

GUIDANCE RELATING TO YEAR 7 APPLICATIONS AT ST JOHN'S SCHOOL, ABERDARE

Each Autumn applications are invited from pupils in year 6 of primary school to join year 7 of St John's C in W High School, Aberdare, for the following September. In years when the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the governing body implements the school's admissions policy to determine who will be offered a place. The policy states that the highest priority will be given to children attending a church primary school "**who, and whose families, can demonstrate they are committed practising Anglicans (demonstrated by reference from Church)**". The second highest priority is given to children attending a community primary school, who can demonstrate the same. The governing body will seek to offer a place to all those who fall into these categories. If, after this has been done, there are no more places available, other applicants will sadly be unsuccessful, even if they attend a non-Anglican church or have a brother or sister already at the school.

As Anglican parishes in Aberdare, this policy brings us into contact with many children and their families who are hoping to secure a place at St John's. We give thanks for this, as it brings an added dimension to our ministry, and we are pleased to be able to support the young people as they go through the often-stressful application process.

As the policy states, the evidence of church involvement takes the form of a reference supplied to the school by the church where the child and family say they attend - in practice this is supplied by the parish priest. Sometimes in the past the phrase "committed practising Anglicans" from the policy has been interpreted in different ways by families applying and the local clergy giving references. Understandably this has led to misunderstandings, confusion and upset.

For the avoidance of doubt, we are now setting out what we understand by the phrase "committed practising Anglicans". This definition will be used by all of us, so that all parties involved - church, families and school - have clarity as to how these important decisions are being made. This definition will be applied beginning with applications submitted in Autumn 2019.

"Committed" - attendance at church for a period of at least six months prior to the date of submitting the application; and attendance **at least fortnightly** during this period. We will endeavour to keep records of those attending from after Easter 2019 in order to verify this.

"Practising" - since the Anglican Church is a Eucharistic church, we define this to mean attendance at the Eucharist, ideally on Sundays but during the week if Sunday attendance is not possible. Attendance at Messy Church or Youth Services will not count. It is not necessary to be receiving Holy Communion if the child has not yet been admitted to Communion or Confirmed.

"Anglican" - attendance at an Anglican Church. In our parishes the churches are:

(St Elvan's Aberdare - currently closed); St John's, Aberdare; St Matthew's, Abernant; St Fagan's, Trecynon; St James, Llwydcoed; St Luke's, Cwmdare; St Margaret's, Aberaman; St Joseph's, Cwmaman.

Other local Anglican churches include: St Lleurwg's, Hirwaun; St Winifred's, Penywaun; St Mary Magdalene's, Cwmbach; St Margaret's, Mountain Ash; St Winifred's, Penrhiwceiber; All Saints, Ynysboeth.

In addition, you can check for other Anglican churches on the Church in Wales website:
www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/places/parishes

Should it ever be the case that the number of applicants who can demonstrate that they are committed practising Anglicans exceeds the number of places available, the priority will be given to those who have attended most frequently and for the longest period, and failing that to those who can demonstrate extra commitment to the church, eg as a server or member of the choir.

We hope that everyone finds this guidance helpful, and any of the clergy are happy to answer any questions that people may have. We assure all young people who are deciding which secondary school to apply for, of our prayers at this important time.

Fr Robert Davies, Vicar of Aberdare

Fr Richard Green, Vicar of Aberdare St Fagan

Fr Matthew Gibbon, Vicar of Aberaman and Cwmaman