



Policy name	Admissions Policy
Policy Owner	Jo Dommett
Last Review	January 2026
Approved By Governors	January 2026
Next Review	December 2027
Published On Website	March 2026

Our Mission

Aquinas College strives to be a Catholic college for the whole community. Christ is at the very heart of our philosophy. This is expressed in our commitment to the Gospel values of freedom, justice and love.

“I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.”

John 10:10

We affirm and value each member of our community, recognising the dignity and unique nature of each individual. In this way the presence of Christ is celebrated. We share in each other’s strengths, support each other in our weaknesses and strive for the highest standards of achievement in all we do. We also encourage a questioning stance towards the values of our increasingly secular society. In short, we aim to provide reasons for living and hoping.

Linked to other policies	Owner

Aquinas College, through its policies and day to day work is committed to promoting equality and fairness. This applies to everyone, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic background, disability, religion, sexual orientation or age and embraces the College’s legal responsibility.

The persons/group responsible for this document reserve the right to amend this document at any time should the need arise. All appropriate staff will be informed should this occur.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aquinas College is the partner sixth form college to

Harrytown Catholic High School

St. Anne's RC Voluntary Academy

St. James' Catholic High School

St. Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy, Buxton

Students attending these schools on 30th November in the year of application have priority of admission.

1.2 Applications are also welcome from Catholic students not currently attending one of the partner schools on 30th November in the year of application, as well as from non-Catholic students who wish to continue their education in a Christian environment.

1.3 The Governors are committed to maintaining the College's open access admissions policy. Applications will therefore be considered in the following order of priority:

1.4 Category 1A

Catholic applicants from the college's Catholic partner schools

1.5 Category 1B

Catholic applicants from other schools

Applicants will be asked to provide proof of baptism

1.6 Category 1C

Non-Catholic applicants from Catholic schools

1.7 Category 1D

Siblings of present students, or former students who have completed a study programme with us within the past 6 years, and children of current staff and governors of the college.

1.8 Category 2

All other applicants

1.9 Children who are looked after, and previously look after children have the highest priority in each category

2. Students with an Education Health Care Plan

2.1 Where Aquinas College is named in Section I of a learner's EHCP, the college will engage with the consultation process.

2.2 During the learner's EHCP consultation with Aquinas College, the college will consider the suitability of the placement the impact on the education of others, and the reasonable steps that could be taken to facilitate the placement.

2.3 During the consultation, learners will be invited into college to discuss their ability, aptitude, and special education needs. Based on this information, we can determine if our programme and resources align well with what the student needs to succeed. If this is the case, Aquinas College will admit the learner.

2.4 Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a diagnosed learning difficulty who receive an offer will also attend a pre-enrolment meeting to discuss individual needs and ensure a smooth transition to the college environment.

3. Overseas Applicants

3. 1 As a state funded Sixth Form College, Aquinas College is not a licensed student sponsor. Consequently, in order to qualify for admission to our college, students must already have a legal right of residence in the UK before the start of their study programme and we will require evidence of this.

3.2 If the student has not been living in UK for three years prior to the start of the course they may have to pay tuition fees.

4 Application Procedures

4.1 All applicants must complete the college application form and apply online, via our website, by midnight of 30th November in the year preceding admission. Students in all categories who apply after this deadline will be placed on a reserve list with no guarantee of further consideration.

4.2 All Applicants will need to be studying at GCSE, or equivalent level, or already have GCSEs or equivalent qualifications, at the time of application.

4.3 Courses which can be followed by students depend on what has already been achieved at GCSE and on the student's future plans. Each case is considered individually. The study of some advanced courses may require a particular level of achievement at GCSE.

4.4 When assessing any application we consider several key factors:

Commitment to study at Aquinas.

Appreciation of and commitment to the college's distinctive ethos.

Wider interests and the contribution the applicant might make to the college community.

Whether the applicant currently attends a school located in Stockport.

4.5 Since it is not possible to offer every student a place at Aquinas the quality of the application is important and all deadlines must be met.

4.6 Category 1

Following application, all category 1 applicants will be invited to discuss their application.

Offers will typically be made before Christmas. However, offers to applicants with an EHCP may be slightly delayed allowing for thorough communication between the College, student, and the local authority throughout the process. We may not be able to make an offer until we have assessed all the relevant information. This ensures we can provide the best possible support for individuals.

4.6 Category 2

Applicants will be assessed and will be notified of the outcome of their application just before Christmas. Those selected for interview will be given an interview appointment in January.

Final Category 2 offers will be made in February.

4.7 Students will be required to have an enrolment conversation following the publication of GCSE results. Failure to engage in an enrolment conversation as requested will result in the offer of a place being withdrawn, except where the College has received prior notification in writing.

4.8 A condition of admission to the college is acceptance of the Student/College Agreement

5. Students not allocated a place

5. 1 Aquinas College is significantly over subscribed and as such unfortunately each year many students are unsuccessful in securing a place at the college. Given the volume of unsuccessful applications it is not possible to offer each applicant detailed feedback as to why their application has been unsuccessful. If you believe you have grounds to appeal this decision, in the first instance, appeals should be addressed to the Director of Student Services, in writing, within 5 working days of receipt of our decision, outlining the grounds for the appeal.

5.2 Students who are not offered a place may request to be placed on Aquinas' waiting list. They can do this by emailing waitinglist@aquinas.ac.uk by 31st March. If and where spaces become available at enrolment, students on this list will be contacted and the offer of a place made.

5.3 A condition of admission to the college is acceptance of the Student/College Agreement

5.4 If you have any questions about admissions, please do not hesitate to contact admissions@aquinas.ac.uk. We are always happy to help

6 Definitions employed in this policy

6.1 CLA/CPLA

A 'child who is looked after' has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (e.g. children with foster parents) at the time of making an application to the school.

A 'child who was previously looked after' is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because he or she was adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

6.2 CATHOLIC

'Catholic' means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of baptism in a Catholic Church or a certificate of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy, it includes a looked after child living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the Church will be required. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism should contact their Parish Priest who, after consulting with the Diocese, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

6.3 SIBLING

'brother or sister' includes:

- (i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and
- (ii) the child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same home address as the child who is the subject of the application.