



## Frequently asked questions on Admissions

### **How do I get my child into a particular school?**

Every school has an Admissions Criteria. The criteria will differ from school to school and the best advice is to get to know the criteria for the schools you are interested in applying for. The criteria determine where your child will be ranked for that particular school if the school is over-subscribed.

### **Where can I find out information about SJP's Admission Criteria?**

SJP's Admissions Criteria for pupils starting in September 2022 is available on the College website and is included in our Open Day/Evening information pack.

### **Why do some schools get full?**

Every school has a Planned Admission Number. This number is set by the school's Governing Body and by law the school is not allowed to admit over and above that number unless there are exceptional circumstances. If there are more applications than the standard number, then a ranking will be carried out by the Local Authority according to the Admissions Criteria of the school. Once the ranking has been completed and the Planned Admission Number of places have been filled, the school is full and no more pupils can be admitted. The Planned Admission Number for SJP for September 2022 is 270.

### **How many pupils got into SJP this year (2021-22)?**

At the time of allocation at the beginning of March 2021, 270 places were allocated in line with the Planned Admission number. However, there were some disappointed parents who were not successful and they decided to appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. The Panel placed a number of pupils in at Appeal over and above our Planned Admission number and our current number for Year 7 stands at 270.

### **Why did the Independent Appeal Panel admit more pupils on appeal?**

The Panel felt that the school could and should take the extra number without it prejudicing the quality of education for the others. They did this on an individual basis informed by families who made submissions to the Panel on behalf of their child.

### **How does the Preference system work?**

You are given three choices and are asked by the Local Authority to rank each school according to your preference. Once the forms have been submitted and the deadline has passed, the computerised system at the Local Authority will try to place your child at the highest possible preference in accordance with the Admissions Criteria for each school. If you are not successful with your first choice, the computer will try to place you at your second choice and so on until your child is placed at one of your choices. If all of the three schools for which you have expressed a preference are full, the Local Authority will place your child at a school which has places and is nearest to your home address. Ensure you list three schools. If you leave any blank and you are not allocated your choices, the Local Authority will allocate you any school in Wirral who have a place; this may not be local to you..

### **Am I disadvantaged for a school if they are a second or third choice?**

No. If you are not successful with your first preference (see above), the computer at the Local Authority will try to place your child at your second choice. It is an equal preference system, which means that it will rank your child in accordance with the Admissions Criteria of that school. The process does not take into account what the preference is that you have expressed apart from trying to place your child at the highest preference possible. Therefore, your child is not disadvantaged because the school is a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> preference. The ranking is done by the Local Authority according to the Admissions Criteria.

**Can I put a grammar school down as a second choice and still get in?**

Yes. It is a myth that you can't. If you are not successful with your first choice and had a selective school down as a second choice, the computerised system will take you to that second choice. Selective schools (in the same way as all schools) are not filled up first with first preferences, their places are allocated according to their Admissions Criteria. Therefore, in theory you could have 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> choice applicants being allocated a place ahead of first choices. This is why the system is known as the Equal Preference system.

**Why should I place SJP as my first preference?**

If you are clear that SJP is your preferred school of choice, you should place it as your first preference on the Local Authority form. In that way the computerised system at the Local Authority will seek to place your child in SJP in the first instance. By placing SJP as a first preference you are directing the computerised system to try for SJP first. Remember you are not disadvantaged by placing another school as a second or third choice, it is all about the Admissions Criteria. Schools do not get to know what your preference for that school is when you put your application form in.

**What if I am unsuccessful and my child is not placed at SJP?**

Every parent has the right to appeal and over the last couple of years, many parents have won a place at SJP on appeal. Those that were successful presented strong cases to the Independent Appeals Panel and argued why their child should be placed at the school. Their arguments outweighed the defence presented on behalf of the Governing Body.

**What if I am given my second choice and am fairly happy with it, can I still appeal for SJP?**

Yes. You can accept your second choice and appeal for a place at SJP without giving up your second choice. If you were not successful at appeal for SJP your child would still hold a place at your second choice school, whatever that school is.

**How do I go about appealing for a place at SJP if I am not successful?**

We would advise that you accept the place your child has been allocated by the Local Authority unless you definitely don't wish for your child to be placed there. You should then contact our Head Teacher, Ms Maria Sharratt, who is also the Admissions Officer at SJP (Tel 0151 645 5049) via the office, or email [schooloffice@stjohnplessington.com](mailto:schooloffice@stjohnplessington.com). They will make a note of your details and will send out Appeal Forms to you.

**When will the appeals take place for SJP?**

The Independent Appeals Panel will normally meet in May. This is one of the earliest of the Appeals Panels to meet in order that parents are not kept hanging on. The school understands how distressing this waiting time can be for parents who have not been successful.

**Will the school ask for evidence of Baptism or Reception into the Catholic Church?**

Yes. SJP had changed its admissions criteria during 2019. If SJP is oversubscribed in a particular category, it will ask parents/carers for this evidence. This is usually a Baptismal Certificate or a letter from a parish priest confirming the date of the Baptism or outlining when formal reception took place into the Church. Governors have the right to withdraw the offer of a place if this evidence is not produced.