

Thomas Jones School

Nursery Admissions Policy and Funding Handbook

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body of Thomas Jones School in September 2023. It is reviewed biennially by the Head teacher and the Resources Committee.

EYFS Rationale

We believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage should be a time of play, and that through play we discover the excitement of learning, the rewards of achievement and acquire our life skills. Our early years settings with their bright, busy and well-planned environments encourage the children in the development of skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to reach their potential and become confident, active members of our school community.

It is through this process that the children will work towards, achieve and in some cases exceed the Early Learning Goals.

The Nursery

At Thomas Jones School, we have a full time Nursery class. Our Early Years provision has been validated as 'outstanding'. Our Nursery is run by a qualified class teacher, nursery officer and additional support staff. The Nursery is by far our most important cohort. It affords children a comprehensive Early Years Foundation Stage education both within the free flowing classroom and our outdoor learning environment.

The Nursery core day runs from 9.00am-3.15pm for 38 weeks per year, Monday to Friday. Full time attendance is obligatory and Nursery children are expected to wear full school uniform.

Children start our Nursery class the September following their third birthday, with a home visit from our staff scheduled for the last week of the summer term before they are due to begin.

For further practical details about our Nursery, please refer to our Parent and Carer Information Handbook. This will be distributed once a place has been accepted.

Nursery Funding

Funding for EYFS provision nationally has changed significantly. In order to sustain our own provision, the school introduced an updated admissions and financial model from September 2018.

The Nursery offers 25 full time places. Full time attendance is obligatory.

All 25 places are entitled to 15 free hours per week for 38 weeks per year, funded by the Government via the Local Authority. Our Nursery is open for 31.25 hours each week for 38 weeks per year.

At Thomas Jones we have agreed to safeguard up to 12 'Fully Funded Places' - free places for children who meet our admissions criteria. The remaining places will be 'Part Funded' – meaning that funding for the remaining hours over and above the 15 hour free entitlement will need to be secured. Further detail on these funding options is available below.

Our fees are set at a competitive rate when compared with other local providers. This is reviewed annually.

NURSERY ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The application window to apply for a place in our Nursery opens on **Wednesday 6th September 2023** and closes on **Wednesday 31st January 2024**.

Places will begin to be offered from mid February 2024 in accordance with the Nursery admissions criteria and will continue to be offered until all places are filled.

Nursery places are allocated by the school. **The final decision regarding the allocation of all places rests with the Headteacher.**

All parents/carers wishing to apply for a Nursery place, **including those with siblings already at the school**, must complete a nursery application form. These can be collected from the school office and are also available on the school's website www.thomasjonesschool.org.

Nursery Admissions Criteria

In the case of more applications than places available, Thomas Jones will welcome current and new pupils into our Nursery in accordance with the following 'oversubscription' admissions criteria:

1. Pupils who attended the school's Nursery during 2023/24;
2. Children who are in the care of the Local Authority or who have an Education, Health and Care Plan;
[Looked After Children (also referred to as in "Public Care") covers children who have been adopted or made subject to a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order immediately after having been Looked After receive priority for admission to school. The child's social worker must submit a letter to the school confirming the legal status of the child and the local authority to which the child is/was in care.]
3. Brothers and sisters of children already on the roll of the school (from Reception to Year 4 to safeguard ongoing priority as these children apply for a Reception place). If there are more siblings than there are places available, distance criteria will also be applied;
4. Children of staff at the school;
5. Children who live nearest to the school.
[Distances are calculated using a straight line (as the crow flies) measurement from the child's home "address point" (determined by Ordnance Survey data) to the main entrance of the school building (as determined by the Royal Borough using its computerised measuring system). The child living closest to the school will receive the highest priority].

These admissions criteria are influenced by the Local Authority's admission criteria for community schools with the aim of maximising the number of successful applicants transitioning to our Reception class at the end of their Nursery year.

It is important to note that acceptance into our Nursery class does not guarantee a child a place in our Reception class or further up the school. All applications for Reception must be made through the Local Authority via the school admissions team at:

www.rbkc.gov.uk/children-and-education/schools/join-school/admissions/start-primary-school

NURSERY FUNDING OPTIONS

All 25 Nursery places are entitled to 15 free hours per week for 38 weeks per year, funded by the Government via the Local Authority.

Our Nursery is open for 31.25 hours each week for 38 weeks per year.

Parents are required to give a full term's notice in writing if they wish to remove their child from our Nursery class.

