

ST LEONARD'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, DURHAM
SIXTH FORM ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-2026

St Leonard's Catholic School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. The school is conducted by the Catholic Education Trust as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and articles of association and seeks at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. We therefore hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school. This does not affect the right of an applicant who is not Catholic to apply for and be admitted to a place at the school in accordance with the admission arrangements.

Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust is the admissions authority and is responsible for determining the admission policy. The local authority coordinates the admissions process on behalf of the Trust. The administration and operation of the admission policy is delegated by the Trust to the Local Governing Committee.

The admission policy criteria will be dealt with on an equal preference basis.

Pupils in Year 11 at St Leonard's are eligible for a place in the Sixth Form if they meet Sixth Form entry requirements. The Sixth Form welcomes applications from other students. All applicants must complete the Sixth Form application form and will be invited to meet Sixth Form staff to establish whether St Leonard's is able to offer an appropriate course of study for the individual. This meeting will be arranged following receipt of formal applications and will take place after the GCSE examinations.

Entry Requirements

Any student failing to achieve at least a grade 4 in GCSE English and/or Mathematics will be required to undertake a re-sit course in Year 12.

We will not offer places to current St Leonard's students or external applicants who fail to meet the entry requirements and for whom no reasonable programme of study can be arranged.

(i) **Advanced Level Study (Route A)**

The entry requirements for Advanced Level study are:

- (a) each applicant must achieve at least eight GCSE or equivalent Level 2 Qualification passes at grade 9 – 1

- (b) each applicant must achieve at least five GCSE passes¹ at grade 9 – 4
- (c) each applicant must achieve **at least four GCSE grade 5 passes including** at least a **grade 5** in each subject to be taken at A Level (see course entry requirements listed in section 6 of this admissions policy).
- (d) any applicant wishing to study a science subject (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) at A Level must achieve at least a **grade 5** in GCSE Additional Science if taking double science rather than separate sciences. If taking separate sciences then the applicant must achieve at least a **grade 5** in the science subject to be taken at A Level.
- (e) any applicant wishing to study a subject at A that they are not currently studying at GCSE must consult the list of entry requirements listed in section 6 of this admissions policy.
- (f) any applicant currently studying a subject at GCSE that they wish to continue to study at A **must achieve at least a grade 5** in that subject at GCSE.
- (g) any applicant failing to achieve at least a grade 5 in GCSE English and/or Mathematics undertake a re-sit course in Year 12
- (h) each applicant must study a minimum of three A Level courses to completion.
- (i) each applicant must study the General Religious Education Course to completion²

(ii) **BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma Study (Route B)**

The entry requirements for the BTEC Extended Diploma study are:

- (a) each applicant must achieve at least eight GCSE or equivalent Level 2 Qualification passes at grade 9 – 1
- (b) each applicant must achieve at least four GCSE or equivalent Level 2 at grade 9 – 4
- (c) any applicant failing to achieve at least a grade 5 in GCSE English and/or Mathematics undertake a re-sit course in Year 12.
- (d) each applicant must study the General Religious Education Course to completion (e) each applicant must undertake the work experience of this course, as arranged.

(iii) **BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma Study + ONE A Level Course (Route B+)**

The entry requirements for the BTEC Extended Diploma under Route B+ study are:

- (a) each applicant must achieve at least eight GCSE or equivalent Level 2 Qualification passes at grade 9 – 1
- (b) each applicant must achieve at least four GCSE at grade 9 - 4 (please note that equivalent Level 2 Qualification passes are not acceptable under Route B+)
- (c) any applicant failing to achieve at least a grade 5 in GCSE English and/or Mathematics undertake a re-sit course in Year 12.

¹ For Route A entry to A Level study, equivalent Level 2 Qualifications are **not** accepted under the terms of this Admissions Policy. The five GCSE passes at grade A*-C must be achieved in full GCSE courses.

