

PREP SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation		
Created	December 2007	Vice Principal
Last Review	March 2023	School Registrars, Compliance Manager
Approved	March 2023	Thomas's Principals and Heads
Next Review	February 2024	School Registrars, Compliance Manager

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Prep Schools, including the EYFS. This policy should be read in conjunction with Thomas's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, Pupil Induction Policy, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy and Special Education Need and Disability Accessibility Policy.

Please contact the Registrar for details of admissions to Thomas's Putney Vale.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thomas's Schools are independent, fee-paying, fully co-educational day schools. We welcome applications from children who will contribute fully and enthusiastically to the ethos and wider life of the school, regardless of disability, ethnicity, sex, religion, belief or sexual orientation. Our assessments ensure that selected pupils will enjoy and benefit from the broad curriculum on offer.

In entrance assessment provision is made for children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) to have equal opportunity to participate and best endeavour will be made to meet the individual needs of a child with SEND.

Thomas's is keen to develop its aims of inclusivity and diversity through its admissions processes.

2. PROCEDURES

2.1 Information for Prospective Parents

Parents are informed about the ethos, aims and organisation of the schools through the website www.thomas-s.co.uk, and through a talk and tour of the school during which they meet members of the Senior Leadership Team.

2.2 Entry points

The majority of pupils are admitted into Reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday. Entry to the school at other points is dependent on places becoming available. We generally admit up to 22 pupils per class.

The Registrar is responsible for all registrations. Each child can be registered at one Thomas's School only, on payment of a fee and completing an online registration form.

Transfers of registration between Thomas's Prep Schools are reviewed on an individual basis.

2.3 Registration Procedure for 4+ entry

The Main List for registration for 4+ entry (Reception) opens in the last week of September, three years before entry, when children are aged between one and two years old. (Therefore, children born between 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023 will be able to register from 1st September 2024 with a view to starting school in September 2027.)

From their child's birth, parents may [click here](#) to make an expression of interest in order to give their contact details to the school, so that we can be in touch with reminders about the opening date of registration. However, an expression of interest does not guarantee registration and there is no advantage in having made an expression of interest, beyond receiving reminders of the registration opening date.

Once the Main List opens it will remain open until there are three applicants for each place. Pupils who are registered after this time are automatically placed on a Reserve List and are able to join the admissions process if places on the Main List become available.

This approach is intended to enable parents to have and enjoy their babies, to start to visit schools during their child's first year of life, and to make an informed decision about the schools at which they would like to register, without feeling pressure to register their child as soon as they are born. The table below indicates our recommended timescale.

Child's age	Illustrative academic year	
Born	1 st Sept 2021 – 31 st Aug 2022	Birth
Turning 1	1 st Sept 2022 – 31 st Aug 2023	25th September - Battersea 26th September - Clapham 27th September - Fulham 28th September - Kensington
Turning 2	1st Sept 2023 – 31 st Aug 2024	
Turning 3	1 st Sept 2024 – 31 st Aug 2025	First year of kindergarten
Turning 4	1 st Sept 2025 – 31 st Aug 2026	Admissions process - see table below
Turning 5	1 st Sept 2026 – 31 st Aug 2027	Reception year at school

2.4 Registration Procedure for entry into other year groups

Please contact the Registrar at the Thomas's Prep School of your choice to discuss if spaces are available. Entry is by means of the Occasional Vacancies Registration List. Registration for entry into Year 7 must be completed by 1 November the year before entry.

2.5 Admission Procedures for Reception (4+) Entry

Twelve to eighteen months before admission, parents whose children's names are on our Main Registration List will be contacted to confirm their continued interest. When

an applicant is withdrawn, parents whose children's names are on the Reserve List will be contacted, though this can never be guaranteed and is dependent on numbers. Below outlines the Admissions process for each school. Once a place on the Main List is confirmed, the schools will share a more detailed timeline of the process.

For entry into Thomas's Battersea

Applicants on the Main List will be invited in for a Discovery Session in the Michaelmas term the year before entry. Discovery Sessions last around 45 minutes and are led by the Head of Lower School.

The Discovery Session is play-based and thoroughly enjoyed by the children who attend. It is a gentle assessment during which staff will gauge a child's readiness for school through observing their play in a group and completion of some independent activities. The school does not seek to assess academic rigour, moreover to find children who will thrive in the school's busy, buzzy school environment. The sessions are in groups of no more than twelve children.

The School may contact Kindergartens/Nurseries in advance of making offers. Offers are made following the Discovery Session with preference to siblings of existing pupils. Children may be placed on a Waiting List and offered a place after the initial closing date for acceptance.

For entry into Thomas's Clapham

In the Lent term the year before entry, offers will be made to siblings of current pupils and parents will be given a week to accept the offer. Following this, all remaining children on the Main List will be selected via ballot. All children not initially selected in the ballot will be placed on a Waiting List and may be offered a place after the initial closing date for acceptance.

Once an offer has been accepted, the School will contact Kindergartens for information about each child joining the school, and a meeting will be arranged in the Michaelmas term the year before entry for the parents and child to meet with the Head. A play session for children will be held in the Summer term.

For entry into Thomas's Fulham

In the Michaelmas term the year before entry, sibling applicants will be invited to attend a Discovery Session led by the Head of Lower School. Offers will be made to siblings following the Discovery Morning and a deadline given for acceptance.

All remaining children on the Main List will be invited to attend a Discovery Session in the Lent term of the year of entry. Offers are then made following the Discovery Session. Children may be placed on a Waiting List and offered a place after the initial closing date for acceptance.

