Thornhill Primary School



Admissions Policy

Approved by: Resources, Premises & Compliance Committee

Date approved: Full Governing Body, Oct 2026

Date of Last Review: Sept 2026

Next Review Date: Sept 2027

Responsible Person: School Business Manager

Supersedes: Nursery Admissions Policy (Sept 2025)

Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Nursery Admissions 3
3. Reception admissions 5
4. Induction programme for Early Years 5
5. In-year admissions 6
6. Admissions process for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) 7
7. Appeals 7
Appendix 1 - Priority Early Learning – Eligibility criteria 11

1. Introduction

Choosing a school is an important milestone for any family, and we are here to ensure the admissions process is as clear and fair as possible. Each school must publish the criteria they will use to decide which children are to be admitted when there are more applications than places available. The admission criteria must be formally agreed (determined) by the relevant admission authority on an annual basis by 28 February.

Islington Council is the admission authority for Islington's community schools. The admission criteria for Islington community schools are determined by the council's Executive.

The relevant governing body or trust is the admission authority for voluntary-aided, foundation, trust, free schools and academies, and determines the criteria for these schools. Contact the school directly to find out information about their admission criteria.

This policy provides detailed guidance on the different types of admissions, which are broken down into the following sections:

- **Nursery Admissions** – Managed by the school
- **Reception Admissions** – Managed by the Local Authority
- **In-year Admissions** – Applications made to the Local Authority; admissions managed by the school
- **EHCP Placements** – Managed by the Local Authority's SEN team

2. Nursery Admissions

This policy sits alongside the Islington Early Years Admissions Policy and Islington charging policy in outlining the terms and conditions of childcare places in Islington; please refer to both for full details.

Our 3- and 4-year-old nursery provision accepts children on the term after their 3rd birthday. We currently offer both 15 hours and 30 hours of childcare term-time only. For the 2026/27 academic year, the Nursery's Planned Admission Number (PAN) is set at **39 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) places.**

2.1 Making an application

Applications can be made at any time, including before the child's 3rd birthday. There are three terms for admission:

- **Autumn Term** (entry September)
- **Spring Term** (entry January)
- **Summer Term** (entry April).

To be considered for an offer, applications should be made by the end of two terms prior to your desired start date (for example, by the end of the Summer term for a Spring term entry). We strongly encourage you to apply as early as possible and to ensure your information remains current, updating us if your circumstances change.
The admission form can be found on our website within the Admissions page or by clicking here to apply.

2.2 Waiting List

The school office maintains a waiting list for nursery admissions. To join, parents and carers must submit an application online or contact the office if they require assistance. Please note that being on the list does not guarantee a place. The list is reviewed before offer rounds and whenever a space becomes available during term time.

2.3 Visiting the Nursery

If you would like to visit our nursery, please call the main school office on 020 7607 4162 or email admissions@thornhill.islington.sch.uk to book onto one of our school tours.

2.4 Nursery Provision Allocations

Our nursery for 3- and 4-year-olds operates from Mondays to Fridays during the school term. Sessions are offered as either:

Full Time (30 hours per week)

- Mondays to Fridays 8:50am-3:20pm

Part Time (15 hours per week) **as either:**

- **Early Week sessions:** Mondays 8:50am-3:20pm, Tuesdays 8:50am-3:20pm & Wednesdays 8:50am - 11:50am
- **Afternoon session:** Wednesday 12:20 - 3:20pm, Thursdays 8:50am - 3:20pm & Fridays 8:50am - 3:20pm

2.5 Eligibility criteria for free early education and childcare entitlements for 3- and 4-year-olds

Part-Time Places: 15 hours a week during term time.

- All three- and four-year-olds are entitled to 570 hours a year from the term after their third birthday. This equates to 15 hours a week during term time (our part-time places). This universal entitlement can be taken in primary and nursery schools, children's centres, other early years settings and with childminders.

Full-Time Places: 30 hours a week during term time.

- Three- and four-year-olds of eligible working parents are entitled to apply for an additional 15 free hours, making a total of up to 30 hours per week during term-time (our full-time places).
    - children of eligible working families can receive 1140 hours of free early education and childcare entitlements from nine months to four years, from the term after they turn the relevant age.
    - each parent must be working and earning under £100,000 per year net and more than the equivalent of 16 hours at minimum wage on average. Check you are eligible for free childcare if you're working.

