

Thurrock Determined Admissions Arrangements

Primary schools 2017/18

amended version dated 5 January 2017

Background

The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to make admission arrangements that comply with the School Admissions Code and related law, and the Equality Act 2010.

The LA is required by law to co-ordinate reception admissions for all state funded schools within its area. There are different types of school; community schools, foundation schools, voluntary controlled schools, voluntary aided schools and academy or academy free schools within the borough.

This LA is part of the Pan-London Co-ordinated Admissions System. The London Inter Authority Admissions Group (LIAAG) is the Admissions Executive Board and is responsible for the scheme that co-ordinates admissions to schools across all boroughs. A copy of the scheme can be viewed on the Thurrock school admissions website thurrock.gov.uk/admissions

The co-ordinated system is in place to ensure parents receive only one offer of a school place for their child.

The LA is the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools within the borough. Each year it must determine, or set, the admission criteria to these schools, including the criteria that will be used where the school is oversubscribed. These have been changed because this was necessary to reflect the law.

Others schools, including academies and academy free schools and voluntary aided schools are their own admission authorities. They set their own admission criteria. These appear in the admission booklet and on their website.

How and when to apply

Parents are advised to check carefully the admission criteria for all schools they are considering before making their application for a school place. Parents are also advised to pay attention to the dates given in these arrangements.

The earliest your child can start school

If your child was born between **1 September 2012** and **31 August 2013** they can start full time school in **September 2017**. See below for arrangements for exceptions to this.

How to apply for a place in reception in a primary school or academy

The person applying on behalf of the child will normally be the person with parental responsibility for the child which whom the child lives. Parental responsibility is a legal term and is defined by the Children Act 1989 as amended.

Parents/carers residing in Thurrock should complete the 'Common Application Form' (CAF) either online via the Thurrock website or by obtaining a paper application from the School Admissions Team. All applications must be submitted by **15 January 2017**.

Parents/carers may list up to four preferred schools that they wish their child to be considered for within or outside Thurrock and rank them in order of preference. All four preferred schools must be included, regardless of who is the admission authority for this school (so include academy, academy free schools, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools, community and foundation schools). Any preferred school outside Thurrock must be listed in the same way, as one of the four preferred school on the CAF.

Some schools require the completion of a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) as well as completing the CAF. Please check with the relevant Admission Authority to determine if a SIF is required as well. SIFs are available from the individual school and must be submitted to the individual school by **15 January 2017**. The LA cannot provide these forms and cannot process or accept them.

Child's address

The child's home address, or address where they live for the majority of the time (their principal address) must be given on the application form. This must not be a business, a relative's, a carer's or child minder's address. The address will usually be the address of the parent/s or carer/s.

If the parents do not live together, it should be the address of the parent with whom the child spends the majority of the time and who receives Child Benefit for the child, if this is paid. You will be required to provide proof of address. We will require you to provide your council tax reference number which can be cross referenced with the address you give.

If you move after completing the application or change your email address, you must inform us so that correspondence continues to reach you. A change of address may affect your offer of a place at the school of your choice. As a starting point, applications will only be discussed with the person/people named on the application.

Parents who do not live in Thurrock but are choosing one or more schools within Thurrock as their preferred schools

Parents/carers who are not resident in Thurrock will need to ensure they read the admissions booklet from their own LA as well as the admissions criteria for the Thurrock school/s they wish to apply for. Parents/carers must complete their own Local Authority 'Common Application Form' (CAF), listing the Thurrock school/s and complete any relevant Supplementary Information Form (SIF) required before the closing date of **15 January 2017**.

Children transferring from infant to junior schools

Thurrock parents/carers whose children attend an out of borough infant school and want their child to transfer to the out of borough junior school will need to complete and submit a Thurrock 'Common Application Form' by **15 January 2017**.

Within Thurrock there are only primary schools. There are no separate infant and junior schools.

Late applications

Applications should be made by **15 January 2017**. Applications received after this date will be treated as late applications unless, exceptionally, there is evidence to show that the application or amendment could not reasonably have been made on time in which case they may be considered as if made on-time. Late applications will be processed after national offer day.

