



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

Finding the light in ourselves and each other

Inspired by the Gospel according to John (chapter 8, verse 12)

An aspirational school that encourages every child regardless of their background to 'soar on wings like eagles' in their learning and personal development (Isaiah 40:31)

Determined Policy Reception Admissions Arrangements for September 2026

Issued:	Spring 2025
Term:	1 Year
To Be Reviewed:	Spring 2026

*A truly inclusive school that is built upon the values of
Hope - Joy - Love - Forgiveness - Faith - Goodness*



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

Introduction

St John's C of E Primary School is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School within the Diocese of St Albans. The governing body of the school is the admission authority. The Governors will admit up to the admission number of 30 children into the reception year. The Governing Body is required to abide by the maximum limits for infant classes, 30 pupils per class.

The Local Authority or LA, (Hertfordshire CC) operates an agreed co-ordinated admissions scheme in line with government legislation. The LA will coordinate the process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published each year. The governing body, as the admission authority, will allocate the available places in line with this policy. However, offers will be made by the home LA.

The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the home Local Authority is as advertised by that authority. Information on completing the 'online' application and notification dates of admission decisions are published in the LA admissions literature which is also available from their website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

The deadline for Reception Admissions to start in September 2026, is **15th January 2026** and the allocation date is **16th April 2026**.

Admissions Guidance

All applications must be made on the home LA common application form. Parents/carers are requested to complete our supplementary information form (SIF) if you are applying under category 6. Please return the SIF directly to the school office by the date given above. If a SIF is not completed the Governing Body will apply their admission arrangements using the information submitted on the LA form only, which may result in your application being given a lower priority.

Admissions Criteria

If there are more applicants than places available applications will be ranked in the following order. Should the school receive fewer applications than there are places, then all applicants will be offered a place. For each criteria below, please note their corresponding rule definition, which you can find as you read through the policy and their capped numbers if applicable.

1. Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a 'child arrangements order'¹ or a special guardianship order² (for these definitions, see Rule 1 in Appendix A).
2. Medical or social
3. Siblings
4. Children who have attended our Nursery (maximum of 7 under this criteria)
5. Children of Staff
6. Applicants of children of who take an active part in the life and worship of any church within the Ecclesiastical parish of Digswell (maximum of 4 under this criteria)
7. Any other children by distance.



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

Additional Information

Defined Local Area

In considering our definition of what constitutes the local area for admissions, we have been guided by three principles – community, localism and inclusivity. Firstly, we are a village school and have included the boundaries of the village of Digswell in our catchment area, which incorporates Digswell Village Church. Secondly, we recognise the importance of our local community in Haldens and their close proximity to the school, which also includes Christ the King. Finally, we recognise the value of being a Church school and have therefore included a reasonable area around St. John's Church to ensure all three of our churches in the parish are covered. Therefore, this presents a boundary that: extends to the edge of Digswell to the north and west, to Bessemer Road on the south and along Bessemer Road to include a loop around St. John's Church. Please see appendix B for a map of this defined area. Applications from children whose home address is in zone A area on the map (and Digswell Lane) will be given higher priority than applications from children whose home address in the area outlined in yellow (zone B). An additional advantage of this area is that all families will be within walking distance of the school thus promoting sustainability and healthy living.

How the home to school distance measurements for the purposes of admissions is calculated

A 'straight line' distance measurement is used between the individual residence and that of the school location for admission allocation purposes. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the Address Base Premium address point of your child's residence to the address point of the school. Address Base Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.

"Where there is a need for a tie-breaker, where two different addresses measure the same distance from the school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed to be nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random. Every child entered onto the HCC admissions database has an individual random number assigned between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. When there is a need for a final tie break the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority."

Special Need Children

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school. These children will be admitted as part of the school's PAN but before the oversubscription criteria are applied.

Fair Access Protocol

Children identified by Hertfordshire LA under the Fair Access protocol will be admitted to the school before any others on the waiting list. They may be admitted even if the school is full and if necessary over the Published Admission Number.

