

ADMISSIONS POLICY

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This Policy was updated in September 2024.
The Policy will be reviewed and updated annually.
Trustee with Responsibility: Charlie Clare Leadership and Management Team.

The Treehouse School

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Admissions Policy

General Information

The Treehouse School was established for children and families who seek an alternative primary education, in Cholsey. Before applying for a place, it is essential that prospective parents/carers and their children are fully aware of the school's aims and approach so that they understand the benefits and the demands it will place on them, and how it differs from other educational provision. Children thrive when parents/carers are philosophically aligned with the school's approaches and values.

The school welcomes primary aged children from all backgrounds and cultures. This includes children with special educational needs and/or a disability given the limitations of the premises, funding, and the dynamics of the whole school.

The Treehouse is a small, non fee-paying school, supported by a Charitable Trust, which relies totally on fundraising, grants and sponsorship to keep it running. Day to day parental/carer support is key to the successful running of the school. Parents/carers will be asked to help with a range of tasks such as cooking, cleaning, maintenance and upkeep of the premises; to play an active role in providing resources; to support fundraising events and initiatives; and to support the school's values, for example, ensuring their children walk/cycle to school.

Caring and respectful relationships between children, parents, carers, teachers, volunteers and Trustees have proved essential in enabling The Treehouse to develop and prosper, enjoying a high level of support from members of the local community. Therefore, families wishing to join the school will be expected to help build and maintain effective relationships within and beyond the school community.

Equal Treatment

Our aim is to encourage applications from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. The Treehouse is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's age, ability/disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

Admissions Procedure

Should places become available at The Treehouse, parents/carers wishing to apply for a place should:

- Make contact with Director Andrea Turner or Deputy Director Laura Lee (office@thetreehouseschool.org.uk Tel: 01491 652000) to arrange a school visit.
- Read The Treehouse School's website which includes information about all aspects of the school's practice including the admissions policy.
- Complete and return the application form (see Appendix 2) which provides parents with the opportunity to show their level of interest in the school and commitment to its aims and approach. Please note this will not guarantee a place for your child, neither does it commit you to enrolling.

As part of the admissions process, you will be invited to meet The Director of Teaching and Learning, the Director and/or Deputy Director to discuss your application in more depth prior to the Trustees' Admissions Panel meeting.

- Members of the Trustees' Admissions Panel will consider the application and make a decision about the request in line with the admissions policy and school transport plan.

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- Once the Trustees have reached a decision, parents will be informed. If a place is offered, parents will be sent an information pack. The school will contact the parents/carers to discuss a transition plan and starting date; a home visit may also be arranged. In the event of families moving out of the village, children already on roll may continue to attend if the school's transport policy can still be adhered to.

Criteria for admission

- Children between 5 and 11 years of age;
- Children living in Cholsey or the surrounding area, enabling applicants to adhere to our transport plan;
- Children with a sibling or siblings already in the school, providing their needs can be met.
- Committed and supportive families who are aligned with our educational ethos and approach.

Additional Factors

When the school is over or undersubscribed, other factors taking into account the best interests of all the pupils, in addition to those listed above, may need to be given due consideration by the Trustees' Admissions Panel. Priority will be given to children/grandchildren of staff who have worked at The Treehouse for two years or more. The Admissions Panel has the right, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, to look at exceptional cases, taking into consideration the needs and interests of the prospective applicants as well as those of the school. Their decision will be final and they are not obliged to give reasons for refusing or granting entry to any particular applicant.

General Information

Families need to be aware that once their children are on roll, there are some financial implications and demands on their time that should be given consideration. All children are expected to have a healthy school lunch, freshly cooked daily on the premises. An annual cost of £600, payable in six equal instalments covers food, trips, treats, visitors, use of minibus and educational workshops.

Parental Responsibilities

We are committed to providing an alternative education for children without charging fees; to that end, we need parents and relatives to undertake roles which enable us to achieve this.

To fully support our work and your child's experience at The Treehouse, parental involvement is essential. Parents will be expected to:

- Be a volunteer to run our General Stall held weekly at Wallingford Local Producers' Market. Those who are unable to do so, are expected to find a replacement or contribute towards paying someone else to do it.
- Clean the school, on a rota basis. (This can also be paid for if preferred).
- Help with gardening.
- Fundraise - which includes organising and attending events.
- In addition, a specific designated role will be assigned to you depending on your skills and experience.
- Parents are required to attend at least two annual focus child meetings.
- Work together with us to achieve higher levels of well-being and involvement for your child.
- Spend some time in school at least once a year.
- Attend fireside chats and information sessions about the school.

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Terms and Conditions

The school relies on the active support of parents/carers and cannot continue without it. Therefore, any parents/carers who are not fulfilling these responsibilities will be asked to meet with the Trustees and Directors to discuss arrangements for the future. If a solution cannot be found, then parents/carers may be given a term's notice to find another school for their child. (6 terms being considered to make up the academic year).

Once a child has been offered a place at the Treehouse, the charity has made a commitment to the child. This commitment is financial as well as professional, in that provision is made for that child both physically and educationally. We envisage that having made a commitment to the school; the vast majority of children would spend their whole primary education at the Treehouse. However, we understand that circumstances do change and that there may be rare occasions when parents/carers need to withdraw their children before the end of Year 6. This has a significant financial impact on the school and the other pupils and therefore, due to our charitable status, we will require 1 term's notice should you wish to remove your child. If your child is withdrawn without a term's notice, The Trustees would require parents to make a financial contribution towards the costs of their child's education for a term. This will be a fee of £1000, which is based on the average price for a term's education at other local independent schools (£6500) and the State school expenditure of £5000 a year per child in primary education.