For any late applications considered on-time containing out of borough preferences, the latest date for sending the out of borough request to the relevant Local Authority is **10 February 2017**.

Children with statements of special educational need (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

All children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) that names a particular school in the statement or plan must be admitted to that school.

Equality Act 2010

An Admission Authority must ensure that their admission arrangements do not discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.

Infant class size

Infant classes, (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6, or 7 during the school year) must not contain more than 30 pupils. Additional children may be admitted under only very limited exceptional circumstances and are referred to as "excepted" pupils. These children remain "excepted" for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. Excepted children are:

- a) Children with statements of special educational need (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names a school who are admitted outside the normal admission round;
- b) Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children admitted outside the normal admission round;
- c) Children admitted after initial allocation of places because of a procedural error made by the Admission Authority or Local Authority in the original application process;
- d) Children admitted after an Independent Appeals Panel upholds an appeal;
- e) Children who move into the area outside the normal admission round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admission round;
- g) Twins and children from multiple births when one of the siblings is the 30th child admitted;

- h) Children with SEN who are normally taught in a SEN unit attached to the School, or registered at a Special School, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream School.

Multiple births

When there are not enough places remaining in a particular criterion to allow all children from a multiple birth to be admitted within the published admission number, the local authority will admit the others as excepted pupils in the terms of the infant class size legislation so as to allow all children from that multiple birth to attend the same school.

Starting school

Primary schools in Thurrock have a single intake into reception. All children whose date of birth falls between **1 September 2012** and **31 August 2013** will be eligible to apply for a full time place in reception at a Thurrock school for **September 2017**.

Local authorities and schools must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. However a child does not have to attend school until he/she reaches "statutory school age", that is, until the beginning of the term after they turn five years old.

If a parent/carer feels that their child is not ready to start school in the September after they turn four they can either request that their child attends part time until they reach statutory school age or, request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same academic year, but not beyond the start of the summer term of the academic year for which a place has been offered.

In addition, parents of **summer-born children*** (those born between 1 April and 31 August) can request for their child to be admitted to reception a year later, that is outside their chronological year group, thereby starting school only once they reach statutory school age. This does not apply to children born in the autumn and spring terms and these children must, by law, be in school full time in the term after they turn five years old (further information is provided below).

** The current legislation that applies to options for summer-born children is currently subject to a review by central government. Any changes will be reflected in the future admission arrangements accordingly.*

Admission of children outside of their chronological year group

Applicants may wish to seek a place outside their child's chronological year group, either starting school later than their peers, or earlier. Decisions about this are taken by the LA in conjunction with the head teacher of the preferred school. They are made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and what is in the best interests of the child concerned.

Applicants applying for their child to start later than other children in their chronological age group, must apply for a school place in accordance with the deadlines that apply for their child's chronological age. If, in liaison with the head teacher, the local authority agrees for the child to start school the following year at a community or voluntary controlled school, the parent/carer is invited to apply the following year. It is not possible to obtain and then defer a place till the following year.

Applicants applying for their child to start earlier than other children in their chronological age group, must initially apply for a school place at the same time that other families are applying for that cohort. If, in liaison with the head teacher, the local authority agrees that the child may begin at a community or voluntary controlled school early, the application will be processed. If it is not agreed that the child starts the application will be cancelled by the LA, and the applicant will be invited to apply again in the following year for the correct cohort.

Applicants must state clearly why they feel admission to a different year group is in the child's best interest and provide what evidence they have to support this.

Children of UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces)

The Local Authority will accept applications in advance of a service family residing in the borough if the application is accompanied by an official government letter declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address for the parents/ carers of the child concerned.

Changing preferences after submitting an application

Parents/carers who have submitted their application either online or by paper application can change their preferences prior to the closing date of **15 January 2017**. If an online application has been submitted but not downloaded, a parent/carer can go back into their account to make amendments and re-submit the application. If the application has been downloaded or a paper application has been received, parent/carers can either email the School Admissions team on school.admissions@thurrock.gov.uk or write to School Admissions, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, RM17 6SL with the changes. All changes must be submitted by the closing date of **15 January 2017** to be considered as on-time applications.

