



The Vicarage
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Bishop Stopford Admissions

18th October 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer,

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your association with our church. It doesn't matter whether you manage to attend weekly or only every so often, it is always such a pleasure when families are able to join us for our services and events. Indeed, young people and their families make our functions come alive in a most wonderful way and they make what we do feel so much more worthwhile.

In October each year, Bishop Stopford C of E Secondary School ask parish priests to attend a meeting held by the school's leadership in order to inform us about how they expect us to undertake our part of their admissions process. This year's meeting has just taken place, and so I thought it might be a good time to contact every parent to keep them in the picture.

We are very lucky because Kettering and the surrounding areas offer a huge range of schooling alternatives. It is because of this vast alternative provision that Bishop Stopford C of E Secondary School consider it important that they offer a special schooling provision to the area with a particularly strong Christian ethos.

The school is independently governed by their own governing body who set their own admissions criteria and the local churches have no say over the school's admissions policy. It may be that you would like your child to attend Bishop Stopford in the future. If so, then please do take seriously what they demand as a part of their admissions process, which assesses each family's level of faith commitment in an attempt to reinforce its Christian ethos. They are very clear with local church leaders that we have a moral duty to apply the rules robustly, openly and honestly, so that everyone is assessed fairly.

As your local parish church, we love it when you join us. Undoubtedly, it is important for all of us to be a regular part of a worshipping community of faith if we wish to strengthen and grow our faith by serving God and his people, but as your church we also understand that busyness of life and other life problems can sometimes get in the way. Please be assured that we absolutely do not judge if you are not able to make it as often as you would like to, even though we do very much miss you when you are not with us.

The admissions process to Bishop Stopford School doesn't always feel very comfortable precisely because it can feel judgemental. It is as uncomfortable for us having to comment on your church attendance, as it is for you having to have your regular attendance commented upon. In order to make it as painless a process as possible, please do read Bishop Stopford's criteria for selection very carefully and be sure that you meet all of the criteria for the grade you wish to give yourself in your application. Please do not claim to attend more than you really do or say you help out more than is actually the case. For our part, we consult a panel of various individuals from the church council and primary school governing body in order to assess each individual application fairly. If you are unsure of your particular situation, then please do discuss it with us at the earliest opportunity before submitting your application. We will try our best to help you improve your score, if that is necessary, and we really do not want anyone to be disappointed because they have misjudged their situation.

As your parish church we will support you in any way we can and we would especially like to see your child go to this excellent school, if that is your desire. We will be understanding and generous in our part of the admissions process, and we will also be supportive of your family whatever the outcome. I am sure that if we all work together on this we can achieve the outcomes we desire for the holistic development of your child. We wish you the best of luck as you try to plan the best for your child's future.

With every blessing,

The Revd Fr R.T. Parker-McGee