Fully Funded Places (Option A)

Thomas Jones will offer up to 12 'Fully Funded Places' for children who meet our Nursery Admissions criteria. You may be entitled to one of these places if you fulfil the criteria listed under A1 or A2 below or if you can provide documentation to support an application for A3.

These places are part funded by the Government via the Local Authority (15 hours) and part funded by the school (16.25 hours).

Please Note: Families will need to provide proof of eligibility for a 'Fully Funded Place' at the time of acceptance and again before the child commences Nursery in September.

Option A1

A fully funded place is available to children:

- With a current Education Health and Care plan;
- Who are looked after by the Local Authority.

Option A2

A fully funded place is available to children of parents who are entitled to one or more of the following:

- Income Support;
- Universal Credit;
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Child tax credit with proof that annual income does not exceed £16,190 per year and the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit;
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit;
- Support under PART IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Employment and Support Allowance (income-related based allowance).

Option A3

If a family do not qualify for a 'Fully Funded Place' under criteria A1 or A2, are not eligible for the 30 Hours of Childcare offer 'Option B' and can demonstrate that they only pay basic rate income tax, then other funding options may be available.

Please contact the school office for further details.

A free hot school lunch is provided for children each day if the child is eligible for Free School Meals. Alternatively, parents and carers may purchase a hot school lunch for their child at the cost of **£2.30** per day or provide a healthy packed lunch.

Part Funded Places

Our 'Part Funded' places offer 15 hours' free nursery education. Funding for the remaining hours over and above the 15 hour free entitlement will need to be secured via either Option B or Option C below:

Option B

'30 hours' free childcare'

A family may be eligible for 30 hours' free nursery education if they meet the following criteria:

- The child is aged 3 or 4 while in the Nursery class;
- Both parents are working- or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family;
- Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage;
- Each parent has an annual income of less than £100,000;
- Parents are seeking the free childcare to enable them to work;
- One or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave or on statutory sick leave;
- One parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled or have been assessed as having limited capability to work;
- Where the parent is in a 'start-up period' (no need to meet the income criteria for 12 months);
- Both parents and child live in England;
- If a non-EEA national, the parent has recourse to public funds.

In this instance, the parent is asked to spend the entirety of their 30 hour allocation with Thomas Jones and to pay for the additional 1.25 hours per week at a termly 'top up' rate of **£130**. This is payable in advance of the start of each term.

Parents can check eligibility and apply via the following websites:

www.rbkc.gov.uk/kb5/rbkc/fis/advice.page?id=yKh9rNwlyEE

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Parents can apply for the 11 digit voucher code needed 12 weeks before a child's 3rd birthday and eligibility commences the term after a child's 3rd birthday. Eligibility needs to be reconfirmed and codes renewed every three months.

The first voucher needs to be given to the School Office along with the parent/carer's date of birth and National Insurance Number. **The first 11 digit voucher code should be presented as soon as possible and must be presented by Friday 30th August.**

Parents who are eligible for '30 hours' free childcare' will also be given the option of opening an online 'Tax Free Childcare' account. For every £8 paid in to this account, the government will add an extra £2, up to £2,000 per child per year. The school is able to accept payment for the £130 termly 'top up' fee from these accounts providing the school is given a child's unique child reference number in advance of the payment being made.

If a parent loses eligibility whilst their child is registered at our Nursery, they will receive a term's 'grace period' to enable them to maintain their childcare arrangements. Parents should

ensure that the school is notified of any changes in circumstances immediately. Any decision by the school to fully fund a Nursery place in this situation will be made by the Head Teacher on a case by case basis. Parents may need to pay for the additional 15 hours via Option C below.

Parents and carers can also purchase a hot school lunch for their child at the cost of **£2.30** per day or provide a healthy packed lunch.

Option C

If a family is not eligible for '30 hours' free childcare' then they will be charged a termly fee of **£1,650** to pay for the additional 16.25 hours per week to top up to a full time Nursery place.

This charge will be kept under review and will remain at a competitive rate when compared with other local providers.

Fees must be paid in advance of the start of each term in full. Any diversion from this is at the discretion of the Head teacher.

Families are asked for a deposit of **£500** to secure the child's place within two weeks of receipt of the offer letter. This deposit amount will then be deducted from the final term's fees.

Parents and carers can also purchase a hot school lunch for their child at the cost of **£2.30** per day or provide a healthy packed lunch.

OFFERING AND ACCEPTING NURSERY PLACES

For 2024/25, places will begin to be offered from mid-February 2024. The offer letter will include an acceptance form which needs to be signed and returned to the school by parents/carers within two weeks of the date of the offer letter.