- Three- and four-year-olds of parents not eligible for the additional 15 free hours, may be eligible to **pay** for the additional 15 hours making a total of up to 30 hours per week during term-time (our full-time places). For full details of charges, including all the income bands, read the Islington Early Years Charging Policy.

2.6 Apply for Tax-Free Childcare

Parents and carers can get up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each of their children to help with the costs of childcare. This goes up to £1,000 every 3 months if a child is disabled (up to £4,000 a year).

Parents and carers can get Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as 30 hours free childcare if eligible for both. To apply and for more information, please visit Gov.uk Tax-Free Childcare.

2.7 Admissions criteria

If there are not enough places available for the number of applications, the places will be allocated to Islington residents as follows:

1. Places are allocated for children approved through the Priority Early Learning panel please see Appendix 1 for the eligibility criteria for further reference.
2. To children already attending the school on the internal waiting list for a change of days/hours
3. To Islington children of an appropriate age to fill the vacancy to ensure a balance of places across the age range
4. To children with a sibling attending in the same school
5. To Islington children living nearest the school decided by a straight-line measurement
6. If there are still vacancies, places can be allocated to non-Islington residents living nearest the school or children's centre, using a straight-line measurement for children of an appropriate age to fill the vacancy to ensure a balance of places across the age range

3. Reception admissions

Admissions to Reception for are allocated by local authorities. It is important to stress that children who attend the Nursery **do not automatically** receive a place in Reception. Please see the local authorities Primary Admissions Guide for the admissions criteria for community schools.

3.1 Making an application

To apply for a reception place, parents and carers will need to apply online through their Local Authority's website. For Islington residents, please click here for admissions information: Apply for a primary school place.

3.2 Visiting Reception

If you would like to visit our school, please call the main school office on 020 7607 4162 or email admissions@thornhill.islington.sch.uk to book onto one of our school tours.

4. Induction programme for Early Years

We have a structured induction programme for our Nursery and Reception children:

4.1 Meet and Greet Event

Parents and carers are invited to our initial Meet and Greet Event. This provides a welcoming introduction to our Early Years staff and a wonderful opportunity to ask questions and get to know one another. Crucially, it allows your child to gently familiarise themselves with their new setting and the adults who will be supporting them.

4.2 Teddy Bears' Picnic

Held in the Summer term for our main Autumn intake, the Teddy Bears' Picnic is a special opportunity for families to visit the school together. Children will meet their class teacher, play in their actual classroom with new classmates, and enjoy a lovely picnic. At the same time, parents and carers will attend a welcome session with Senior Leaders to learn important information about school life, ask questions, and even sample a taster of our school meals.

For nursery children joining us in the Spring or Summer terms, we offer a dedicated taster session where they can join in with the current class. During this time, parents will still have the valuable opportunity to meet and greet our Senior Leaders.

4.3 Staggered start and personalised settling in period

At Thornhill, we offer staggered starts, meaning only a few children join on any particular day. This approach allows for the careful planning of resources and a gradual introduction to class routines. We understand that every child is unique, so the class teacher will work closely with you to tailor a personalised settling-in plan. This dedicated time enables our staff to get to know each new child individually, ensuring they feel happy, secure, and fully settled into school life.

4.4 Toilet Training

We encourage parents to begin toilet training their children before they begin at school or nursery. However, we recognise that all children develop at their own pace and staff are trained to support children with their personal care needs, including toileting, in a sensitive and respectful manner, following our Intimate Care Policy, which can be found on our website.

We work in partnership with parents and carers to promote independence and ensure each child's needs are met. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns or specific requirements with us before their child starts nursery. Our approach ensures that no child is disadvantaged or excluded due to their personal care needs.

5. In-year admissions

For admissions in Years 1 to 6 and Reception from Spring Term, parents and carers must apply via Islington Council who will screen applications and then the school will manage the process, waiting list, tours, offers, etc.

5.1 Making an application

To apply for an in-year primary place, parents and carers will need to apply online via Islington Council, please click here to apply and for more information: Apply for a school place in-year.

5.2 Visiting the school

If you would like to visit our school, please call the main school office on 020 7607 4162 or email admissions@thornhill.islington.sch.uk to book onto one of our school tours.

5.3 Waiting List

In the event of over-subscription to a particular year group, the following criteria will be applied in the order listed below:

1. **Looked after children and children who have been adopted** (or made subject to child arrangements or special guardianship orders) **immediately after being looked after, including those who appear to have been in state care outside of England.**

2. **Siblings**: A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister or adopted brother or sister whose main residence is at the same address. This criterion will apply to applicants with a sibling living at the same address who is on the roll of the preferred school (Reception Class to Year 6) or co-located Special School at the time of proposed admission in the new academic year.

