

Admissions Policy

St. Thomas' Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School welcomes children from all backgrounds, faiths and no faith. The Governors of the School are committed to developing an inclusive school that reflects the diversity of the local community. Admission to the school is not dependent on being a member of a particular faith community.

As well as being an inclusive neighbourhood school, as a Church school St. Thomas' has a distinctive character and ethos that reflects the teachings of Jesus Christ and Christian values. We ask all parents applying for a place here to respect this ethos and its importance to the school community. We hope that all children who come to the school will be able to participate (as appropriate) in the religious life of the school (including collective worship and religious education (**see note 5**)). This does not affect the right of parents who are not Christians to apply for a place. Indeed, through our commitment to inclusivity, we actively welcome families of other faith and no faith.

Responsibilities for admission to this Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School sit with its Governing Body. A maximum of 30 children are accepted into Reception Class in September of the academic year in which they attain their fifth birthday.

The Governing Body is required to abide by the maximum limits for infant classes (5, 6 and 7 year olds) i.e., 30 pupils per class.

The Governors would wish to accept all children whose parents seek admission on their behalf. But if the number of applications for the Reception year exceed the places available, pupils will be given preference according to the following criteria, which in order of priority are:-

1. All children who are looked after or in the care of the local authority or who are provided with accommodation by that authority and children who ceased to be in care because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order).
2. Children, at least one of whose parents (**see note 2**) is a faithful and regular worshipper (**see note 3**) at St. Thomas' Church, Kidsgrove.
3. Children, at least one of whose parents (**see note 2**) is a, faithful and regular worshipper (**see note 3**) at a Christian church in Kidsgrove (belonging to Churches together in England) and who also live (**see note 1**) within the Ecclesiastical Parish of Kidsgrove. (A map of the parish is available at school.)
4. Children who have an elder sibling (**see note 4**) attending the school and who will still be attending at the proposed admission date.
5. Children living (**see note 1**) in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Kidsgrove or in the LEA designated catchment area for the school. (A map of the parish is available at school.)
6. Children, at least one of whose parents (**see note 2**) is a, faithful and regular worshipper (**see note 3**) at a Christian Church (belonging to Churches Together in England) who live (**see note 1**) outside the Ecclesiastical Parish of Kidsgrove. (A map of the parish is available at school.)
7. Any other children.
8. TIE-BREAKER: If there is over subscription within a category listed above, the Governors will give priority to children living (**see note 1**) closest to the school by a straight line measurement from the school gate to the home address as measured by the Local Authority's Geographical Information System. The distance is measured in miles and calculated using Ordnance Survey (OS) data from an applicant's home address to the main front gate of the school. The coordinates of an applicant's home address are determined and provided by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and OS Address Point data.

Note 1 The home address of a pupil is considered to be the permanent residence of a child. The address must be the child's only or main residence for the majority of the school week. Documentary evidence may be required. Where care is split equally between mother and father, parents must name which address is to be used for allocating a school place.

Note 2 For admission purposes a parent is defined as the 'Prime Carer'.

Note 3 A "Faithful and regular worshipper" of a church community is defined as worshipping at least twice per month for a period of one year prior to application.

Parents APPLYING FOR A PLACE ON FAITH GROUNDS MUST COMPLETE THE Supplementary Information Form (which can be obtained from the School) and return this form direct to the School, signed by an appropriate faith leader.

Note 4 For admission purposes 'Sibling' refers to a brother or sister living at the same address and either: have one or both natural parents in common; are related by a parents marriage; are adopted or fostered by a common parent or are unrelated children who live at the same address, whose parents live as partners.

Note 5 Parents have a statutory right of withdrawal from Collective Worship and Religious Education. Nevertheless, we hope that in choosing a Church of England school, they will wish to support the school's ethos.

Note 6 Children with statements of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plan whose statement specifically names St Thomas CE(VA) Primary School must be admitted.

Note 7 When meeting the requirements of infant class size legislation will result in separation of twins or siblings from multiple births, careful consideration will be given to exceeding the published admission number.

Late Applications - Applications received after the closing date will only be considered alongside those received by the closing date under the following circumstances:

- The family were unable to complete an application form before the closing date because they moved into the area after the issue of application forms.
or
- The family were unable to comply with the admissions timetable because of exceptional circumstances which prevented the application arriving on time - the circumstances must be given in writing and attached to the application form.

Repeat Applications - Unless there are significant and material changes in the circumstances of a parent's application for their child, or of the school, the governors will not consider a repeat application in the same academic year.

Applications to join the school outside the normal age of admission should be made to the local authority who will need to consult with the governing body. The above criteria will be applied if casual vacancies arise during the school year and there are more applicants than places.

Appeals - Parents who are not offered a place for their child are entitled to appeal to an independent committee. Parents wishing to appeal should do so in writing, to the Clerk of Appeal Committee (care of the School). The letter should be sent within a fortnight from the notification of the decision not to admit.

Should some appeals be unsuccessful, the governing body will not consider further applications from those parents within the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in their circumstances

Waiting Lists – Unsuccessful applicants will be automatically placed on a waiting list that will operate until the end of the Autumn term. Where refusals have been made due to infant class size legislation, the waiting list will normally be kept open until the cohort leaves Year 2.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out above. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Deferred Entry to Reception Class

The governors will consider requests from parents to retain a place in the school where the parents wish to defer their child's entry to Reception Class until later in the same academic year when it appears to be in the

best interest of the child. Where it is possible to offer a place, deferral will be supported if the request is made at the normal time of application.

Governors will also consider requests from parents for their child to attend Reception class on a part-time until they reach compulsory school age.

Admission Outside of the Normal Age Group

Parents may seek to apply for their child's admission to school outside of their normal age group, for example if the child is exceptionally gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of summer born children may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted outside of their normal age group to Reception rather than Year 1.

These parents will need to make an application alongside children applying at the normal age which should explain why it is in the child's best interest to be admitted outside of their normal age which may include information such as professional evidence as to why this is the case and why an exception should be made in the case of the child. A decision as to whether this is an appropriate course of action will be made by the Governing Body who will take into account the circumstances of the case and views of the headteacher. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year group.

November 2015