



Guidance for school governors on interpreting evidence of Catholic Practice in Supplementary Information Forms following the Coronavirus outbreak.

Evidence of Practice

The evidence of practice of the faith is based on the Catholic Church's discipline relating to Mass attendance. The question of Mass attendance should not, in principle, be affected by the suspension of the Sunday obligation because the evidence sought in the Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs) relates to length of practice over time. Ultimately, priests are asked to do no more than certify, to the best of their knowledge and belief, that the child comes from a practising Catholic family. The unusual situation following the COVID 19 outbreak will form part of the circumstances to be taken into account this year.

To provide further clarification, we recommend that school governors adopt the following statement. (This can be done at the next Full Governing Body meeting or if required it can be a 'Chair's or Vice Chair's Action' that is then formally recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Full Governing Body.) We do not think that there is a need for in-year variations of admissions arrangements.

On the advice of the Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Southwark the governing body of xxxx school has agreed the following statement in order to clarify how its faith-based oversubscription criteria will be interpreted whilst churches are closed or attendance at church is not possible due to COVID19. This statement has been shared widely with parishes in order to ensure that determinations made by parish priests concerning regular practice of the faith are being made on a consistent basis.

The suspension of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass was announced on 18th March 2020 by Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. If a parent/carer attended Mass at particular parish (or parishes) prior to 18th March 2020 then they will be considered to have attended Mass in that parish (or parishes) regularly since that time. This will remain the case until the Sunday obligation is reintroduced by the Bishops.

This statement should be made available to parents as widely as possible. For example, on the school website; as an addendum to the SIF; at parents' information evenings; an insert for parish newsletters; a display in school reception areas. Governors should inform other schools and admission authorities in their local area. The Education Commission has sent these details to Admission Officers at each Local Education Authority within the boundaries of the Archdiocese. A separate briefing paper has been produced for parish priests, which also includes some guidance about maintaining personal safety by following social distancing guidelines.

Should further guidance be required please email patrickharrison@rcaos.org.uk