² Students who choose to study A Level Religious Studies are not required to study the NOCN General Religious Education Course.

- (d) each applicant must study the General Religious Education Course to completion
- (e) for the A Level course the applicant MUST achieve grade 5 or higher in the chosen subject grade 5

Please note: that not all A Level Courses may be available under Route B+.

(iv) If the entry requirements have not been met due to an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child the admissions authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

The evidence will need to demonstrate why a place specifically at St Leonard's Sixth Form, or on a specific course, is in the student's best interest. The Governors will consider the evidence submitted to them, also taking into consideration the ability of the school to meet the individual's need. On the basis of the case presented to them, the Governors will decide whether or not the pupil is eligible for admission.

Students with an Education, Health and Care plan

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school must be admitted. Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other students.

Oversubscription Criteria (for external applicants)

Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority to external applicants who meet entry requirements:

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after students (see note 2&3)
2. Catholic students (see note 3)
3. Other looked after and previously looked after students (see note 2)
4. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church (see note 4&5)
5. Students who will have a sibling at St Leonard's during the academic year 2025
6. Students of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader. (see note 10)
7. Students of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader. (see note 11)
8. Other external applicants

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.

- (i) *Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 9)*
- (ii) *The attendance of a sibling at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above. (see note 7)*

Tie breaker: Where there are places available for some, but not all applicants within a particular criterion, distance from home address to the school entrance will be the deciding factor. In assessing home to school distance the LA measures by the shortest walking route. Routes are measured from the centre point* of the child's house, or in the case of a flat from the centre point* of the building, to the nearest school site entrance. A Geographic Information System (GIS) is used to identify and measure the shortest walking route. The GIS identifies routes on the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network (ITN) and Urban Paths Network (UPN), which are national recognised datasets. The LA will not include any other routes. In all cases the GIS identifies the route to be measured by connecting in a straight line the centre point³ of the child's house to the closest point on the nearest route on the ITN/UPN. In the event of distances being equal for two or more students where this would determine the last place to be allocated, random allocation will be carried out in a public place and supervised by a person independent of the school.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

1. An **Education, Health and Care Plan** is a plan made by the local authority under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special educational provision required for a student.
2. A **looked after student** has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any student 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. students with foster parents) at the time of making application to the school.

A previously looked after student is a student 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 admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

3. **'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.

³ In accordance with the co-ordinates of the Basic Land and Property Unit on the National Land and Property Gazetteer.

4. **Catechumen** means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. For the purposes of admissions this refers to the student on whose behalf the application is being made. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.
5. **Eastern Christian Church** includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception should contact the Diocese who will decide how the question of baptism or reception is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.
6. A child's "**home address**" refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form ("CAF"). Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the CAF, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.
7. **Sibling** 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.
8. A **parent** means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a student, and any person who has care of a student (having care of a student means that the student lives with and is looked after by that person).
9. To demonstrate an **exceptional social, medical or pastoral need** of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the admissions authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.
10. **Children of other Christian denominations** means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledge God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An ecclesial community which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above.

All members of Churches Together in England and CYTŪN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local Churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis.

Applicants must provide a baptismal certificate or where child baptism is not practised, a letter confirming their church membership from their minister or faith leader.

11. **Children of other faiths** means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 6 above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- A religion which involves belief in more than one God, □
- A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in that supreme being through worship.

Applicants must provide a letter of support to confirm their faith membership from their minister or faith leader.

OPEN EVENING

The annual Sixth Form Opening Evening gives both internal and external students the opportunity to discover more about the Sixth Form. The evening for 2025 applications is due to take place in October 2025. This evening is comprised of a short introductory presentation from the Head Teacher, and the Head of Year (Sixth Form) as well as an opportunity to meet departmental staff.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The formal application process begins following the Sixth Form Open Evening.