Reception Appeals

Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal". Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details and log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

system. For in-year applications, parents wishing to appeal should contact the school directly in the first instance.

Continuing Interest (Waiting) List and In Year Applications

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list. A child's position on a CI list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and a child's place on the list can change as other children join or leave it. The County Council will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. Continuing Interest lists will be maintained for every year group until the summer term (date to be specified and confirmed to parents at the time of allocation). To remain on the CI (waiting) list after this time, parents must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In year Application Form (To retain a CI application after this time parents must make an In year Application).

To apply for an in-year application you will need to click on the following link:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

If your in-year application is unsuccessful the county council will write to you with registration details to enable you to log in and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals.



Appendix A

Explanatory notes and definitions for the admission arrangements for St John's Church of England Primary School for 2026/27.

The following definitions apply to terms used in the admissions criteria:

Rule 1:

Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order¹ or a special guardianship order².

Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 2, Section 7 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

These children will be prioritised under rule 1.

Highest priority will also be given to children who were previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order.

A "child looked after" is a child who is: in the care of a local authority, or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989)

All children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under rule 1.

Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified by law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order and the application would be prioritised under Rule 1.

Children who were not "looked after" immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under rule 1. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under rule 2.

Child arrangements order

Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

Special guardianship order

Under 14A of The Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Rule 1 if the child's previously looked status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School". The



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

child's previously looked status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017: to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is in "state care" if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by: a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Rule 2: Medical or Social

Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school. For applicants under this category, A panel of governors will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule.

Rule 2 applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted.

All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However, in a few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school.

Few applications under Rule 2 are agreed.

All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs. If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address, clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.

For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate. A Rule 2 application will generally not be upheld in cases where more than one school could meet the child's need.

In exceptional cases relating to a disability, where more than one school in the county can meet the child's specific needs, a clear and compelling case can be made for the "nearest" school with the relevant facilities, environment or location. You must clearly explain why attendance at the "nearest" school with these facilities is essential.

Applications under Rule 2 can only be considered when supported by a recent letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example a doctor, psychologist or police officer. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child.

Applications for children who were not "looked after" immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order may be made under this rule.



Rule 3: Definition of sibling

For applications to St John's Digswell using our admission criteria, a sibling is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after¹ and in every case living permanently² in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application.

A sibling must be on the roll of the named school at the time the younger child starts or has been offered and accepted a place.

If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

Children previously looked after are those children adopted or with a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. This definition was amended following a determination by the OSA in August 2014.

A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement.

Rule 4: Children who attend our Nursery Class (maximum of 7)

This applies to all children who have been registered for a minimum of two full terms for at least 15 hours per week. If there is over-subscription in this category then children will be ranked according to the priorities set out in Rule 7 below.

Rule 5: Children of staff

This category applies to all members of staff, regardless of their position in the school, who have been permanently employed by the Governing Body for a minimum of two years at the time of the deadline for application for Reception admissions. The child must be resident with the member of staff and can include step siblings and children of partners.

Rule 6: Taking an active part in the life and worship of any church within the Ecclesiastical parish of Digswell

The Ecclesiastical Parish of Digswell is the area excluding the new Parish of Panshanger which was created in the Pastoral Scheme confirmed by the Privy Council on 24 November 1982. This includes: St John's Digswell, Christ the King – Haldens and Digswell Village Church.

*Taking an active part in the life and worship' of the above-mentioned churches is defined as (1) a parent being on the Electoral Roll of the Parish and (2) regular attendance (on at least two Sundays per month during the twelve months immediately prior to the submission of the application). A form of certification from the relevant member of the clergy team of the Parish will need to be submitted with the school's admission application form. In the event of a family moving into the area and seeking qualification under this category, confirmation will be sought by the headteacher from the incumbent of the family's previous parish. In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship,



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

the requirements of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship. Please note that to take an active part in the life and worship of any church within the Ecclesiastical Parish of Digsweil, an applicant does not need to live in any set area.