Catchment school/nearest school and using all preferences

The Local Authority strongly recommends that parents express more than one preference and considers using all four possible preferences. These include either their catchment school and/or the nearest school to their home address if there is no catchment area for the school. The reason for these recommendations is that in recent years many schools have been oversubscribed – i.e. more applicants than places –so parents should think about several schools. Go to thurrock.gov.uk/catchment-areas

Travel and travel assistance to schools

All schools should be suitable for all children and most parents will want their child to attend the catchment or nearest school. This should mean that getting to and from school will be easier. The LA encourages sustainable school travel and its sustainable school travel policy can be found on the Thurrock Website. Some children, however, may qualify for free home to school transport, where no free suitable arrangements exist, and they attend the nearest suitable school to their home where a place is available. Details of the LA home to school transport scheme can be found on the Thurrock Council website at thurrock.gov.uk/schooltransport

Offers

Parents/carers who completed a Thurrock on-time application will be able to log into their online account on **18 April 2017** after 12:30am to view their offer, they will also receive an email during the morning of the **18 April 2017** informing them of the offer made. Parent/carers who completed a Thurrock on-time paper application will be sent an offer letter by 2nd class post on **18 April 2017**.

Thurrock will ensure that each Thurrock applicant who cannot be offered a place at one of their preferred schools receives an offer of an alternative school place. The offer will be made at your catchment school (if applicable) if places are still available after all allocations have been made to on-time applicants. If places are not available at your catchment school (if applicable) after allocations you will be offered the next nearest school with spaces measured by shortest walking route from your home address to the school.

Accepting or declining an offer

We strongly recommend that all parents/carers accept the school place offered. Accepting a school place does not prejudice the chances of being offered a higher preference school later on in the process as the child's name will automatically be placed on the waiting list for the schools listed higher than the school offered. Accepting an offer will not affect parent/carers chances at an Independent Appeal Hearing.

You have the right to reject any place offered. However, if you reject an offer it will then become your responsibility to secure a place at an alternative school. Our advice would be to accept an offer you receive until such time as you get a preferred alternative. At that time you can then reject the earlier offer. Accepting an offer does not prejudice your waiting list position or appeals for any higher preference schools.

Waiting lists

In the event that parent/carers are offered a lower preference school Thurrock will automatically place children on a waiting list for higher preference schools. The child's name will automatically remain on the waiting list for the remainder of the academic year when a parent will need to reply to go back on the waiting list for the next academic year.

Waiting lists are prioritised using the same oversubscription criteria to rank applications. Priority cannot be given to children in any other way, for example, based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list.

If you wish your child's name to go on a waiting list for a school that you did not originally apply for, you should contact our admissions service. If you were not offered a place at an out of borough school and you wish to go on the waiting list for that school, you will need to contact the relevant Local Authority to find out how to put your child's name on the list. A child's position on the waiting list can change because of the way the list is prioritised and can go up or down.

Appeals

All admission appeals must be heard by an independent appeal panel in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. Appeals for community and voluntary controlled schools are arranged by Thurrock Council. Appeals for foundation schools, voluntary aided schools and academies are the responsibility of the governing body or academy trust. If you are refused admission to a particular school you will receive further information about how to appeal. You can only appeal for a school for which you have made an application and been refused.

In-year admissions

In-year admissions are admissions that take effect after **1 September 2017**. The Local Authority will continue to administer and co-ordinate in-year applications for schools in Thurrock.

Parents/carers including out of borough residents, requesting a school place in-year in Thurrock can either submit an online application on the Thurrock website or complete a paper in-year transfer application form which is available to download from the Thurrock website thurrock.gov.uk/admissions. Paper applications are also available from Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, RM17 6SL.

Voluntary Aided Denominational, Foundation, Academies and Free Schools that require Supplementary Information Forms to be completed should be sent to the School direct.

Fraud

Where there is evidence to suggest that a fraudulent attempt has been made to secure a school place there will be an investigation. The Local Authority as the co-ordinating body reserves the right to seek evidence from parents, council records, primary schools or any other source deemed appropriate.

