

## **Frequently asked questions**

Choosing the right school for your child is one of the most important decisions that you will make as a parent / carer. It requires careful consideration and a clear understanding of what the process entails. Here at St Francis, we are confident that we offer the quality of education that all young people deserve. To support the process, we have provided answers to a number of frequently asked questions that we receive annually. We trust that this will enable you to make an informed decision.

***Does my child have to be a baptised catholic to be offered a place at St Francis of Assisi Catholic College?***

The admissions criteria is available on the school website (<https://www.stfrancis.cc/official-documentation/>). If the number of applications exceeds the admission number, the governors will give priority to applications in accordance with the criteria listed, provided that the governors are made aware of that application before decisions on admissions are made. The vast majority of students at St Francis of Assisi Catholic College are baptised catholic. However, in September 2020, places were offered to some non catholics.

***I already have a child at St Francis, does this mean that their younger sibling is guaranteed a place?***

In all categories, priority will be given to those who have a sibling or brothers or sisters who are legally adopted and attending St Francis of Assisi at the proposed time of admission. If there is oversubscription within a category, the Governors will give priority first to siblings, then to children living closest to the school.

***My child has been baptised, but I do not have their baptism certificate. Will they still be offered a place?***

A copy of your child's Baptismal certificate should be sent directly to the school together with the ***Supplementary Evidence Form***, in line with the deadline for returning your home authority application form. In special circumstances where this is unobtainable (e.g. applicants from abroad) a letter from your current parish priest or minister of religion must be sent directly to the school to support the application. If you fail to send in the ***Supplementary Evidence Form*** your application will be submitted as a non catholic. Once places have been offered, it is not possible to rescind them. Therefore, should supplementary evidence be provided after the date of offers, there is no guarantee that places will be available.

***My child has Special Educational Needs, does this mean that they will be offered a place at St Francis?***

Children with a statement of special educational need will be given priority. If your child has an EHCP, you are welcome to discuss the support we could offer them with our SENDCO Mrs Claire Walker. Parents whose child has an Education and Health Care Plan follow separate admission procedures through the Statutory Assessment or Annual Review process. Parents or carers of

children who live in Walsall must still apply on-line on via the Walsall Council Admissions Portal. They should make sure that they show on the application that their child has an Education, Health and Care Plan. The School Admissions and Appeals Team will forward details of all relevant applications to the Walsall EHC Assessment Team, who will complete the process.

### ***What about transport to and from school?***

Our school is served by a number of public bus services which the large majority of students use to travel to and from school. The majority of services drop off and collect in Aldridge town centre which is a 10 minute walk from school. Public buses from Walsall, Birmingham and Lichfield all collect and drop off in Aldridge.

We have a small number of school services run by National Express West Midlands which service the school by dropping off and collecting students on the school site, these are still public services.

Students who travel from Tamworth have the option of using a dedicated school service which is paid for via Parentpay and serves all areas of Tamworth across to buses (SFA 1 and SFA2)

Details about all bus services are included in the parents' information booklet and are available on the school website.

### ***How do I go about getting school uniform?***

Wearing the school uniform is essential to being part of our school community. We believe that wearing our uniform indicates that students have the highest standards and, this outward sign, indicates that they are proud to be part of St Francis of Assisi. Students should be proud to be members of St Francis of Assisi and therefore should wear the uniform properly and with pride. The specific uniform requirements are available on the school website and can be purchased from the following suppliers (including PE kit):

- Crested School Wear Walsall, 7 Victorian Arcade, Walsall, WS1 1RE. T: 01543 504866
- Crested School Wear Stafford, St Marys Mews, Stafford, ST16 2AP. T: 01785 748481
- Crested School Wear Cannock, 1 Wolverhampton Rd, Cannock. WS11 1AH. T: 01785 748481
- S K School Uniforms, 44-46 Chartwell, Tamworth, B79 7UG. T: 01827 705779
- Clive Mark stores available in -
- Walsall: 19 Park Place Shopping Centre, Park Street, Walsall WS1 1NP. T: 01922 622556
- Sutton Coldfield: 407-411A Birmingham Rd, Sutton Coldfield B72 1AU. T: 0121 382 1728
- Birmingham: 38-40 Poplar Rd, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7AD. T: 0121 444 7623
- Birmingham: 1-2, Anderton Rd, Birmingham B11 1TG. T: 0121 459 4599
- Smethwick: 4-5 Three Shires Oak Rd, Smethwick B67 5AX. T: 0121 429 4

### ***How are students put into their teaching groups?***

Students are set or banded as soon as they start at St Francis. Information is provided by the primary schools to aid this process. Some lessons however, are taught in mixed ability groups in Year 7 e.g. PE and Music. Students will also sit assessments in their induction week to help us find out about how they learn best and identify their areas of strength and areas for development. This will enable them to start making progress as soon as possible. All classes in year 7 will experience the same curriculum and will sit mini and formal assessments in the first half term. The results from these assessments in the core subjects will be used to review the teaching groups for the second half term and beyond.

### ***How do the school dining facilities operate?***

Under normal circumstances, the school dining hall is open for breakfast, break and lunch, offering a range of hot and cold food. More details are available in the catering services section of the transition page on the school website. We have been required to make certain alterations to the service that we currently offer due to Covid. This will continue to be reviewed as we adapt to changing circumstances.

We also have a bistro, which normally serves hot and cold snacks, as well as drinks. There are also a number of outdoor kiosks that enable students to “grab and go”. We are a cashless school and students’ accounts can be topped up online at any-time from home. Free school meals will be provided through this system accordingly. Should your child be allocated a place at St Francis, details of Parentpay accounts will be sent out before the end of the summer term.

### ***What if my child has a packed lunch?***

Children are more than welcome to bring their own packed lunch. These can be eaten in the dining hall or in outdoor seating areas if preferred.

### ***If my child is allocated a place at St Francis, who should I go to if I have a concern about them?***

At St Francis of Assisi Catholic College, the well-being of each individual child is the single most prevalent focus that we have. Significant importance is placed upon both their physical and emotional welfare. The following communication protocols should be followed in adhered to ensure that all issues are addressed appropriately.

**Social concern or query:**

Your son/ daughter's tutor is your first port of call. Tutors are available to be contacted via email. More information about communication with staff is available in the parents' information booklet.

Other concerns about pastoral issues should be directed to the appropriate Head of Achievement and Learning (HAL).

***Academic concern or query:***

Please contact your son/ daughters' subject teacher or Head of Department via email.