Rule 7: Any other children by distance (see appendix B for defined area)

All families within and outside of our defined local area are eligible to apply for a school place at St John's Church of England Primary School. This rule applies only when there is an over-subscription in this category or in category 4.

- Applicants whose home address is within the red zone are prioritised first, using the Home to school distance measurements method.
- Should all applicants within the red zone be allocated a place, then the Home to school distance measurements method would then be applied to applicants whose home address is within the yellow zone.
- If all applicants within the yellow zone are allocated a place then the Home to school distance measurements method is then applied to all other applicants.

Multiple births

St John's School as the admission authority will admit over the school's published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated the last place at a school.

Home address definition

The address provided on the application form must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application

- "At the time of application" means the closing date for applications
- "Permanent" means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year at the time of application, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months and the child must be resident in the property at the time of application. If, because of the nature of the agreement, it is not possible to provide a 12-month tenancy agreement, alternative proof of address will be requested.

It is for the Governing Body (as the admission authority) to determine the address to be used for admission purposes.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives for the majority of the school week. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If the child's living arrangements change after you apply and they now spend the majority of the school week living at a different address, you must provide evidence of the new permanent address.

Addresses will be verified as necessary with Hertfordshire County Council's Shared Anti-Fraud Service.



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

Applications made as part of the main Reception admissions round [and in-year admission applications] are processed by Hertfordshire County Council ("HCC") on behalf of the Governing Body, in accordance with HCC's published coordinated admission schemes.

If a child's permanent residence is disputed, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes. If two applications are received, with different addresses, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

If HCC receives two different (main admission round) applications for the same child from the same address e.g. containing different preferences, parents/carers will be invited to submit a joint application or provide court documentation to evidence the preferences that should be used for the admission process. Until the preference issue is reconciled, neither application will be processed.

For the main Reception admission round, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received by HCC "on-time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before 3rd February 2026 (the late deadline). If the amended joint application is received after 3rd February, it will be treated as "late".

Fraudulent applications

The Governors of the school work in close co-operation with Hertfordshire County Council will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses, including referring cases to the Shared Anti-Fraud service for further investigation as necessary. Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. Hertfordshire County Council will take action in the following circumstances:

- When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school;
- When a child lives at a different address to the applicant;
- When the applicant does not have parental responsibility;
- When a family move shortly after the closing date of applications when one or more of the following applies:
 - The family has moved to a property from which their application was less likely to be successful;
 - The family has returned to an existing property;
 - The family lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than a year) over the application period;
 - Official/public records show an alternative address at the time of the application
- When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application.

Parents/carers will need to show that they have relinquished residency ties with their previous property and they, and their child(ren) are permanently residing at the address given on the application form.



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

Applications from children* from overseas

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) in England have a right of access to education. However, where a child is in England for a short period only, for example less than half a term, it may be reasonable to refuse admission to a school. An application for a school place will only be accepted for such children currently overseas if, for In Year applications, proof is provided that the child will be resident in Hertfordshire within two weeks. In Year allocations are made on the assumption that the child will accept the school place and be on roll within that timescale.

For the Primary transfer processes, applications will not normally be accepted from, nor places allocated to, an overseas address. The exception to this (for both In Year and transfer processes) is for children of UK service personnel and crown servants (and from military families who are residents of countries with a Memorandum of Understanding with the UK). In these cases HCC will allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a HCC Unit postal address or quartering area address, for consideration of the application against oversubscription criteria.

Applications will also be considered, and places offered in advance for these families, if the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date but does not provide a quartering or unit address because the family will be residing in private accommodation. In these cases, if the family does not already have a permanent private address in Hertfordshire, the military base or alternative "work" address in Hertfordshire will be used for allocation purposes. If the family already has an established alternative private address, that address will be used for admission purposes.

We will also consider accepting applications from children* whose family can evidence intent to return to and/or permanently reside in Hertfordshire prior to the start of the new academic year. These applications, if accepted, will be processed from the overseas address until sufficient evidence is received to show the child is permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Evidence must be submitted at the time of application.