(i) The Application Form

All applicants are required to complete the Sixth Form Application Form and return it to:

Sixth Form Administrator
St Leonard's Catholic School
North End
Durham
DH1 4NG

(ii) Acknowledging Receipt of Application

Receipt of applications will only be acknowledged if accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope.

(iii) **Important Deadlines**

Deadline for receipt of applications: 12th November 2025

- (iv) **Late applications** considered by the Governors and included in the admissions procedure at the point when they are received. Each individual case will be considered by the Deputy Head Teacher in consultation with the Head Teacher. No application submitted after the submission deadline (12th November 2025) can be guaranteed a place in Year 12 for that year of application.

(v) **Admission of Students outside their Normal Age Group**

A request may be made for a student to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the student is 'More Able' or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be made in writing to the Head Teacher. The Admissions authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the student. In addition to taking into account the views of the Head Teacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school. The Admissions authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals. Students admitted to the Sixth Form outside of their normal age group are required to meet the relevant entry requirements for their proposed programme of study.

(vi) **Fair Access Protocol**

The school is committed to taking its fair share of students who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the admissions authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a student where admission is requested under any local protocol that has been agreed by both the diocese and the admissions authority for the current school year. The admissions authority has this power, even when admitting the student would mean exceeding the published admission number.

(vii) **Waiting List**

For any student who has been refused admission due to oversubscription in the Sixth Form or on a particular course, a waiting list is available until 31 December 2025 where priority will be given according to the above criteria based on the information provided at the time of application.

Further enquiries should be directed to the Deputy Head Teacher. A Sixth Form prospectus is available.

Students who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the Chair of Governors at the school address.

- (viii) Course changes are only permitted at the discretion of the Head of Year in consultation with the Deputy Head Teacher and in consultation with the appropriate Heads of Department. No course changes will be permitted after 30th September in the year of admission.

(ix) **False evidence**

Any false or deliberately misleading information given on the application form or in supporting papers, or any relevant information withheld, may lead to the withdrawal of a place, even after a student has started at the school.

(x) **Information and Assistance**

St Leonard's is committed to fairness and transparency in the way it operates its admissions procedures. Parents are invited to contact the school to discuss their situation and to obtain help in applying, especially if they are disabled or have difficulties of language or are not familiar with school admissions.

(xi) **Information and Advice Meeting**

As part of the application process all applicants are required to attend an 'Information and Advice Meeting'. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss with each applicant academic success to date and assist in the determination of future courses. These meetings will be arranged following receipt of applications and are scheduled to take place following the GCSE results.

(xii) **Pupil Admission Number**

Any student currently on roll at St Leonard's (Year 11 in the academic year 2025-2026) is eligible for a place in the Sixth Form providing they meet the entry requirements. For September 2026 St Leonard's Sixth Form has 40 places available for external candidates who meet the entry requirements. In the event of the Sixth Form being oversubscribed or meeting capacity, the oversubscription criteria (see section 1iv) will be applied.

(xiii) **Capacity**

The Sixth Form capacity is 340 students. The maximum number of Year 12 students admitted for any given year is determined by the number of Year 13 students in that academic year.

CONTINUATION REQUIREMENTS

It is envisaged that all students admitted into Year 12 in September 2026 will continue at St Leonard's until the end of Year 13 in June 2028.

(i) **Year 12 criteria (Route A)**

The following criteria must be met in order to ensure continuation on route A:

- (a) students must work effectively towards their target grades as given at the beginning of each academic year
- (b) students must demonstrate their commitment by maintaining a minimum 90% attendance
- (c) students must meet St Leonard's high expectations of behaviour and commitment in accordance with the Sixth Form Learning Agreement and the policies detailed in the Sixth Form planner app.

