

### **Admissions Policy for Academic Year 2025 - 2026**

The Governors of St Thomas's Church of England VA School are the Admissions Authority for the school. Following consultation with the Diocesan Board of Education and the Local Authority the Governors have set the published admission number for access to the reception class as 30.

**An application for entry in September 2026 must be made subject to the LA closing date which is 15th January 2026.**

Parents are encouraged to name three schools in order of preference on the application form. The Governors operate a system whereby they consider all preferences equally. So the order of your preferences will not be used in considering your application. (It will only be used if a place is available for your child at more than one school.) Places at this school will be allocated according to this Admissions Policy and the Local Authority's Coordinated Admissions Scheme. A letter informing parents of the success or otherwise of their application will be sent out by the Local Authority in April. Parents of those children not offered a place will be informed of the reason and offered an alternative school by the Local Authority. They will be informed of their right of appeal.

The school will admit any pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan naming the school.

**All children will be admitted unless there are more applicants than places in which case the Governors will make allocations using the following criteria. These are listed in order of priority.**

#### **1. Looked After Children, Previously Looked After Children and Internationally Adopted Looked After Children**

Children who are in Public Care or who have been adopted but were formerly in Public Care. This also includes children who were previously in Public Care outside of England. A child in public care is defined as a child who is looked after by the Local Authority within the meaning of section 22 of the Children's Act 1989. An "Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Child" is a child who appears (to the Admission Authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

#### **2. Physical/Medical Needs**

Children who have physical and/or medical needs who would be disadvantaged by travelling to another school. Written evidence from an appropriate professional would be required for the Governors to consider admission in this category.



### **3. Pupil Premium**

Children eligible for the pupil premium including the Early Years pupil premium and the service premium. Parents/guardians will be required to provide evidence of eligibility and the school may request confirmation from the applicant's home local authority. Children given priority under this criterion fall into the following categories:

- Children eligible to be registered for free school meals and children who have been registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years;
- Children eligible to receive the Early Years premium; and
- Children whose parent(s) are serving in the regular UK armed forces, the children of regular armed forces personnel who were serving in the past 3 years, or children who are in receipt of a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and the War Pensions Scheme because their parent(s) died on active service with the UK armed forces.

### **4. Siblings in Catchment**

Children living within the catchment area having a brother or sister attending our school at the time of their admission giving priority, if necessary, to those children with the youngest siblings. Brothers and sisters are those living at the same address including step, adopted and foster children.

### **5. Catchment Area Attending our Nursery**

Children living in the catchment area who attend our Nursery.

### **6. Catchment Area**

Children living in the catchment area.

### **7. Siblings Outside Catchment**

Children living outside the catchment area who, at the time of their admission, have brothers or sisters attending our school giving priority, if necessary, to those children with the youngest siblings. Brothers and sisters are those living at the same address including step, adopted and foster children.

### **8. Outside Catchment Area Attending our Nursery**

Children living outside the catchment area who attend our Nursery.

### **9. Outside Catchment Area**

Children living outside the catchment area. The catchment area map is available to view in school. The criteria outlined above will be strictly followed there being one exception. If a child has a statement of Special Educational Needs naming St Thomas's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, then irrespective of the criteria the child will be admitted as in these circumstances the Governors have a statutory duty to admit the child concerned.

**Tie Breaker:**

In some categories, where there are more applicants than places available, age will act as a determining factor but unless specified it will be distance. The distance is measured from the centre of the child's address to a common point on the school site as determined by the Local Authority. The Governors will use the Local Authority's computerised Geographical Information System (GIS) to ensure consistency of measurement. The closest addresses will have priority.

**Address of Pupil:**

The address on the application form must be the current one at the time of application. Where a child can live at more than one address the home address is to be the one where the child sleeps and thus wakes up for all or the majority of the school week. Where there is any doubt the governors reserve the right to verify the information provided by the parent(s), for example, through the GP or the child benefit address.

**In Year Admissions.**

In year admissions are those which occur outside the "normal" admission time. If you wish your child to attend St Thomas's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, you should visit our school and admission details will be provided if we have a vacancy in the relevant year. If your child is refused a place you will be informed of your right to appeal.

**Fraudulent applications:**

If the Governors of St Thomas's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School discover that a child has been awarded a place as a result of an intentionally misleading application from a parent, for example, an incorrect address and as a result it effectively denies a place to a child with a stronger claim then the Governors will withdraw the offer of a place. The Governors will reconsider the application and the right of appeal offered if a place is refused.

**Deferred Admission:**

For children beginning School following their fourth birthday admission is normally in September. However, if you wish entry can be deferred until later in the year or until the term in which your

child reaches compulsory school age. For example, if your child's fifth birthday is between September and December then, if you wish, admission may be deferred until the beginning of the Spring Term. If it is between January and April admission may be deferred until the beginning of the Summer Term. You can also request part time education until the term in which your child reaches compulsory school age. The Governors recommend that in your child's interests full time education is deferred no later than the start of the Spring Term.

**Appeals Procedure:**

If the Governors are unable to offer your child a place because of over subscription, you as a parent have a right of appeal under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by the Education Act 2002 and subsequent legislation.

You should notify the Clerk to the Governors of St Thomas's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School within at least 20 school days from the date of the notification that their application was unsuccessful to submit their appeal. As a parent you will have an opportunity to submit your case to an independent (of the Governors) appeals panel. You must set out your grounds for the appeal in writing.

Appeals against decisions made in the 'normal admissions round' must then be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for submitting appeals. For in year applications, appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the deadline for submitting appeals.

For applications that were made by the closing date, admission authorities will usually try to ensure that appeals are heard before the end of the summer term, but there are sometimes exceptions to this.

This right of appeal does not prevent you from making an appeal in respect of any other school. The Independent Appeal will be organised on behalf of the Governors by the Local Authority Legal and Democratic Services Unit at Carlisle.

**Waiting List:**

Those children who are not offered a place may, if the parents so wish, be placed on a waiting list. The names will be placed on the list in the order of the admissions criteria. Late applicants will be slotted into the list according to the admissions criteria. It is thus possible for a child recently arrived in the area to have a higher priority than a child who has been on the waiting list for some time. Irrespective of whether an appeal has been submitted, if a place becomes available it will be offered



to the child at the top of the list. The waiting list will remain open for the whole of the first term in the year to which it relates.

### **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 with a single school teacher. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The excepted children are:

- a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with Education, Health and Care Plans specifying the school;
- b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions 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 admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

### **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents may request that their child is admitted to a year group outside their normal age range, for instance where the child is gifted or talented or where a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting on their schooling. All such requests will be considered on their merits and either agreed or refused, on that basis. If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group.

The process for requesting such an admission is as follows.

With the application, parents should request that the child is admitted to another year group (stating which one), and the reasons for that request. Parents should submit any evidence in support of their case with the application, for instance from a medical practitioner, Headteacher etc. Some of the evidence a parent might submit could include:

- 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; and
- whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

The school will consider each case on its merits, taking into account the individual circumstances of the request and the child's best interests. We will also ensure the parent is aware of whether the request for admission out of age group has been agreed before final offers are made, and the reason for any refusal. Requests for admission out of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time.

**Nursery:**

If you have a child in our Nursery Class, then you must make a separate application for the Reception Class. A place in our Nursery Class does not guarantee a place in our Reception Class.