



Frequently Asked Questions

How does my child get a place in Reception at St. Gregory's Catholic Primary School?

St. Gregory's is an Academy within the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership, which means that the Governing Body agrees its Admissions Policy with KCSP and The Diocese in accordance with national guidelines and standards.

As detailed in the oversubscription criteria on the Admissions Policy, baptised Catholic children have first priority. Children in the care of a Local Authority, other baptised Christian children, current family associations (a brother or sister in the school at the time of entry), or children with health or special access reasons also have priority. The places remaining are offered according to the distance from your home to the school. The measurements are taken in a straight line using Ordinance Survey data. This is supplied to the school from the local authority. About two thirds of our current pupils are non-Catholics, but many of these are baptised Christians. Should you not be fortunate to get a place for your child, you are entitled to appeal and welcome to place your child on the prioritised waiting list, which operates using the same oversubscription criteria published in the Admissions Policy.

When applying for a school place in Reception using the online Primary Common Application Form (RCAF), you must also complete our school's own Supplementary Information Form (SIF) available from our website or from the school office. The RCAF must go direct to the local authority; the SIF must be completed and returned direct to the school office. The SIF must also be completed for any admission to St. Gregory's at any time outside the normal admissions round.

Although we are in contact with several local nurseries, and have our own nursery on site, there is no preference given to any single nursery as a feeder for St. Gregory's. A place in the St. Gregory's Nursery does **not** guarantee a place in Reception. For advice on admissions in other year groups, please contact Mrs. Jolles at St. Gregory's on Tel. 01843 221896.

When can I visit the school?

Viewing mornings, which comprise of an individual tour around the school followed by the opportunity to meet with our Headteacher, are organised over terms 1 and 2 (autumn) in the year before your child is due to start school. You are welcome to telephone the school office from the September of that term to make an appointment. Your child is also most welcome to come with you on the visit.

What happens to the children at 11?

Parents select one of a number of secondary schools in Thanet for their child's secondary education. Most parents choose Ursuline College, the Catholic Comprehensive School in Westgate on Sea that is also an Academy within the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership. Other chosen schools include Chatham and Clarendon House, Dane Court, Hartsdown Academy, King Ethelbert, St. George's, or Charles Dickens. On average, a quarter of pupils choose a grammar school following the local authority selection process(11+). You will have ample opportunity to discuss this with staff during your child's time in Y5. Ultimately, it is for parents' to decide which secondary school is best suited to their child.

Where can I buy uniform?

All uniform is available to buy from 'The SchoolWear Centre', 56, Addington Street, Margate, Kent, CT9 1QS. A full list of uniform items needed, including PE Kit and book-bags, can be found on this website using the tabs; 'Parents and Pupils' 'School Uniform'. Regular uniform items that do not carry the school crest can be purchased at any regular store such as Tesco, Marks and Spencer, Asda.

Tell me about PE.

P.E kit must be brought into school every Monday and taken home every Friday to be washed. Details of items listed for St. Gregory's P.E. Kit is available as stated above. We will respect special requests made for religious reasons. Please contact us if this applies to your child.

Can my child wear jewellery in school?

For safety reasons children should not wear any jewellery in school. However, they may wear a wrist watch and if your child has pierced ears, small studs may be worn. These will need to be removed for PE lessons and if your child goes swimming.

What time does school start? What if I'm late getting in to school?

Being on time is very important to your child's education and welfare. Learning starts at 8.55am, but we open the doors to pupils at 8.50am. We would encourage pupils to be in the school playground from 8.40am, when a member of staff is on duty, to avoid lateness and the stresses this can bring. In conjunction with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer, we closely monitor lateness and will contact you if the problem persists. However, if you are late arriving at school you must bring your child to school via the front reception office and not directly to the classroom.

Is there before and after school provision?

Yes, 'Breakfast Club' runs each day from 8am until school begins (pupils from Nursery to Y6) and 'After School Club' is from 3.25pm until 5pm daily (pupils from Reception to Y6)

How much is Breakfast Club, Dinner Money and After School Club?

Presently the daily cost is as follows:

Breakfast Club £2.00

Hot School Dinner £2.00

After School Club £5.00

What if I'm late picking up?

Sometimes you may be unavoidably delayed. Please contact the school office as soon as possible and we will place your child in 'After School Club' until you arrive. You may be asked to pay the £5.00 fee. If children are regularly collected late, we will contact you to discuss how we can help.