(ii) **Year 12 criteria (Routes B and Route B+)**

The following criteria must be met in order to ensure continuation on route B:

- (a) students must meet the pass criteria for their chosen course of study in each of the Year 12 units covered.
- (b) students must work effectively towards their minimum target as given at the beginning of each academic year
- (c) students must demonstrate their commitment to study by maintaining a minimum 90% attendance
- (d) students must meet St Leonard's high expectations of behaviour and commitment in accordance with the Sixth Form Learning Agreement and the policies detailed in the Sixth Form planner app.

Any student on **Route B+** must meet the above criteria (a) – (d) for the BTEC element of their Programme of Study and students must achieve at least a grade E in their chosen A Level course.

(iii) **Year 13 criteria**

The following criteria must be met during the Year 13 in order to ensure continuation:

- (a) students must work effectively towards their target as given at the beginning of each academic year
- (b) student must demonstrate their commitment to study by maintaining a minimum 90% attendance
- (c) students must meet St Leonard's high expectations of behaviour and commitment in accordance with the Sixth Form Learning Agreement and the policies detailed in the Sixth Form planner app.

EXPECTATIONS

Expectations of behaviour and commitment are very high. Students are required to behave well according to a clear code of expectations and school rules and to develop self-discipline and to show commitment to the ethos of the school community. This includes the wearing of the uniform, courtesy shown towards others, attendance, punctuality and a positive attitude to studies and the wider life of the school. Students are set challenging academic targets and encouraged to stretch their capabilities and to see what they can achieve.

The school's disciplinary system is both clear and demanding. The basis of this system is that students are expected to have respect for themselves, for their studies and for the school community.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Route A Entry Requirements

A Level Subject	Entry Requirements
-----------------	--------------------

Biology	Grade '5' in GCSE Additional Science or in GCSE Biology (if studying separate sciences)
Business Studies	Grade '5' in GCSE Business Studies if taken or Grade '5' in GCSE Mathematics
Chemistry	Grade '5' in GCSE Additional Science or Grade '5' in GCSE Chemistry (if studying separate sciences)

English Literature	Grade '5' in GCSE English Literature and Grade '5' in GCSE English
Fine Art	Grade '5' in GCSE Art, if taken, or GCSE Grade '5' in Technology
Food Technology	Grade '5' in GCSE Technology if taken or GCSE Grade '5' in English or GCSE Grade '5' in Mathematics
French	Grade '5' in GCSE French
Further Mathematics	Grade '8' in GCSE Mathematics
Geography	Grade '5' in GCSE Geography, if taken, or Grade '5' in GCSE Additional Science or Grade '5' in GCSE Biology (if taking separate Sciences).
German	Grade '5' in GCSE German
Government & Politics	Grade '5' in GCSE English Literature

History	Grade '5' in GCSE History if taken or Grade '5' in GCSE English Literature
ICT	Grade '5' in GCSE ICT if taken or Grade '5' in GCSE English Language
Mathematics	Grade '5' in GCSE Mathematics
Media Studies	Grade '5' in GCSE English Language
Music	Grade '5' in GCSE Music or Grade 4 on a musical instrument.
Physical Education	Grade '5' in GCSE Physical Education if taken or Grade '5' in GCSE Additional Science or Grade '5' in GCSE Biology (if taking separate Sciences).
Physics	Grade '5' in GCSE Additional Science or Grade '5' in GCSE Physics (if studying separate sciences)
Product Design	Grade '5' in GCSE Technology if taken or GCSE Grade '5' in English or GCSE Grade '5' in Mathematics
Psychology	Grade '5' in GCSE Mathematics
Religious Studies	Grade '5' in GCSE Religious Studies
Sociology	Grade '5' in GCSE Sociology if taken or Grade '5' in GCSE English Language
Textiles	Grade '5' in GCSE Technology if taken or GCSE Grade '5' in English or GCSE Grade '5' in Mathematics

Please note that if you have studied a subject at GCSE and wish to continue that subject to A Level study you **MUST** have achieved at least a grade '5' at GCSE.

Route B and Route B+ Entry Requirements

Please see Section 1 (ii) and (iii) of this policy.