

# THRAPSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ADMISSIONS POLICY



**RESPECT, EMPATHY, AMBITION, COLLABORATION, HONESTY**  
*INSPIRING AND ENABLING EVERY CHILD TO SHAPE THEIR WORLD*

**Approved by:** the Full Governing Body on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Last reviewed on:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

**Next review due by:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how to apply** for a place at the school
- Set out the school's **arrangements for allocating places to the pupils** who apply
- Explain **how to appeal** against a decision not to offer your child a place

## 2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

## 3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at the school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

**Looked after children** are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

**Previously looked after children** are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

## 4. How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of three state-funded schools, in rank order.

Applicants to Thrapston Primary School do not need to complete a supplementary information form.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority.

**Please note, pupils already attending our nursery will not transfer automatically into the main school. A separate application must be made for a place in reception.**

## 5. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group.

Requests for admission outside a child's normal age group should be made, in writing, to the Head Teacher.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development

- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The headteacher's views

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

## 6. Allocation of places

### 6.1 Admission number

The school has an agreed admission number of 90 pupils for entry in Reception Year.

### 6.2 Oversubscription criteria

#### **Rule 1: Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order<sup>1</sup> or a special guardianship order<sup>2</sup>)**

Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

These children will be prioritised under Rule 1. Highest priority will also be given to children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

A 'child looked after' is a child who is:

- a) in the care of a local authority; or
- b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989)

All children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under Rule 1.<sup>3</sup> Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified by law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order and the application would be prioritised under Rule 1. Children who were not 'looked after' immediately before being adopted, or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under Rule 1. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under Rule 2.

#### <sup>1</sup> Child arrangements order

Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

#### <sup>2</sup> Special guardianship order

Under 14A of The Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

<sup>3</sup> This definition has been amended in accordance with paragraph 1.7 (footnote 17) of the School Admissions Code that came into force on 19 December 2014.

## **Rule 2: Children who have an EHC Plan that names the school**

Rule 2 applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted. All schools in Northamptonshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However, in a few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school. Few applications under Rule 2 are agreed.

Applications for children adopted but previously looked after abroad will be considered under this rule and accepted if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed. Northamptonshire's 'Virtual School' will be asked to verify all such applications.

All applications are considered individually, but a successful application should include the following:

- a) Evidence that the child was previously cared for by the state abroad because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately and has been subsequently adopted; or
- b) Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs; and/or
- c) Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs.
- d) If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.
- e) For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate. A Rule 2 application will generally not be upheld in cases where more than one school could meet the child's need. In exceptional cases relating to a disability, where more than one school in the county can meet the child's specific needs, a clear and compelling case can be made for the 'nearest' school with the relevant facilities, environment or location. You must clearly explain why attendance at the 'nearest' school with these facilities is essential.

Applications under Rule 2 can only be considered when supported by a recent letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example a doctor, psychologist or police officer. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child. Applications for children previously 'looked after' but not meeting the specific criteria outlined in Rule 1, may be made under this rule.

A panel of Northamptonshire County Council officers, on behalf of the Governing Board of Thrapston Primary School will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule. The evidence must relate specifically to the school applied for under Rule 2 and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs.

## **Rule 3: Sibling Definition of sibling**

A sibling is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after<sup>1</sup> and in every case living permanently<sup>2</sup> in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application.

A sibling must be on the roll of Thrapston Primary School at the time of application. If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

<sup>1</sup> Children previously looked after are those children adopted or with a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. This definition was amended following a determination by the OSA in August 2014.

<sup>2</sup> A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement.

#### **Rule 4: Children of staff**

Children of permanent members of staff who live in the same house as the member of staff, are directly employed by Thrapston Primary School and have been employed at the school for a minimum of two years or have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage, such shortage to be determined by the Governing Board Admissions Committee.

#### **Rule 5: Children who live in the priority area**

If the school is oversubscribed under this rule places will be offered as follows:

- To children living in Thrapston and Denford
- On the basis of distance, with those living nearest the school prioritised.

#### **Rule 6: Children living outside the priority area on the basis of distance, with those living nearest to the school given priority.**

#### **Multiple births**

Thrapston Primary School will admit over the school's published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated the last place at a school.

#### **Tie break**

**When there is a need for a tie break where two different addresses are the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer.**

#### **Home address**

The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application. 'At the time of application' means the closing date for applications. 'Permanent' means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year and/or the family own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months. The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one which the child lives at for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, the address of the parent/carer that claims Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit will be considered as the child's main residence. If a family is not in receipt of Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit.

Alternative documentation will be requested. If a child's residence is in dispute, parents / carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes. If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address, e.g. containing different preferences, the application from the parent in receipt of Child Benefit will be processed if the applications cannot be reconciled.

#### **Fraudulent applications**

Northamptonshire County Council will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses, including referring cases to the Shared Anti-Fraud service for further investigation as necessary.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. Northamptonshire County Council will take action in the following circumstances:

- When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school;

- When a child lives at a different address to the applicant;
- When the applicant does not have parental responsibility;
- When a family move shortly after the closing date of applications when one or more of the following applies:
  - The family has moved to a property from which their application was less likely to be successful;
  - The family has returned to an existing property;
  - The family lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than a year) over the application period;
  - Official/public records show an alternative address at the time of the application
- When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application.
- Parents/carers will need to show that they have relinquished residency ties with their previous property and they and their child(ren) are permanently residing at the address given on the application form.

#### **Home to School distance measurement for the purpose of admissions**

Distances are measured using a Geographical Information System (GIS) by Northamptonshire County Council.

#### **Appeals**

All unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal to an independent panel for a place to be made available for their child. Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Northamptonshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link 'register an appeal'.

#### **In-Year Admissions**

The school is part of Northamptonshire County Council's co-ordinated In-Year admissions scheme. Parents should make an In Year Application online via the Northamptonshire County Council website at <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/school-admissions/Pages/default.aspx> The county council will write to you with the outcome of your application and if you have been unsuccessful, will include registration details to enable you to login and appeal

#### **Admissions out of year group**

At Thrapston Primary School the policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance which states that 'in general, children should be educated in their normal age group'.

#### **Fair Access**

The school participates in the County Council's Fair Access protocol and will admit children under this protocol before those on the continuing interest list and above PAN if necessary.