

St Bernard's Primary School

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Maintained Primary School

Enrolment Number: 595
Admissions Number: 85

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Sean Kavanagh BSc PGCE PQH
CHAIR OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS: Very Rev Fr
Sheehan

RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS

The Board of Governors will determine the Admissions Criteria. The criteria will be applied by the Principal and a Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors.

The Principal will consider the acceptance of each child to the school within the confines of the published criteria for admission, but any decisions will be subject to the ultimate approval of the Board of Governors. St. Bernard's Primary School and Nursery Unit in the parish of St. Mary's on the Hill.

The following criteria have been established and will be implemented by the Principal and the Board of Governors Admissions Panel.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on the application or provided directly to the school. Parents/Guardians should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's Admissions Criteria is stated on the application or provided directly to the first preference school via the Education Authority's Admission Portal. Examples of such information include whether the child has brothers/sisters attending the school.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on 7 January 2026 at 12noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 21 January 2026 at 12noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 21 January 2026 and up to 4 pm on 26 January 2026 will be treated as a late application. This is also the last date and time for processing a change of preference in exceptional circumstances. After 4 pm on 26 January 2026 no applications will be processed until after the close of procedure on 23 March 2026.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

Any child who reaches their 4th Birthday on or before 1st July 2026 is of Compulsory School Age. Under the School Age (NI) Act which became law in Northern Ireland in April 2022, 'Compulsory School Age' also includes those children who deferred commencing Primary 1 in September 2025 as defined by the new School Age (NI) Act (both groups to be treated equally).

Priority will be given to children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the school before those who are not so resident.

The following criteria will be applied in the order set down 1 - 6 by the Board of Governors of St. Bernard's Primary School. Only children of compulsory school age will be considered. (See above)

1. Children who reside in the Parish of St. Mary's on the Hill and who have a sibling defined as 'a child of the family' (see below) at time of application attending St. Bernard's Primary School i.e. any year group from Nursery to Primary 7 inclusive. (Indicate name and year group). Please note, a clearly defined map of the Parish of St Mary's on the Hill is available on the school website.

Admissions Criteria for Entry September 2026

2. Children who have a sibling (see below) attending St Bernard's Primary School i.e. any year group from Nursery to Primary 7 inclusive and who now live outside the Parish of St. Mary's on the Hill. (Indicate name and year group).
3. Children who attend St. Bernard's Nursery Unit or St. Bernard's Playgroup, Glengormley.
4. Children who reside in the Parish of St. Mary's on the Hill. Please note, a clearly defined map of the Parish of St Mary's on the Hill is available on the school website.
5. Children who are a 'Child Looked After' as defined by the Children NI Order 1995 as children who are in the care of a Trust or who are provided with accommodation by the Trust.
6. Children from outside the Parish of St. Mary's on the Hill.

Note: Siblings/A child of the family includes brothers, sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters, children who are adopted, fostered and children of either party from a previous marriage/relationship.

Sub-Criteria

If over-subscribed in any one of the above criteria taken in order, then selection for the remaining places will be on the basis of the following sub criteria in the order set down below.

- (a) Children whose parent or guardian is a permanent employee of St Bernard's Primary School / Nursery Unit.
- (b) Children will be selected for admission on the basis of the initial letter of their surname (as entered on the birth certificate) in the order set out below:

N U M Z S P D X C H G K I Mac V A T J Mc F Y L O E Q R W B

This order was determined by a randomised selection of letters carried out by Governors on 10/11/25. In the event of surnames beginning with the same initial letter the subsequent letters of the surname will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of two identical surnames the alphabetical order of the letters of the forenames will be used to determine selection. The first name will be used in the case of a double-barrelled surname. Surname must be as entered on the birth certificate only.

- (c) If it is still not possible to distinguish between applicants, places will be allocated by a computerised randomised selection. (Audits will be kept)

Please note, applications for primary school places should be completed online through the Education Authority's admissions portal. The portal will open for parents to complete an online application on Wednesday 7th January 2026 at 12noon (GMT). The closing date for the receipt of punctual applications is Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 12noon. Documentation submitted in support of your application e.g. your child's birth certificate, address verification etc. must be uploaded via the online portal not later than 4pm on Monday 26th January 2026.

DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application. If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

Parents should note that the deadline for providing new information for inclusion on their child's application is Monday 26th January 2026 no later than 4pm.

Applicants should note that where an address contained within an application qualifies it for admission, then that address will have to be verified. This is in addition to the standard requirement to provide a Birth Certificate in order to demonstrate whether or not a child is of Compulsory School Age.

WAITING LIST POLICY

Applications for admission to Primary 1 for September 2026 before the start of the school year:

Confirmation advising parents of the primary school in which their child has been placed/not placed will be issued via the EA Connect Portal on Monday 23 March 2026. After this date, all applications for admission to Primary 1 which were initially refused, late applications, applications where new information has been provided and new applications received will be treated equally and the criteria as listed above will be applied. Your child's name will be added to this list automatically and, if a place becomes available, the school will contact you in writing. This waiting list will be in place until 31st August 2026. Parents must inform the school in writing if they wish to have their child's name added to a new waiting list which will take effect from 1st September 2026. Should parents wish to have their child's name retained on the waiting list indefinitely, they must inform the school of that in writing at the start of each subsequent new school year i.e. 2026, 2027, 2028 etc.

Applications for places in Primary 1 after the start of the school year i.e. from 1st September 2026:

If a vacancy arises and provided no class in Primary 1 exceeds 30 children, the Principal and Board of Governors deem it is in the best interests of all involved and the efficient use of resources is not prejudiced, the Admissions Criteria will be applied to select children from the waiting list. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school in writing that they wish to have their child's name added to the waiting list.

ADMISSION TO Primary 2 – Primary 7

Children will be admitted to Primary 2 – Primary 7 in accordance with the preference of their parents provided their admission does not lead to the enrolment number being exceeded. The Principal and Board of Governors deem it is in the best interests of all involved and the efficient use of resources is not prejudiced. In the event of over-subscription, the same Admissions Criteria will be applied as for admission to Primary 1.

APPLICATIONS & ADMISSIONS TO PRIMARY 1

Year	Total Applications	Total Admissions
2023/2024	75	75
2024/2025	70	70
*2025/2026	72	72

****The Total Admissions for year 2025/2026 includes all P1 children admitted to the school including those who have a statement of special educational needs and/or may be attending SPiMS.
(SPiMS = Specialist Provision in Mainstream School)***