**).
4. Other baptised Catholic children (**see note (d)**).
5. Non-Catholic children who have a sibling in the school at the time of application and admission (**see note (e)**).
6. Children with a parent or carer who has been employed at St Bede's for a minimum of two years prior to the closing date for applications.
7. Non-Catholic children from the Partner Primary Schools as listed in Category 3.
8. Other children.

## NOTES

- a) ‘Previously Looked after’ children means children who were previously ‘looked after’ but immediately after being looked after were adopted or became subject to a child arrangement order, or special guardianship order, including those who appear to this admission authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (**see note (b) and (c)**). 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 a school.
- b) An ‘adoption order’ is an order 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). A ‘child arrangements order’ is 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 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. 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).
- c) A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.
- d) All Catholic applicants will be required to produce baptismal certificates or documentation from a Parish Priest confirming that the child is in full communion with the Catholic Church at the time of application. Certificates/Documentation from the Parish Priest must be sent to St Bede’s R.C High School **by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 via email - [admissions@stsbedesblackburn.com](mailto:admissions@stsbedesblackburn.com)**. Any certificates/documentation from Parish Priests received after this date will not be used to support the application in the normal admissions round.
- e) Sibling is defined as a 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 and the sibling will still be attending St Bede’s when the younger child is admitted.

Tie-Breaker: If, in any category, there are more applications than places available, priority will be given on the basis of distance from home to school. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the front door of the child’s home address (including the community entrance to flats) to the main entrance of the school using the Local Authority’s computerised measuring system with those living nearer to the school having priority. In the event of distances being the same for two or more applications where this distance would decide who would be allocated the last place/s, the Local Authority’s system of a random draw will determine which address(es) receive the offer(s). The random draw allocation is carried out automatically by the Local Authority’s computerised system.

### Waiting list

A waiting list for children who have not been offered a place will be kept and will be ranked according to the Admission Criteria. Since the date of application cannot be a criterion for the order of names on the waiting list, late applicants for the school will be slotted into the waiting list according to the extent to which they meet the criteria. Please note that looked after children, previously looked after children and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair access protocol must take precedence over those on the waiting list. Parent(s)/carer(s) can enquire about their child's position on the waiting list, which will operate until **31 December 2026**.

### Address of Pupil

In some cases, for example, where shared parental living arrangements are in place, a pupil's address may be difficult to determine. In these circumstances, the address used for Child Benefit purposes, i.e. the address of the parent claiming the Child Benefit will be used.

### Twins/Triplets/Multiple birth groups

If an application has been made for places for twins/triplets/two or more siblings in the same year group and insufficient places are left within the published admission number (i.e. one of the siblings is the last child who can be admitted within that number) it may be possible for the Admission Authority to offer places to the other sibling(s) in the birth group.

### In-Year Applications

The governing body will participate in in-year coordinated admission arrangements in 2026-2027. Anyone wishing to apply for an in-year place at St Bede's should contact Blackburn with Darwen Place Planning and Admissions Team (email - [admission@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:admission@blackburn.gov.uk), Telephone 01254 666605). In-year applications will be considered when they are received, and places offered if available. If more applications are received at a particular time than there are places available for, then the published over-subscription criteria will be applied to those applications and places offered accordingly.

### Fraudulent Applications

The Governing Body reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a school place where false evidence is received in relation to baptism, sibling connections or place of residence. In that situation, the application will be considered afresh on the basis of the correct information and a right of appeal offered if a place is refused.

### Appeals in the normal admissions round

If an application for admission has been turned down by the Governing Body, parent(s)/carer(s) can appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. Parent(s)/carer(s) should notify the Admissions Officer at St Bede's by **30<sup>th</sup> March 2026**. Parent(s)/carer(s) must give reasons for appealing in writing and will have the opportunity to attend the hearing to present their case. You will normally receive 14 days' notice of the time and place of the hearing. The decision of the Appeals Panel is binding on all parties.

**Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents/carer(s) may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if a child is particularly gifted and talented, or has experienced problems such as ill health

**Children who are already of secondary school age**

Parent(s)/carer(s) must submit their written request for admission out of the normal age group to the Governing Body. If their request is agreed and a place is available in the requested year group, the child will be admitted.

**Children who wish to seek admission to Year 7 outside their normal age group (i.e. who are currently placed in a lower year group).**

Parent(s)/carer(s) will need to submit a normal Common Application Form (CAF) to the Local Authority (in writing or online) for admission into the normal age group at the same time as they submit a written request to the Governing Body for their child to be admitted out of the normal age group.

**Please note:** This Governing Body will not honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parent(s)/carer(s), therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference school.

The Governing Body will make a decision on the request before the Secondary national offer date if at all possible.

If the request is agreed, the parent(s)/carer(s) must make a new application for the next main admission round the following year, and their current application for the normal age group should be withdrawn before a place is offered.

If their request for admission outside the normal age group is refused, parent(s)/carer(s) must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group that they receive from the Local Authority, or to refuse it and make a further in-year application to the Governing Body for their child to be admitted outside their normal age group when they leave the current primary school.

**Making the decision**

Parent(s)/carer(s) seeking admission of their child outside their normal age group must send their written request to the Governing Body. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/carer(s) to provide the Governing Body with all relevant information relating to this request, including the parent(s)/carer(s) views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; medical history and views of a medical professional (where relevant); whether the child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely; and whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group.

The Governing Body is required to consider the views of the Head Teacher on the application as well as the information from the parent(s)/carer(s). The Governing Body will make their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each individual case, and in the best interests of the child concerned.

The Governing Body will then inform the parent/carer of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to and will provide the reasons for their decision.

Parent(s)/carer(s) have a statutory right to appeal to an independent admission appeal panel against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. As the purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, the right of appeal does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred year group. However, they may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside their normal age group.