Evidence submitted after the date for late applications (1 February 2026 for the Under 11s process) cannot be taken into account before National Allocation Day. Decisions on these applications will be made by a panel of governors and communicated with parents within 6 weeks of the closing date for applications.

If an applicant owns a property in Hertfordshire but is not living in it, perhaps because they are working abroad at the time of application, the Hertfordshire address will not be accepted for the purposes of admission until the child is resident at that address.

Other children, than those mentioned above, from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. An application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until they are permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Proof of residency such as an endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application, in addition to proof of Hertfordshire address, for example a council tax bill or 12 month rental agreement.

*Children who hold full British Citizen passports (not British Dependent Territories or British Overseas passports), or have a UK passport describing them as a British citizen or British subject with the right of abode and normally have unrestricted entry to the UK. Freedom of movement into the UK for European Economic Area and Swiss citizens ended at the end of 2020. EEA (Irish citizens aside) and Swiss national children entering the UK after the end of 2020 are now treated the same as other foreign nationals. This means they will no longer have the right to enter the country to access a



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

state-funded school unless they fall within certain immigration categories. Find out more about visas and immigration and the EU Settlement Scheme for European Economic Area and Swiss citizens.

Age of Admission and Deferral of Places

St John's policy is that children born on and between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021* would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2026. All Hertfordshire infant, first and primary schools provide for the full- time admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. If a parent wants a full-time place for their child from September (at the school at which a place has been offered) then they are entitled to that full-time place.

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age. Summer born children are only able to "defer" entry to Reception class until the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Where parents wish, children can attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age. Any parents wishing to take up a part-time place or deferred entry should contact the school to discuss their child's requirements once a place has been allocated.

***Summer born children (1st April – 31st August) – Entry to Reception**

Legally, a child does not have to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Children born between 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2021 are categorised as "summer born". If parents/ carers do not believe that their summer born child is ready to join Reception in September 2026 then they should contact the Headteacher at St John's via admin@digswell.herts.sch.uk before November 21st 2025, as approval for applying will need to be sought from the Governing Body.

If parents wish to delay their application for a Reception place they are advised to discuss their child's needs/development with their current early years or nursery provider. If parents wish their child to remain in their existing nursery school or class for a further year (rather than moving into the Reception year group) they must let their current school know before the end of the Spring term in 2026 (before the Easter break).

*Summer born deferred applications that chronologically would have commenced school in September 2025 but have been approved to apply for a September 2026 place will be processed in exactly the same way as all other reception applications received at that time; there is no guarantee that a place will be offered at a child's preferred school.

Children Out of Year Group (except applications for reception from summer born)

Hertfordshire County Council's policy, that the school follows in this respect, is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group". If parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort. DfE guidance makes clear that "it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect parents to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case".



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School

The relevant admission authority, through a panel process, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The panel make decisions based upon the

circumstances of each case including the view of parents, the relevant headteacher(s), the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of the year group. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal. Similarly there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school.

The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Headteacher and senior leadership of individual schools.