3. **Exceptional Social/Medical Needs:** The Director of Children's Services, on an individual basis, may give priority to applicants who can demonstrate that admission to a particular school is necessary on the grounds of professionally supported **exceptional medical, social or special educational needs**. Parents must supply details of any such special factors at the time of the original application (together with recent supporting documentation), to enable these factors to be considered.

4. **Distance**: Applicants who live nearest to the preferred school. Nearness to the school will be determined by a computerised mapping system using a **straight**-line distance **measurement.** Routes will be calculated from the home address (as defined by the Land & Property Gazetteer) to the midpoint of the school grounds (as determined by Islington Local Authority).

Distance will be used as a tiebreaker for over-subscription criteria 1- 3. If only one place is available and two or more children live at an equal distance, the child who will be offered the place will be determined by random allocation using a computerised system.

Multiple Births

- **Key Stage 1 & 2**

If only one place is available at the school and the next child who qualifies for a place is one of multiple birth siblings, or has a sibling who is eligible for admission in the same year group, schools will go over their published admission number to support the family as required by the School Admissions Code 2021. These children will be deemed as 'excepted' pupils under KS1 class size legislation.

5.4 Waiting List Cleanse

Waiting lists will be cleared at the end of each term and you must submit a fresh application if you wish to remain on the school's waiting list.

6. Admissions process for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) **must** be admitted to the school named in the plan. This process sits outside the normal admissions process and is administered by the SEND team through formal consultation.

6.1 Mainstream SEND Provision

The Inclusion Team, led by the school's SENDCo, works collaboratively with a range of specialist services, including The Bridge and Samuel Rhodes outreach teams, Richard Cloudesley among others, to provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

6.2 Meet the SENCO

If you would like to visit our school and meet with the SENCO, please call the main school office on 020 7607 4162 or email admissions@thornhill.islington.sch.uk to book onto one of our school tours.

7. Appeals

7.1 Appealing a Reception or In-Year decision

You have the right to appeal if your child is refused a place. To ensure your child can start at the beginning of the academic year if your appeal is successful, submit your appeal by the deadline listed on the Islington Council website.

To view key deadlines and complete the online appeal form, visit the Islington Council Appeal a School Decision page.

The Hearing Process

An independent panel will hear your appeal. The panel will be made up of people who have experience in education and people without personal experience of school management or education provision. The panel's decision is final.

7.2 Nursery Admission Decisions and Formal Reviews

Under statutory guidance, there is no formal right of appeal to an independent appeal panel for nursery allocations, as nursery attendance is non-compulsory and falls outside the statutory appeals process set out in the School Admissions Code.

However, if your child is not offered a nursery place or you wish to query how your application was processed, you may request an internal review.

Internal Review Request

Parents and carers may submit a written request for an internal review within **10 school days** of receiving their allocation decision. Please mark your request **FAO Paul Robinson (Head of School)** or **Jenny Lewis (Executive Head)** and send it via email or post to:

- Email: thornhill@thornhill.islington.sch.uk
- Post: Thornhill Primary School, Thornhill Road, London N1 1HX

The school leadership team will review the application to ensure that the Nursery Admissions Criteria (Section 2.7) and oversubscription rules were applied correctly, transparently, and impartially. Written notification of the decision will be provided within 10 school days of receiving your request.

School Complaints Policy

Following the outcome of the internal review, if you believe the school failed to comply with its published Admissions Policy or that your application was handled unfairly, you may escalate the matter by submitting a formal complaint under the school's Complaints Policy (accessible on our website under Our School Policies).

Waiting List

If a place cannot be allocated following an internal review or complaint process, your child will remain on the Nursery Waiting List (Section 2.2) and will automatically be considered in subsequent offer rounds or whenever a vacancy arises.

7.3 Appealing an EHCP Decision

If a parent or carer disagrees with the Local Authority's decision regarding:

- The school named in Section I of the EHCP,
- A refusal to name Thornhill Primary School as the preferred placement, or
- A refusal to issue or amend an EHCP,

The appeal must be lodged with the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), which is an independent, judicial tribunal.