What if my child is going home with someone else?

At the beginning of the school year, we ask all families to provide a complete list of adults responsible for collecting a child from school. If another adult is needed to collect your child, and they are not on 'the list', you must let the school know in advance, preferably in writing via a note sent in that morning. For reasons of Safeguarding, we will not let a child of any age leave the school premises with another parent or adult without your permission.

How can I help my child settle into school?

Bring your child to school on time. Arriving late can mean that your child misses important information about their school day. Also, it can also be embarrassing for your child to walk into a room late, and can prove disruptive for the class.

Are children given homework?

We expect children from Nursery to Year 6 to read at home every day; either with you or on their own. Children should bring their book bag in to school every day to change their reading book. This is their responsibility. Depending upon your child's age, Home Learning will vary with tasks set (sometimes for

the whole family to enjoy together). Please speak to your child's class teacher for details or take a look at your child's class webpage.

What does SEND / SENCo stand for?

SEND is Special Educational Needs and Disability and the member of staff responsible is the SENCo who co-ordinates provision for these children. Many children have difficulties learning and the SENCo will help you to understand how your child can be supported and will organise professional help from other agencies if needed. Children with SEND will have specific targets in school to help with their learning.

What if my child has special needs?

We can meet a variety of special needs in school. Please discuss your child's needs with the class teacher. The SENCo, Mrs. Mitchell will be happy to meet with you to discuss any specific concerns, should that be necessary

What if my child can't speak English?

We have many children in our school who are learning English or who have English as an additional language at home. Being able to speak more than one language is a good reason for celebration! Staff will do all they can to ensure that pupils learn to speak English in school as quickly and as proficiently as possible.

What should I do if I am worried about my child's progress?

Ask for an appointment to talk to the class teacher about your concerns. If you remain anxious, please ask for an appointment to see Mrs. Mitchell the SEND Co-ordinator.

What is the best time to talk to the teacher if I have a question?

We would discourage parents from trying to talk to a teacher in the morning as they are busy preparing for the school day. We would advise you to speak to the teacher at the end of the school day after all the children have been dismissed. We can also make appointments in the school office for parents to see the class teacher or another member of staff.

Who do I see if I have any concerns?

We greatly value our partnership with parents and seek to be approachable and available as far as possible. In the first instance, please speak to your child's class teacher. As stated above, teachers are available at the end of the school day when pupils are dismissed from the playground, or you may want to leave a message with the teacher on duty at the start of the day using the communication book. You could also write a message using the home learning/reading contact books, or by telephoning the school office to arrange a mutually convenient appointment, by writing a note or by sending an email using the parents only address; info@st-gregorys.kent.sch.uk . If you are seeking more of an overview on behaviours, policy or school-wide issues, then the next stop would be one of the following:

Teaching and Learning (Phase) Leaders:

Early Years/KS1 – Miss Usmar
KS2 – Mr Kirk

Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND), Pastoral Care and Behaviour:

SENCo - Mrs Mitchell

Pastoral and Behaviour Manager - Mrs Kingston

Family Liaison Officer – Mrs Saddington

Senior Leadership Team

Mrs. Wright - Headteacher

Mrs. Rougvié - Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Sellwood - Assistant Headteacher

How can I avoid missing what is going on?

Please read all school texts, emails, letters and newsletters and keep your home diary up to date. Children get upset when families miss an assembly, class Mass, Open Day or other special event and school staff are disappointed when deadlines for return of forms or money are missed. All newsletters are updated regularly on the school website.

Can I receive school newsletters by email?

Yes, please make sure that the school office has your up-to-date email address. All newsletters are uploaded onto the school website. Hard copies are available from the reception office.

What else can I do?

Please ensure that you attend parent/teacher consultation days and special events in school; help out in other ways; offer to go on school trips; notify us of absences; read all of the letters and message that are sent home; support your child with home learning and reading; read together; give praise and encouragement. Let your child know that school is a safe place and that learning can be fun!

What happens at lunchtime? How long do the children get to eat lunch?

Pupils have at least twenty minutes in which to eat their lunch. As this drifts toward 30 minutes we will start to chivvy your child along (usually because they have been chatting too much!) A hot school meal freshly cooked on the premises is available at a daily cost of £2.00. Payment for the week should be made in advance at the school office by the previous Friday morning. A copy of the weekly menus is available at the school office.

Can my child get free school meals?