Nursery Provision

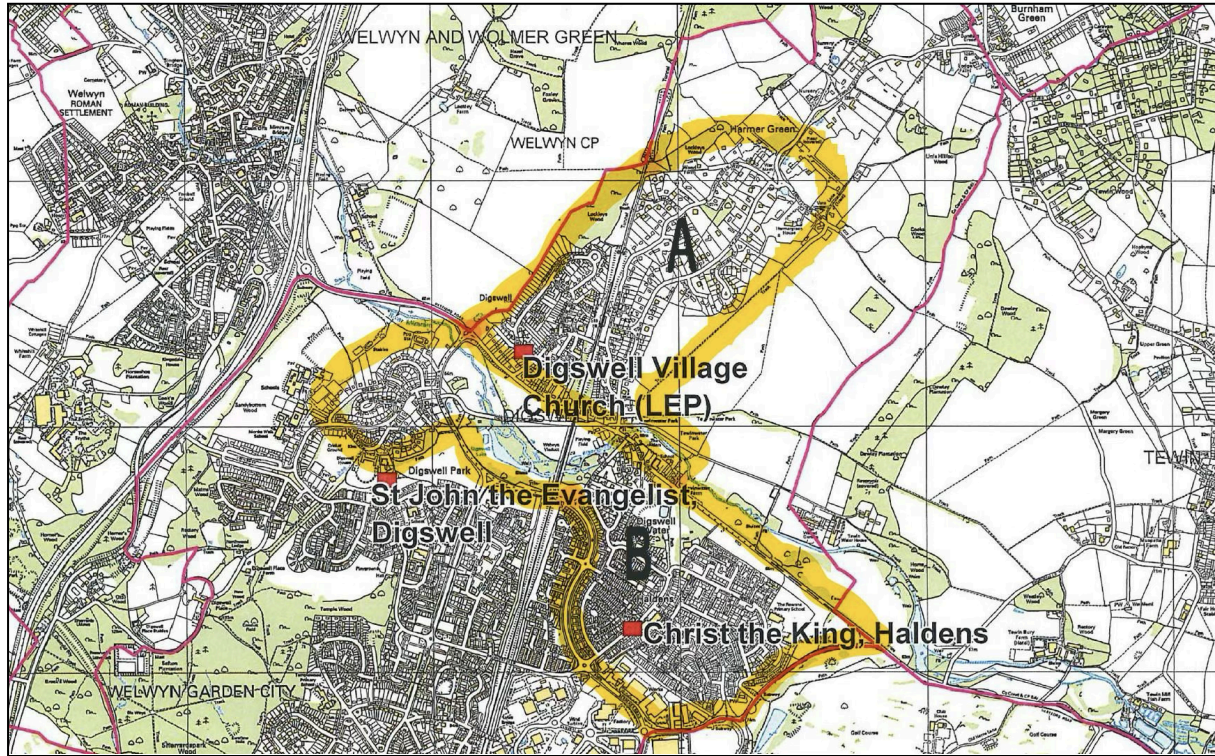
Some schools have a nursery unit or deliver pre-school nursery education. The admission arrangements detailed in this document do not apply for those being admitted into any nursery or preschool provision. The responsibility for admission into nursery provision lies with the governing body of the school which offers such provision.

Parents of children who are admitted to a nursery provision at a school must apply in the normal way for a place at the school if they want their child to transfer to the reception class. Attendance at the nursery or co-located children's centre does not guarantee admission to the school.



Appendix B: Map of Defined Local Area

The boundary lines of the defined area that the Full Governing Body at St John's CofE Primary School, determines to be local. *Please note that although not marked out within the map below, Digswell Lane is included within the red zone.





Appendix C: Supplementary Information Form For Admission To The Reception Class September 2026

When completed, this form should be returned to the Clerk to the Governors c/o St. John's School, NO LATER THAN 15th January 2026. All applications will be acknowledged within one week of receipt, if a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed. Please note that you must complete the HCC online Primary Application. Please refer to the Governors' Admission Policy and criteria before completing this form

PLEASE USE CAPITAL LETTERS WHEN COMPLETING THIS FORM

Child's Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Do you take an active part in the life and worship at any of the following churches?	
	St. John the Evangelist, Monks Rise <input type="checkbox"/> Christ the King, Haldens <input type="checkbox"/> Digswell Village Church <input type="checkbox"/>
Will there be a sibling in the school at the time of admission to the Reception Class? Please tick yes or no. If yes, then please give name(s) of sibling(s) and their respective year group(s):	
	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, Name/Year Group:	
I hereby apply for a place in the Reception Class for admission in the year 2026 – 2027 for my above-named child. I confirm that I have read and understand the Governors' Admissions Policy and criteria.	
Full Name of Parent(s)	
Parent's Signature	
Date	



Admissions Policy

22nd April 2025	Approved	FGB
2nd April 2025	Created	Arnold Worton-Geer