The Discovery Session is play-based and thoroughly enjoyed by the children who attend. It is a gentle assessment during which staff will gauge a child's readiness for school through observing their play in a group and completion of some independent activities. The school does not seek to assess academic rigour, moreover to find children who will thrive in the school's busy, buzzy school environment.

Prior to the Discovery Morning the school will contact Kindergartens/Nurseries to inform them of a child's application and to give them an opportunity to provide any pertinent information. During the Summer term the school's Early Years Team will visit the main Kindergarten/Nurseries.

For entry into Thomas's Kensington

Applicants on the Main List will be invited in for a Discovery Play Session in the Michaelmas term the year before entry. Discovery Play Sessions last around 45 minutes and are led by the Head of Lower School.

The Discovery Session is play-based and thoroughly enjoyed by the children who attend. It is a gentle assessment during which staff will gauge a child's readiness for school through observing their play in a group and completion of some independent activities. The school does not seek to assess academic rigour, moreover to find children who will thrive in the school's busy environment. The sessions are in groups of no more than twelve children.

The School may contact Kindergartens/Nurseries in advance of making offers. Offers are made following the Discovery Play Session with preference to siblings of existing pupils. Children may be placed on a Waiting List and offered a place after the initial closing date for acceptance.

For all schools, the Waiting List is kept open until the relevant school year begins. Parents may then ask for their child to be transferred onto the Occasional Vacancies List in case a space becomes available at a later date.

2.6 Delayed Reception Entry

A child should be registered to start school in the September following their fourth birthday, regardless of when their birthday falls within that year, and have the assessment at the appropriate time. If after meeting with the School, and only for children born in August, it is felt that the child would benefit from starting school a year later, this option may be recommended to parents. The decision would be made in conjunction with discussions with the child's nursery school. The child would then be placed on the Main List for the following academic year and would be re-assessed in line with normal procedure. Being "out-of-year" is not ideal so should be considered as an extreme circumstance rather than the norm, but we recognise that children develop at different rates so aim to make provision for the very youngest children in the academic year.

Children who are on our Reserve List and are therefore not considered during their correct year of entry may be moved on to the Reserve List for the following year if they are staying for another year at nursery.

2.7 Procedures for entry into other year groups

For entry into Years 1 and 2 children are assessed against the standard currently being achieved in the year group and, particularly if they are moving from a different education system, for evidence of potential. Written reports are requested from the previous school, generally prior to assessment.

For entry to Years 3 - 6 children are assessed for evidence of academic potential and against the standard currently being achieved in the year group. Information about their previous education experience, a meeting with a senior member of staff and a written reference from the previous school are taken into account when making a decision.

For entry to Year 7, children will be invited to attend a Discovery Day which includes an assessment and meeting with a senior member of staff. A written reference from the previous school will be requested. Offers will be made following the Discovery Day.

For entry to Year 8 children are assessed for evidence of academic potential and against the standard currently being achieved in the year group. Information about their

previous education experience, a meeting with a senior member of staff and a written reference from the previous school are taken into account when making a decision.

2.8 Acceptance of Places

If the parent chooses to accept a place at a Thomas's Prep School they must pay a non-refundable deposit and provide written acceptance of the Terms and Conditions (Parent Contract) by a set date. The deposit is returnable when the pupil leaves the school, providing a full term's notice is given.

2.9 Thomas's Kindergarten

For parents whose child attends Thomas's Kindergarten and wish to progress to a Thomas's School must complete a separate registration form when the child is in Lower Kindergarten. They will automatically be placed on the Main List for that school and progress through the Reception Admissions process outlined above. *Please note this applies to 2025 entry onwards.*

2.10 Siblings

When siblings of current Thomas's pupils are registered for Reception they automatically go onto the Main List for the same school and are given priority during the admissions process. On occasions, we do not offer a place if we feel that the school is not the correct educational environment at that stage. The Head of Lower School / Head discusses this with parents as soon as possible after a decision not to offer has been made. Reassessment may be offered at a later stage. Sibling preference is only given if the sibling is a current member of the school.

For other year groups, siblings are placed at the top of the Registration List (or if no places are available after assessment, the waiting list) but they have to meet the same criteria for admission as other candidates.

2.11 Children of Thomas's Alumni

When children of former Thomas's pupils are registered for Reception they will automatically be placed on the Main List for the school applied to, and progress through the Reception Admissions process outlined above.

This does not apply to children of former Thomas's staff.

2.12 Children of current staff

Children of staff will be subject to the same admissions procedure and criteria as other applicants for places. The offer of a place and a staff bursary will be at the recommendation of the Head and at the discretion of the Principals. The child of a staff member may be an additional pupil in the class.

2.13 Visa requirements

It is the responsibility of the parents of foreign national children to check that their children have a right under their UK entry conditions to study at Thomas's, before applying for a place. The schools may ask to see evidence of a child's right to study in the UK when parents accept the offer of a place at Thomas's. Please note that Thomas's does not hold a Child Student sponsor licence. Thomas's Schools do not take part in this Scheme and thus cannot provide a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) for pupils hoping to be admitted to the school.

2.14 Note regarding sanctions

Like all UK institutions and organisations, admissions staff check and review updates to the UK Sanctions List to avoid financial transactions with named individuals, companies or banks.

3. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice.

DfE 'Advice on the admission of summer born children' (June 2020)

DfE Departmental Advice 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools' (May 2014)

DfE 'School applications for foreign national children and children resident outside England' (updated April 2022)