



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

*“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish,
and Christ is made known to all.”*

School Admissions: Certificate of Catholic Practice

The Catholic Education Service (CES) issued advice on the use of the Certificate of Catholic Practice during the Coronavirus pandemic. When the last of the legal restrictions were removed in England on 19th July 2021, most churches retained mitigating measures in accordance with the guidance issued by the Bishops' Conference at that time. As a result, the Bishops made it clear that, in their continuing judgment, it remained impossible for all Catholics to fulfil the precept of attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, as had been the situation from March 2020: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/sunday-it-is-our-day/>

In their statement in July 2021, the Bishops expressed the hope that it would be possible for this most important precept to be fulfilled in the ordinary way by the First Sunday of Advent 2021. Last week, at the Plenary Assembly of the Bishops' Conference, the Bishops issued a further statement: *Honouring Sunday, in which they confirmed that, for most Catholics, it is now possible to resume Mass attendance in full.* <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishops-statement-honouring-sunday/>

*In applying the Certificate of Catholic Practice, the advice from the CES is that **the obligation set out in canon 1247 should be considered as once again operating in the normal way from the First Sunday of Advent 2021.** In accordance with the Bishops' Statement, it should be recognised that **there will still be some individuals who, for various reasons, may still be excused attendance at Mass, but this is already covered by the existing Guidance for Clergy.** This Guidance can be found, along with the Certificate, at the following link: <https://catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/admissions>*

The guidance set out in the previous two DSC Letters stands in relation to the pastoral judgment made by priests during the period from March 2020 to the present day when the Sunday obligation was not in full force.

In particular, **the CES remains strongly of the view that it is not necessary for schools using the Certificate of Catholic Practice to apply to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for an in-year variation to their admission criteria.**

BDES, November 2021