



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)

Nursery Admission Policy

for September 2026

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

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



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Introduction

St John's C of E Primary School (**St John's** or **the school**) is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School within the Diocese of St Albans, with attached nursery class. The Governors will admit the admission number of 30 children into the Nursery Class during each academic year. This policy applies to all children who have turned 3 before September 2026, with a 2nd intake for children turning 3 before January 2027 if places are available. If a child turns 3 between 1st January 2027 and 31st March 2027, they may join the nursery as part of a 3rd intake, at the school's absolute discretion, decided on a case-by-case basis. Please note that the 2nd or 3rd intake is not for children where the parents are seeking to delay the September start date. The school reserves the right to cap the number of places to 26 if required due to staffing ratios and the context of the cohort.

Admissions Guidance

All applications must be made on our application form, which can be collected from the School Office or printed from our website.

- a. All application forms for Nursery must be returned directly to the school as it is the school that processes the paperwork.
- b. These arrangements do not apply to our Reception intake.
- c. Attendance at our Nursery does not guarantee a place in Reception.
- d. Full time attendance (15 hours) at our Nursery is a requirement should you accept a Nursery place at St John's and this will be entered as your main setting if you are looking at sharing the entitlement to 30 hours with different settings/providers.
- e. If we have spaces available in our Nursery Class by 13th November 2026, then we will complete the second intake process for those children, who will turn 3 before January 2027. However, you will still need to apply for a Nursery September 2027 start, during the same time frame as everybody else.
- f. The deadline for applications to our Nursery for the purposes of ranking is Monday 23rd February 2026 and parents will be informed of the outcome of their application on Friday 13th March 2026.

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 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 of Staff
5. 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)
6. Any other children by distance.



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 the area outlined in red (zone A) 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.

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. Please note that the information in this policy is correct for the year shown. Policies for future years may well be different.

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.

Nursery Appeals



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Parents do not have a right of appeal against refusal of a place at nursery as this is non-statutory education.

Continuing Interest (Waiting) List and In Year Applications

After places have been offered, the school's continuing interest (waiting) list will be maintained by the school. A child's position on the 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 school office, on behalf of the school's governing body, will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child.



Appendix A

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

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.

¹ 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.

² 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 child's previously looked status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The



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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, the chair 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 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.

¹ 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.

² 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 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 Nursery admissions. The child must be resident with the member of staff and can include step siblings and children of partners.

Rule 5: 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, 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 Digswell, an applicant does not need to live in any set area.



Rule 6: 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 Nursery place at St John's. This rule applies only when there is an over-subscription.

- 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 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.

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.

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



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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:

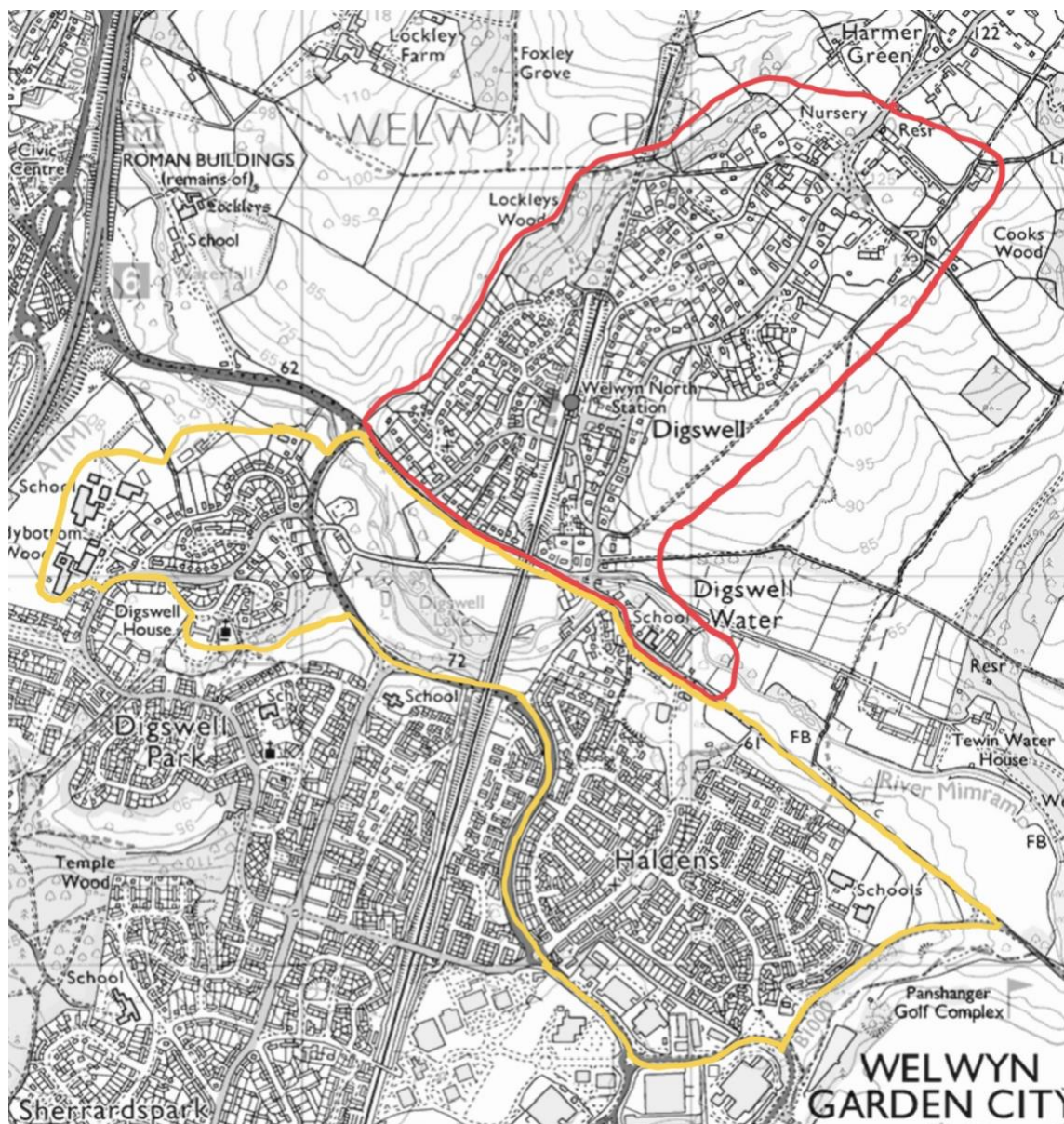
- When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school;
- When a child lives at a different address to the applicant;
- When the applicant does not have parental responsibility;
- When a family move shortly after the closing date of applications when one 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.



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 Nursery Class

September 2026

When completed, this form should be returned to the School Office. All applications will be acknowledged within one week of receipt, if a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed. Please note that you must also complete a Nursey Application Form. Please refer to the 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 ☐ Christ the King, Haldens ☐ Digswell Village Church ☐
Will there be a sibling in the school at the time of admission to the Nursery Class? Please tick yes or no. If yes, then please give name(s) of sibling(s) and their respective year group(s):	
	No ☐ Yes ☐
If Yes, Name/Year Group:	
I hereby apply for a place in the Nursery Class for admission in the year 2026 for my above-named child. I confirm that I have read and understand the Admissions Policy and criteria.	
Full Name of Parent(s)	
Parent's Signature	
Date	



Admissions Policy

24 th November 2025	Approved	FGB
13 October 2025	Created	Arnold Worton-Geer