Families categorised as funding Option C are asked for a deposit of **£500** to secure the child's place within two weeks of receipt of the offer letter. This can be made via electronic transfer to the school or by cheque to the school office. **This deposit is non-refundable.**

Tie-Breaks/Multiple Births

If applicants share the same address point (for example, those who live in the same block of flats or a shared house), priority will be determined by random allocation. Routes are measured to four decimal places if necessary. If, in the unlikely event that two or more applicants meet the same criteria and live exactly the same distance from the school, the offer of a place will be decided by random allocation which will be carried out independently of the school.

In the case of twins, if one twin fills the final Nursery place available the other twin will automatically be offered a place under the same criteria taking the number of children in the nursery up to 26. This will be agreed at the Head teacher's discretion. In the case of triplets or more, unfortunately this cannot be extended to more than one child.

Unfilled Places

In the event of there being less applicants than places available, the Head teacher reserves the right to make decisions about how the Nursery class will be run for the forthcoming year.

Waiting List

All unsuccessful applicants will be kept on a waiting list in order of admissions priority and should a place become available, places will be offered in accordance with the criteria outlined above.

Early Starters

Occasionally we may invite children to commence as an early starter prior to their official start in the September following their 3rd birthday. These places will be offered with our admissions criteria in mind and at the discretion of the Head teacher.

Nursery Settling-in Process

Should your child be successful in obtaining a place within our Nursery, their induction and settling-in process will be as follows:

- Pupils in the Nursery start in a staggered fashion; this means that pupils start gradually across the month of September. Pupils are offered start dates in order of birth, with older pupils offered an earlier start date. This is to ensure that staff are able to give adequate support, time and attention to all pupils when they start in the nursery, with older pupils being fully settled by the time that younger pupils begin.
- The Nursery induction process takes place over a **minimum of 5 days**, as follows:
 - **Day 1:** The child stays in the Nursery for one hour with their parent or carer.
 - **Day 2:** After settling the child and saying goodbye to them, the parent/carer leaves the Nursery for one hour.
 - **Day 3:** After settling the child and saying goodbye to them, the parent/carer leaves the Nursery for the morning and returns at 11.50am to collect them.
 - **Day 4:** After settling the child and saying goodbye to them, the parent/carer leaves the Nursery and returns after lunch at 1pm to collect them.
 - **Day 5:** After settling the child and saying goodbye to them, the parent/carer leaves the Nursery and returns at the end of the day to collect them.

Where appropriate, the Nursery settling process will be extended. This will be decided on an 'as-needed' basis, dependent upon the needs of the individual child.

Nursery Term Dates

Due to the staggered settling-in process, Nursery pupils will start at different dates in the autumn term. You will be given your start date by the office team within the summer term prior to your child starting in Nursery.

In order to carry out home visits, the Nursery **will close one week prior to the end of the summer term.**

Wrap-around Care

Once Nursery pupils are successfully inducted and settled within the school, they will be able to access wraparound care, including our breakfast and after-school 'play plus' clubs.

Please do not book your child onto any wraparound care before discussing this with your child's Nursery teacher, to ensure that your child is settled and ready for extended days.

Equality

At Thomas Jones School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all children, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or socio-economic background. We ensure the 9 characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 are protected. Please refer to our Single Equality Policy for further details.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Payment Methods

Vouchers for '30 hours' free childcare' must be provided to the school by Monday 3rd June 2024. Applications can be made via:

www.rbkc.gov.uk/kb5/rbkc/fis/advice.page?id=yKh9rNwlyEE

Deposits to secure a place can be made via electronic transfer or cheque to the school office. The acceptance form and Fees Factsheets include all relevant payment information.

All other payments should be made via electronic transfer from either a Tax Free Childcare account or other bank account. School lunches need to be paid for via ParentPay. Parents needing to set up a ParentPay account should contact the school for an activation letter.

Fraudulent Applications

The Local Authority takes very seriously any attempt to obtain a school place by fraud. All cases are fully investigated. If the school finds that a Nursery place was obtained using a false address, the offer will be withdrawn, even after the child has started the school, and will be re-offered to a child who was legitimately entitled to the place.

If for any reason the offer is not withdrawn, occasionally when a child has been on roll for more than one term, any future sibling priority will cease to apply.

Use of Data

All personal information is handled in line with Data Protection principles. A full copy of our Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy is available on the school's website.

Complaints

Any dissatisfaction with the admissions process should be addressed in writing to the Headteacher. A nursery panel will investigate any complaints fully before a decision is made and communicated back to the parent/carer.

Natasha Peurois

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