



Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the core admission arrangements to Thornton Heath Nursery School. These arrangements seek to comply with Croydon Council community schools admission criteria, the Local Conditions of Funding and the Statutory Guidance for the Delivery of Free Early Education for Two, Three and Four Year Olds.

- 1.1 The school Governing Body has a responsibility for applying the Local Authority's admission arrangements for nursery education in accordance with the set criteria.
- 1.2 The nursery is registered to admit two year olds who are eligible for the free 15 hours entitlement.
- 1.3 All three and four year olds are entitled to receive 15 hours free early years education.
- 1.4 Working parents may be entitled to an additional 15 hours (funded) of childcare for their 3 and 4 year olds. Eligibility for these additional funded hours is means tested according to the Government's funding criteria.
- 1.5 Places offered under this policy will be available to;
 - Parents/carers of children aged two who are eligible for the funded 15 hours entitlement;
 - Parents and carers of all three and four year olds as they are all entitled to receive 15 hours free early years education;
 - Parents and carers of all three and four year olds entitled to receive an additional 15 hours extended funded early years education;
 - Parents/carers of children aged three and four who opt to pay for extended services.
- 1.6 Parents and carers of children in receipt of the free entitlement may choose to take up additional hours, chargeable at the applicable fee rate.
- 1.7 The nursery has an agreed admissions limit. Parents and carers will be advised if the admissions limit has been reached.

2. Free Nursery Early Education places for three and four year-olds

- 2.1 All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year in their local area in the term following their third birthday. This applies until they reach compulsory¹ school age the term following their fifth birthday.

¹ Compulsory School Age is defined at Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 together with the Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 (SI 1998: 1607).

2.2 Places are made available from the start of the term beginning on or following the dates set out below:

- Children born in the period 1st January to 31st March: **1st April** following the child's third birthday;
- Children born in the period 1st April to 31st August: **1st September** following the child's third birthday;
- Children born in the period 1st September to 31st December: **1st January** following the child's third birthday.

3. Free Nursery Early Education places for two year-olds

3.1 Some two year olds are entitled to 15 hours of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year in their local area in the term following their second birthday.

3.2 From September 2014, two-year-olds who meet any of the following criteria will be eligible:

- If they meet the eligibility criteria also used for free school meals²;
- If their families receive Working Tax credits and have annual gross earnings of no more than £16,190 per year before tax;
- Universal Credit - if you and your partner have a combined income from work of £15,400 or less a year, after tax;
- If they have a current statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan;
- If they attract Disability Living Allowance;
- If they are looked after by their local authority;
- If they have left care through special guardianship or through an adoption or residence order.
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3.3 Places are made available from the start of the term beginning on or following the dates set out below:

- Children born in the period 1st January to 31st March: **1st April** following the child's second birthday;
- Children born in the period 1st April to 31st August: **1st September** following the child's second birthday;
- Children born in the period 1st September to 31st December: **1st January** following the child's second birthday.

3.4 THNS must have confirmation of a child's funding eligibility before they are allocated a place.

A child reaches compulsory school age either on or after their 5th birthday, on whichever of the following dates is either on, or the first to follow, their birthday: 31st August, 31st December or 31st March.

² The entitlement to an early education place follows the criteria for eligibility for Free School Meals as set out in section 512ZB (4) of the Education Act 1996, and in regulations made under that section. Two-year-olds whose families meet these criteria will be eligible for a place.

3.5 If a child is not eligible for a funded two year old place, with permission the applicant's details will be shared with the Family Information Service (MASH) who will be able to discuss alternative childcare options and/ or signpost the applicant to services who may be able to provide additional support.

3.6 The child will then become eligible for their early education entitlement at age three. The term after their third birthday and will automatically move into the next nursery room. Should the nursery not have any available three year old funded places parents and carers will be informed in advance. The child will remain in the two year old setting until a space becomes available. Two year olds in our setting will have priority over other children when a place for the Nursery setting is requested.

4. Admissions Criteria

4.1 Parents and carers may state their preference as to which nursery class, school or centre they would like their child to attend in the years leading up to the child's admission to reception class. Parents and Carers will be advised annually of the agreed admission dates.