Although nationally, all pupils in EY and KS1 are entitled to a daily free school meal, still let us know if you think your child fulfils the FSM eligibility criteria, as the school receives extra school funding. You will be asked to complete a simple form. The school is **not** made aware of any details of the eligibility. Your child might be eligible for free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

What should I put in my child's packed lunch?

We recommend a healthy packed lunch, which may include savoury sandwiches, a cereal bar, fruit, yoghurt or other items which are good for a growing child. Children should not bring in fizzy drinks, chocolate bars such as Twix, Mars or Milky Way, or anything at all that contains nuts.

What happens if my child does not like their lunch?

Whether you have made it yourself or the school kitchen has, children will sometimes not like what they have been given. We encourage them to try as much as they can. If we feel they will suffer in the afternoon if they have not eaten enough we may contact you to discuss what could be done to ensure that they eat a better lunch.

Why is my child being offered milk and fruit or vegetables?

Children in Nursery and Reception Classes, who are under 5 years old, are eligible for a free small carton of milk every day. Children further up the school will be required to pay for the milk should they choose to receive it. Also, children in Key Stage One are given a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable each day, again free of charge. This is a government initiative to encourage children to eat healthily and to develop a liking for fruit and vegetables as they grow up. This is not available to Key Stage Two children.

Is there any shade in the playground?

There is shade available in all playground areas and all children have access to outside drinking water fountains. We recommend that during the hot weather your child should bring to school a sun hat to wear whilst outside. You may wish to apply sun-screen to your child before they leave the house in the morning. Please be aware that staff cannot re-apply sun-screen to any child, unless there is a medical reason to do so and stated on the child's medical care plan. Sun-screen must not be sent in to school with a child.

Is drinking water available?

All cold water taps accessible to children in school, are mains drinking water. Water is also available in the dining hall and from drinking fountains in the playgrounds. Children are encouraged to bring water into school to drink in the classroom during the day. This water should be in a clear plastic container that has a securely fitting lid and clearly labelled with the child's name. Water bottles are not to be taken onto the playground.

What happens if my child has an accident at school?

Unfortunately, children do have accidents sometimes or become unwell whilst they are at school and we might need to call you. It can add to your child's distress if we are unable to contact you, so please ensure that the school office has up to date contact telephone numbers for you and other adults named on your child's data sheet. Please tell us straightaway if any of the contact details change. Please be assured that staff will immediately assess whether an accident necessitates a visit to the hospital. Calling an ambulance is a very rare occurrence, but the needs of the child will always come first.

What do I do if my child is having difficulty making friends?

Don't worry! Children can take time to settle into school: there is a great deal for them to learn and to take on board. Children are encouraged to mix as they move through the many and varied school activities and will naturally find a friend with whom they can feel comfortable. Friendship groups tend to be fluid as they move through the school, and your child will soon have an instinct for who she/he will feel happy to play with. However, if you feel that there is a significant problem in your child forming friendships, then we would encourage you to get in touch with your child's class teacher.

What should I do if my child is bullied?

Advise your child to speak to an adult in the school. This can be any member of staff that they feel comfortable with. You may also wish to support your child by talking to his/her class teacher with your child. We would encourage that any incident is reported to the class teacher immediately, as they can observe behaviour during learning times and advise lunchtime staff as necessary. We take accusations of bullying very seriously and any incidents are dealt with appropriately and with speed. If you are concerned about your child please speak to us immediately and never approach a child or parent.

Can I park at the school? Where can I park without annoying the neighbours or breaking the law?

We do not have a car parking facilities for parents and carers on site, so please do not drive up to the locked electronic gates when visiting the school. The school is situated on residential roads and we ask parents to park legally and with due consideration for our neighbours.

If you do choose to park near the school you must follow the Highway Code and not park opposite a drive or within 10m of a junction. It is never acceptable to think that blocking someone's driveway is OK for a

short period of time. We encourage our neighbours to report bad parking to the police. If you have a grandparent, other relative or friend visiting for an event, please mention this to them too.

Can my child cycle to school?

Yes, your child can cycle if they are accompanied by an adult. If you wish your child to cycle on their own we would need a letter of permission from the adult with parental responsibility.

Can my child walk to school alone?

No, children must be accompanied by an adult. If you wish an older child to walk to school alone we must receive a signed letter of permission from the adult with parental responsibility.

What do I do if my child has lost a piece of clothing?