Any application found to have been made using false information may be withdrawn by the relevant admission authority and may be subject to legal proceedings. If an application is found to be fraudulent after places are offered, the place offered may be withdrawn in which case a new application will have to be made at a time when the availability of places is likely to be extremely limited.

Data Protection Act Statement

All information will be processed in line with our duties under the Data Protection Act and in line with council policy.

Admissions criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools

The LA is the admissions authority for community maintained and voluntary controlled schools within Thurrock. The criteria outlined below apply **only** to the schools listed at Appendix A. These criteria will be effective for admission to all year groups throughout the academic year **2017/18**.

Applicants with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names a school will be admitted in accordance with the 2014 School Admissions Code, and are outside these arrangements.

For applications to reception in a particular school where there are fewer applications for places than the published admission number for that school all legitimate applications will be met with the offer of a place there.

Where there are more applicants than places, the following oversubscription criteria (admission criteria) will be used for deciding which applications have priority. These criteria are set out below in the order in which they are applied.

1 Looked after children and previously looked after children

Children in public care and all children previously looked after will automatically be given first priority over other categories where priority is claimed on the application and validated by the relevant local authority. Looked after and previously looked after children will be considered to be:

Children who are registered as being in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989(a), e.g. fostered or living in a children's home, at the time an application for a school is made; and

Children who have previously been in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989(a) and who have left that care through adoption, a child arrangements order (in accordance with Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014) or special guardianship order (in accordance with Section 14A of the Children Act 1989).

2 Special reasons

Priority for admission may be given where there are exceptional social, medical or educational reasons for admission to a particular school. These reasons must be supported by evidence from a relevant professional (e.g. a doctor or a social worker) and must be submitted with the application for admission.

The purpose of this criterion is to give priority to pupils with a specific need that can be met specifically at one school rather than another. The threshold for a successful application under this criterion is high and such cases are likely to be rare since all schools are able to offer support and facilities for a wide range of needs.

3 Catchment area siblings

Children whose normal place of residence is in the catchment area of the school at the closing date for applications, and who will have a sibling at the school at the point of admission, in distance order with those living closer having higher priority.

4 Catchment area children

Children whose normal place of residence is in the catchment area at the closing date for applications in distance order with those living closer having higher priority.

5 Non-catchment area siblings

Children whose normal place of residence is outside the catchment area of the school at the closing date for applications and who will have a sibling at the school at the point of admission in distance order with those living closer having higher priority.

6 Non-catchment area children

Children whose normal place of residence is outside the catchment area at the closing date for applications in distance order with those living closer having higher priority.

Distance

The distance measurement used is the shortest straight line distance from home to school. For most schools the straight line distance measurement is taken from the front door of the home address to the main school gate. Addresses within the same apartment block will be regarded as a tie and resolved using the tie breaker.

Siblings

For the purpose of allocating places siblings will be defined as:

- Full siblings living at the same address;
- Step siblings living at the same address;
- Half siblings living at the same address;
- Long-term foster siblings living at the same address at the date of application and admission.

Children attending a school nursery class

Admission to or attendance at a school nursery class does not guarantee or give any priority for admission to the main part of a primary or infant school.

Multiple births

When there are not enough places remaining in a particular criterion to allow all children from a multiple birth to be admitted within the published admission number, the local authority will admit the others as excepted pupils in the terms of the infant class size legislation so as to allow all children from that multiple birth to attend the same school.

Tie breaker

In circumstances where more than one child is entitled to the same place the place will be offered using the random allocation system (a lottery). This process will be administered by the school admissions service and supervised by an independent witness.

Other offers

Applications that are not met with an offer of a preferred school will receive an offer at their catchment school (if applicable) if places are still available after all allocations have been made to on-time applicants. If places are not available at their catchment school (if applicable) after allocations they will be offered the next nearest school with spaces measured by shortest walking route from your home address to the school.

APPENDIX A – Published Admissions Number (PAN) for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools

School name	Published admissions number
Aveley Primary School	60
Bonnygate Primary	60
Bulphan Church of England Primary School	12
Little Thurrock Primary and Nursery	90
Somers Heath Primary	60
Warren Primary School	60

The above information is correct as at 1 September 2016.