4.2 The School Governing body will consider all applications in accordance with the following criteria, set out in priority order:

- Children must be eligible for the two year old free entitlement;
- Looked-after children and previously looked after children (*note 1*);
- Children who have a sibling (defined as half/step/foster/adopted sibling) whose main residence is the same address and will be attending the school at the time of admission;
- Where there are serious medical grounds (supported by documentation from a registered medical practitioner) and/or special educational/ social need for admitting the child (*note 2*);
- Date of application as noted on our application form;
- Distance- proximity of the child's home to the school, with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority (*note 3*).

If the nursery is oversubscribed, children in the year before they start in Reception will be given priority.

Note 1

Looked after children are defined as children in public care at the date on which the application is made. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order, immediately after being looked after. If an application is made under the 'looked after' criterion, it must be supported by a letter from the relevant Local Authority Children's Services Department and/or relevant document.

Note 2

The medical reasons must be verified by a doctor or consultant and declared at the time of application if known at the time. Claims for priority of admission on medical grounds will not be considered if submitted after a decision on the original applications has been made.

Children for whom there is a recommendation for nursery education by a health professional, social worker, educational psychologist, outreach worker or education welfare officer on the basis of the child's special educational needs. Examples of special educational or social needs, in no order of priority, might include:

- Identified emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- Lack of personal interaction and stimulation;
- Identified social communication difficulties;
- Identified speech and language difficulties;
- A registered disability.

Note 3

Distance will be measured as a straight line drawn on a map from the front gate of the school to the front door of the home at which the child normally resides. For flats, the centre point will be taken from the centre of the building. Home is defined as the address where the child normally resides as their only or principal residence. Parents/ carers are always asked to provide documentary evidence to confirm an address and parental responsibility. Child minding factors cannot be taken into account when allocating places at over-subscribed schools.

Shared Custody - If parents share custody of the child, the address given should be that of the parent with whom the child spends most of the school week, which will be the address where Child Benefit is payable. Only one application per child can be accepted. If the address of the parent differs from that of the child, a written explanation must be submitted with the application. Custody issues cannot be resolved by the LA.

5. Procedure for Admission

5.1 Thornton Heath Nursery School can accommodate a maximum of 110 places for three to four year olds and 40 places for two year olds. Parents and carers who are interested in making an application to the nursery will need to complete the relevant application form and return it to the school.

5.2 As soon as a place has been offered, parents/ carers will need to sign the Croydon Free Entitlement Parental/Carer Agreement and staff must see the child's full, original birth certificate and proof of address. THNS does *not* keep original photocopies of these documents due to data protection. Parents/ carers must give 4 weeks' notice in writing if they no longer wish their child to attend THNS.

6. Patterns of Attendance

6.1 Available attendance patterns for our two year olds are:

Thornton Heath Nursery School

- Morning sessions (8.30-11.30, Monday to Friday); or
- Afternoon sessions (12.30-3.30, Monday to Friday).

6.2 Extended services available for our two year olds (if appropriate) are:

- Breakfast club sessions (7.30-8.30 daily, charged at £4 per session); and/or
- Lunchtime sessions (11.30-12.30 Monday to Friday charged at £30 per week).

6.3 Available attendance patterns for our three and four year olds are:

- Morning sessions (8.30-11.30, Monday to Friday); or
- Afternoon sessions (12.30-3.30, Monday to Friday); or
- 30 hour funded sessions (8.30-11.30 then 12.30-3.30, Monday to Friday).

6.4 Extended services available for our three and four year olds (if appropriate) are:

- Breakfast club sessions (7.30-8.30 daily, charged at £4 per session); and/or
- Lunchtime sessions (11.30-12.30 Monday to Friday charged at £30 per week); and/or
- Full-time paid sessions (8.30-3.30 Monday to Friday charged at £95 per week).

6.5 Please note that there is a limited number of places in our extended services and for full-time places.

6.6 Parents must provide an appropriate packed lunch for their child if they are attending a lunchtime session.

6.7 Payment for extended services is made online via 'Magic Booking' and families will be supported in setting up their account. Please note that THNS reserves the right to withdraw places within extended services if payment is not made promptly and in advance.