Process and Key Steps

1. Local Authority Notice: Following the issue of a Final EHCP (or an amended EHCP), the Local Authority will issue a decision letter setting out the parent/carer's statutory right of appeal and key deadlines.
2. Mediation: Before lodging an appeal, parents are offered the opportunity to consider mediation. *Note: If you are appealing only the school named in Section I, contacting a mediation adviser is optional and you do not require a mediation certificate to proceed to Tribunal. If appealing the description of needs (Section B) or provision (Section F) alongside the school name, a mediation certificate is required.*
3. Time Limits: An appeal must be registered with the SEND Tribunal within:
    - 2 calendar months of the date on the Local Authority's final decision letter, or
    - 30 days from the date of the mediation certificate, whichever is later.

4. Tribunal Hearing & Decision: The SEND Tribunal will review evidence from both the family and the Local Authority. If the Tribunal orders the Local Authority to name Thornhill Primary School in the EHCP, the school has a statutory duty to admit the child.

7.4 Independent Advice and Support

Parents and carers seeking free, confidential, and independent guidance regarding school admissions, appeals, or special educational needs (SEND) may contact the following independent organisations:

Coram Children's Legal Centre
Offers free advice on the admissions process and a range of education issues, including bullying, exclusion, SEN and attendance
Email: info@CoramCLC.org.uk
Phone: 0300 330 5485, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Islington SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice and Support Service)
Offers free, confidential, and impartial advice specifically for local families navigating SEND support and EHCP processes.
Email: islingtonSENDIASS@family-action.org.uk
Phone: 020 3031 1580

IPSEA (Independent Special Education Advice)
Provides free legally-based information, advice, and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
Website: www.ipsea.org.uk

8. Monitoring Arrangements

8.1 Review and Statutory Consultation

This policy is reviewed and approved annually by the Resources, Premises and Compliance (RPC) Committee of the Governing Body.

- **Reception and In-Year Admissions:** As Thornhill Primary School is a Local Authority maintained community school, Islington Council is the determined admission authority for Reception and In-Year admissions. Islington Council is responsible for conducting statutory public consultations on primary admission arrangements at least once every 7 years (or whenever changes are proposed) between 1 October and 31 January, in accordance with the School Admissions Code.
- **Nursery Admissions:** The Governing Body is responsible for managing Nursery admissions arrangements. Any proposed changes to Nursery oversubscription criteria or provision structure will be consulted on by the Governing Body prior to determination.

8.2 Internal Monitoring and Data Tracking

To ensure this policy operates fairly and effectively, the School Business Manager and Early Years Lead will maintain and review operational data termly. An annual monitoring report will be presented to the RPC Committee detailing:

- **Application & Offer Numbers:** Total Nursery applications received versus places allocated across the academic year.
- **Provision Trends:** Demand for 15-hour (part-time) versus 30-hour (full-time) places.
- **Intake Transition:** Retention rates of pupils transitioning from Thornhill Nursery into Reception.

- **Reviews and Appeals:** A log of any internal review requests (Section 7.2) or formal complaints regarding the admissions process to inform future policy reviews.

Appendix 1 - Priority Early Learning – Eligibility criteria

Islington Council and partners consider the following children to be most in need of the services (which may include day care and early education) they provide or commission.

An early years multi-agency panel allocates places in priority order as per the list below, with 'A' being the highest.

These children are assessed by the relevant professionals as requiring additional services in order to reach or keep up a reasonable standard of health and/or development and who are:

A - Children who are "Looked After", adopted, subject to a special guardianship order or residence order

A - Children subject to Court Orders or Police Powers of Protection

A - Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan

B - Children who are likely to become 'Looked After'

B - Children whose parents [or primary carers] are experiencing difficulty as a result of drug or alcohol related problems (this could include the child if appropriate)

B - Children living with domestic violence

B - Children whose parents [or primary carers] have a significant mental health illness

B - Children whose parent/s / carer/s are known to the criminal justice system/ in prison or recently released from prison

C - Children of parents who are teenagers

C - Children who have suffered abuse in the past

C - Children who are privately fostered

C - Children who are unaccompanied refugees or asylum seekers

C - Children of parents who are or were previously looked after

D - Children who are homeless and/or are temporarily housed in bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation

D - Children living in overcrowded housing

D - Children whose parents [or primary carers] have a significant physical illness or physical or learning disability that impacts on the wellbeing of the child

D - Children whose parent/carer has caring responsibilities for someone else (e.g. disabled parent/partner)

E - Cognitive and learning (SEND)

E - Social, emotional and behavioural (SEND)

E - Communication and interaction (SEND)

E - Sensory (SEND)

E - Physical (SEND)

E - Medical condition or syndrome (SEND)

F - Children who are siblings of disabled children