To enable pupils to locate their missing item more easily, parents must first either sew a name label into all clothing or write the child's name in indelible ink onto every item. If an item goes missing, your child must inform the class teacher straightaway. We will do our utmost to find lost items that are named, but we are unable to provide a replacement.

Can my child bring toys in to school?

No, we normally discourage toys or collectables (e.g. football cards) being brought to school, unless the class teacher has specifically requested that they do. Please always check with the class teacher.

What do I do if I need to take holidays in term time?

Holidays in term time should be avoided, if at all possible, to prevent the loss of valuable curriculum time for teaching and learning. Although there may be times when absence during term time is regarded as necessary for family reasons, it remains school policy not to authorise any absence for holidays during term time. If parents wish to remove their children from school, for any reason during term time, the request must be put in writing to the Headteacher in advance. Please refer to our Attendance Policy.

What do I do if my child is ill?

On the first morning of your child's illness, please telephone the school office, preferably before 9.20am. If leaving an answer phone message, please state who you are, your child's name and class, and the reason for absence. Once your child returns to school, the absence must be confirmed in writing. Most absence is due to illness, but should there be a reason other than illness, you will still need to inform The Headteacher in writing before an authorised absence can be agreed. If your child must attend a medical or education appointment during school hours, please confirm the details in writing with the school in advance of the appointment date.

How can I help in school?

We welcome parent volunteers in all classes for as much or as little time as you can spare. We also enjoy one off visits from parents who have a particular skill or vocation and feel able to answer class questions, please let your child's class teacher know if you can help in these ways. Disclosure and Barring Service checks will be made by the school for all regular helpers. In addition, the Parents Council holds regular meetings throughout the year and always welcome support from new parents wishing to help.

What are Houses and to which one does my child belong? How does my child earn House Points and how are they used?

There are four Houses (teams) in school and children are allocated to one of them; Becket (Yellow), Champion (Green), Fisher (Red), More (Blue), our houses are named after Catholic Saints with a local connection. Children earn House Points by working well, helping others or displaying good manners. The House Points of all children in each house are accumulated weekly by the House Captains in Year 6 to give

a winning House. We also have sports events where children compete for their house. On Sports Day the children are asked to wear PE kit in the colour of their house.

How is my child prepared for moving into Year R or on to their next class?

In the summer term all children spend time with their new teacher. Before your child starts school the Reception teacher will visit their pre-school establishment as well as undertake a home visit. This helps your child to familiarise themselves with their new teacher. It is also an opportunity for a handover discussion with their nursery teachers. Your child will come into school for two visits before they start school. 'Meet the Teacher Day' is always an exciting day for the children in school from Reception to Year 5, as it gives everyone the opportunity to get to know each other before the start of the new academic year. In Year 6, the children visit their chosen secondary school for the whole day. We are aware that the transfer to "big" school can be both a worrying and exciting time. Year 6 teachers and the Heads of Year 7 meet to discuss the needs of all Year 6 pupils. This provides good opportunities to discuss or answer any relevant questions to make Y7 transition a smoother process for the pupils.

What is a School Mass?

Every term, Father Finigan agrees a set of dates when Mass will be said either in school or at the parish church of Ss. Austin and Gregory. On these days, the school and parish join together for special 'School Mass' and classes take it in turns to organise the Mass so that the children undertake the readings and Bidding Prayers or take part in the Offertory Procession. All children and their families are warmly invited to attend.

Can I attend school services?

Parents, carers and parishioners are warmly welcome when Mass is celebrated in school. Community members may also attend Achievement and Class Assemblies. Should there be any other occasion where community members are welcome to attend we will let you know by text, email or newsletter.

What is the Wednesday Word?

This leaflet is available from the school office every Wednesday. Every Wednesday, a 'word' (inspired by the Sunday Gospel) will be suggested for you and your family to talk about in your home. This weekly Family Time has been structured around the Sunday Gospel because evidence shows that Gospel values really do help family relationships to thrive. The Wednesday Word 'Family Time' leaflet is designed to ensure that all family members feel included. It presents an effective way for even the busiest of parents to enrich relationships with their children through spending a very special five or ten minutes together each week.

What is the First Holy Communion programme?

This is run by the parish for children in Years 3 and above. It leads the children towards receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation in spring and then making their First Holy Communion in early summer. If your child expresses an interest in this, then you must approach your parish priest to discuss it.