

# TOWER HAMLETS CHILDREN SCHOOLS and FAMILIES

## Proposed Admissions Arrangements for Community Nursery Schools and Classes

### 2015/16



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## 1. Introduction

Nursery education is provided in a range of settings in Tower Hamlets. This policy is for nursery education provided in community schools. Children will normally attend either a nursery school or a nursery class attached to a primary school. Some schools provide nursery education in an Early Years Unit attached to their school (EYU). The EYUs accept children aged from three to five years inclusive. All of these schools offer a mixture of part time places (either a morning or an afternoon); and full time places.

In this policy the term 'school' refers to a nursery school, a nursery class attached to a primary school or a school with an EYU.

## 2. Nursery Entitlement

All children aged three and four are entitled to 15 hours a week free nursery education during school term times (38 weeks a year), from the term following their third birthday.

Parents considering sending their child to a playgroup as well as a nursery class may wish to think about what impact this would have on their child and how they would cope with the two environments. The adjustment is often very demanding and confusing for children of this age and much of the benefit from either setting could be lost. Once children take up a nursery place, it is in their interests to remain at that school until they have to move on. Children take at least a term to settle and can find it very upsetting to move at this stage. Transfers are only considered if a family has moved from the area or on exceptional grounds.

## 3. Age of Admission to a Nursery School/Class

Parents who would like a nursery place for their child should get in touch with the preferred school when the child reaches the age of two.

The actual age at which a child can start will depend on the number of places available but will not be before the term after they turn three. In exceptional circumstances a child may start in the term they turn three but this will need agreement from the Local Authority.

## 4. Applying for a Place

Applications can be made by parents or carers with parental responsibilities who are residents of Tower Hamlets and professionals with parents' agreement. Application forms are available from schools, nurseries and children centres.

The closing date for applications is **[date to be determined after consultation is complete]** and the date on which families are sent notification of the outcome is **[date to be determined after consultation is complete]**.

Further information on the nursery schools and classes and how to apply for a place is set out in the Local Authority's school admissions booklet, 'Starting School in Tower Hamlets'.

## 5. How Decisions are Made

Individual schools will make decisions on applications for nursery places in accordance with the criteria and arrangements set out below. Children who attend a school's nursery class do not have priority for admission to the reception year as decisions on primary school admissions are taken separately.

## 6. Oversubscription Criteria

If a school receives more nursery applications than places available the decision on whether or not a place can be offered will be made in accordance with the admission criteria set out in priority order below:

- 1) Children looked after by the local authority including adopted children who were previously looked after and children who leave care under a special guardianship or residence order;
- 2) Children for whom it is deemed there is strong educational, medical or social reason to attend the school applied to (**See Note 1**);
- 3) Children living within the catchment area who have a sibling attending the school (including the school of separate infants and junior schools) and who will continue to do so on the date of admission (**See note 2**);
- 4) Children who live within the catchment area of the school; (**See notes 3 and 5**);
- 5) Children living outside of the catchment area of the school applied to. (**See note 3**);

In the event of oversubscription within categories 3 and 4 and 5, priority will be given to children for whom the school applied for is their nearest school within the catchment area; and then by shortest walking distance.

In the event of oversubscription within category 5, priority will be given to children who live nearest to the school by the shortest walking distance.

**Note 1:** can include the parents', carers' or other family members' medical conditions and the family's social needs. Parents must complete the relevant section on the application form and attach medical and/or social reports from a suitable professional (e.g. a doctor or social worker) to support the application.

**Note 2:** includes the sibling of child who does not live within the school's catchment area, but who was admitted before the start of the 2015/16 school year. For this purpose "sibling" means a whole, half or step-brother or step-sister resident at the same address.

**Note 3:** A digitised Ordnance Survey map is used to measure the distance from the home address to the school's designated official entrance.

**Note 4:** Private, independent and VA nurseries have their own admission policy.

**Note 5:** Tie- Break - If a school receives more applications for children in the catchment area than there are places available, the school must decide who to offer places to. The 'tie-break' used gives priority to children who apply to their nearest school and then to those who live the shortest walking distance from the school. This reduces the possibility of a family having to undertake an unreasonable journey to a school and provides equal opportunity for families living in parts of the borough where there are a limited number of schools.

## 7. Catchment Area

The school catchment area is the defined area in which a school is located. It is generally bounded by major roads and/or railway/canal. The catchment area for each Tower Hamlets Community school is defined by the Local Authority and is designed to ensure that each address in the borough falls into the catchment area of local school. Details of the catchment areas for community schools and the schools within the catchment area for a particular address can be viewed on the Local Authority's website: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/equalchance>.

## 8. Full and Part-Time Places

Once places are offered, children are then allocated full-time or part-time places. This is done in accordance to the following priorities:

<b>Priority 1</b>	Children with Special Educational Needs
<b>Priority 2</b>	Children looked after by the Local Authority including adopted children who were previously looked after and children who leave care under a special guardianship or residence order.
<b>Priority 3</b>	Children for whom it is deemed there is strong medical or social reason.
<b>Priority 4</b>	Children of working parents or parents who are studying.

It is important that the Common Application Form is completed and all relevant information is provided to support your child's application. The information on the form will not only determine admission to the school; it will also help decide whether your child is offered a full-time or part-time place.

## 9. Late Applications

Applications received after the closing date will be treated as late applications unless there is evidence to show that the application or amendment could not reasonably have been made on time. A new preference or change in the order of preferences will not be accepted after the closing date unless the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional. Late applications will be given a lower priority and will be dealt with after all on time applications in the first round of offers education **[date to be determined after consultation is complete]** Where a school is oversubscribed late applications will be refused and placed on the waiting list in accordance with the admission criteria.

Where the Local Authority has determined there are exceptional circumstances for the late submission of an application it will be treated as 'on time' and, where possible, considered alongside existing applications.

## 10. Waiting List

Schools will hold waiting lists until the end of the school year and continue to allocate places from these lists if spaces become available. Applicants will be ranked on these waiting lists in priority order, according to the above criteria. Schools will not maintain waiting lists beyond the end of the school year, but parents will have the opportunity to register their continued interest in a place.

## 11. Appeals

Parents do not have the right of appeal against the decision to refuse a place for their child at a nursery school, nursery class or nursery places at an Early Years Unit.

## 12. Twins and Multiple Births

For applications made in the normal admission round, if the last child to be offered a place is a twin and their sibling cannot be offered initially, the school will ensure both twins are offered a place. In the case of triplets or other multiple births, if the majority of children can be offered a place initially, the school will offer places to the remaining children. For example, if two triplets can be offered a place, the remaining child will also receive an offer of a place.

