**Our Lady and St Thomas Catholic Primary School**

**Nursery Admissions Policy 2025-2026**

This is a summary of Our Lady and St Thomas Catholic Primary School’s principles and criteria, in line with other schools in the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust, for the admission of children to nursery.

General Principles:

• There is no catchment area for places in our nursery.

• Normally all children (regardless of race, gender, religious belief or affiliation, social or cultural background) should have equal access to places in our nursery irrespective of whether or not they are offered a place in the reception classes of our school for the period of statutory education, subject to appropriate resources being available if a child has identified special needs. However, we will give higher preference to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Looked After Children (LAC).

• The offer of a place in our nursery unit does not guarantee a school place for the period of statutory education.

• Parents may apply for a nursery place from the beginning of the school year (1st September to 31st August) in which the child has their second birthday.

• A child is ‘eligible for a free part-time nursery education place in the term after their third birthday’ subject to the availability of places.

• Each child is entitled to a minimum of 15 hours free early years education per week from the term following their third birthday. This entitlement can be delivered flexibly by the nursery (where it is able to do so and in response to parental demand).

Parents should be aware that in 2017 the Government has increased free early education from 15 to 30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year for some 3- and 4-year-old children. Therefore, this Nursery Admission Policy will be reviewed yearly. At the time of writing, all Nursery aged children are eligible for 15 hours free Nursery provision. Some may be eligible for 30 hours, provided you, as parents, fulfil certain criteria as listed below:

• Both parents must be working – or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family

• Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage

• Each parent must have an annual income of less than £100,000

• You live in England

Parents can find out more and register for 30 hours provision at: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

• Children will be admitted according to the published admissions criteria for our nursery.

However, it may not be possible to offer your child a place at our nursery if we receive more applications than we have places.

Where this happens, places will be allocated according to the following criteria:

(i) Children in Need: As defined by the Children Act 1989 i.e. those who are unlikely to achieve or maintain or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development or a child / children whose health or development would be further impaired without the provision. This includes children in public care (LAC). Applications under this criterion would need to be supported by an appropriate professional stating that attendance in our nursery is essential.

(ii) Medical Reasons: A child(ren) who is/are attending the Child Development Clinic and/or for whom parents can supply written support of their circumstances.

(iii) 4-year olds before 3-year olds

(iv) Family Links: A child who has a brother or sister already attending our nursery or school and who are expected to be on the roll at the time of admission.

Children have a family link if:

• They are half or full brother or sister

• They are adoptive brother or sister

• Their Carers are married/co-habiting and children live together in the same household.

• They are children of the same household.

(v) Distance: Children who live nearest the preferred school measured by the shortest walking route judged to be safe\*. This will be based on the parental address. (\*a pathway that is lit at regular intervals and paved/tarmac). If there were to be 2 children with an equal distance than the elder child would be offered the place.

**Offer of a Nursery Place**

* When offered a nursery place, you will have 21 working days in which to accept or refuse the place offered. The nursery will then look to withdraw the offer. Should a vacancy arise then places will be offered according to the oversubscription criteria.
* There is no appeals process for nursery places as it is not statutory education. The offer of a place in our nursery does not guarantee a place in our school for the period of statutory education.