By signing this policy, you agree to adhere to its contents.

Signed:

Date:

This policy takes account of the following documents and guidance:

- The Independent School Standards January 2019
- Education Act 2002 and Education and Inspection Act 2006
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S1 2003/1910
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998

The Treehouse School Transport Plan

The past 20 years have seen major changes in school travel. The proportion of cars on the school run has almost doubled, causing major problems around schools. The decline in walking to school has coincided with a rise in childhood obesity. Children who walk and cycle regularly are less at risk from heart disease, stroke, diabetes and osteoporosis when they are older, making moderate exercise vital as an integral part of a child's day. A walk or cycle to and from school is an excellent way to guard against excess weight and improve general health.

The Treehouse School has an ethos of healthy and sustainable living at its core. Thus, the overall aim of The Treehouse School's Travel Plan is to encourage children and their parents to make healthy, environmentally friendly travel choices. Children of families living within the village who wish to send them to The Treehouse will be expected to walk or cycle to school every day. Children living further afield will be encouraged to use environmentally friendly vehicles, car share or a 'park and stride' scheme whereby parents park at a given location and walk with their child from there. Car parking spaces at the school will be purposely limited to one disabled space. Further parking facilities for staff, deliveries and visitors to the school are limited to on-street parking in Cross Road. The School premises will include on-site cycle and mini-scooter storage facilities. A weekly walking bus, sustainable travel and road safety will be incorporated into the curriculum. Situated close to the village centre, the school will make good use of public transport to access facilities further afield. Staff at the school will either walk to the premises or, where this is not possible, will park off site.

Changing the patterns of travel to and from school is an enormous undertaking but is an area to which The Treehouse Trust is committed. The plan below aims to combat increasing car use on the school run, reduce congestion within the village, and contribute to improving children's health.

Action	When	Rationale
Parents required to agree to the expectations within the travel plan when registering for a place.	Before the child joins the school.	To promote an ethos that fosters and encourages walking and cycling as the preferred options.
All parents to identify a safe walking or cycle route to school with their child.	Before the child joins the school.	Reduce accidents and danger on the journey to school.
Provide pedestrian and cycle access to the school; bicycles and scooters will not be ridden on site.	From first day.	Safety on arrival at the school gate.

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Staff member/parent to meet children/parents at the school gate.	From first day.	To continually monitor/review systems that have been put into place.
Provide secure cycle and scooter storage.	From first day.	To promote an ethos that fosters and encourages cycling.
Action	When	Rationale
Set up a 'park and stride' /car share scheme (see below) for parents who live outside the village/need to use their car.	From first day.	Ease congestion in the village and on the Wallingford Road.
Implement restrictions on use of cars at and around the school.	From first day.	Ease congestion on the Wallingford Road.
Provide pedestrian and cycle training as part of the curriculum for all children.	From first day.	Equip children with good road awareness, respect for other pedestrians and safety skills.
Implement sustainable travel and road safety curriculum opportunities.	Ongoing.	Encourage children and their parents to make healthy, environmentally friendly travel choices.
Use Public Transport	When appropriate and affordable.	Offer access to a greater range of educational opportunities.
Review The Treehouse Travel Plan.	In line with the Admissions Policy.	Involve children, parents and staff in decisions that affect them.

Car Sharing

Car sharers should note that all children under 12 years old and under 150 cm tall must use child restraints if they are fitted in a vehicle and cars should not carry more children than there are child restraints or adult seat belts. Insurance policies may also restrict the number of children that may be carried. So, car sharing parents need to ensure that suitable child restraints are available for the children they carry.

Park and Stride

On occasions when driving to the school proves essential, parents are asked to park locally and walk to the school from there.

Public Transport

Buses

The 136 bus departs from Cholsey to Wallingford/Oxford every hour from 9.00 am – 6.00 pm. The nearest bus stop is situated on Wallingford Road, 240m from number 37 Wallingford Road.

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Trains

Cholsey railway station is situated on Station Road, 890 m (0.5 mile) from number 37. Trains run frequently to Reading, London, Oxford and Bristol.

Implementation and Monitoring

Prospective parents will be fully informed about the contents of the school's Travel Plan before applying for a place at the school. If their child/children are offered a place at the school, they will be required to agree that wherever possible their child/children will walk or cycle to school.

The Travel Plan has been implemented since the school opened in 2012 and is constantly under review by the Director of Teaching and Learning; she will be responsible for any actions required to ensure the Travel Plan is complied with. The Director of Teaching and Learning and the Treehouse Trustees will be responsible for reviewing the Travel Plan.

The Treehouse School Application Form

Child's full name:

Child's date of birth:

Please tell us anything that you think we should know about your child (strengths, interests, needs, health). Continue overleaf if necessary.

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Why are you considering The Treehouse School and what do you think the Treehouse has to offer your child?

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What is your main goal for your child should they be offered a place?

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After your visit, what was your impression of The Treehouse School?

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Parents are key to the day to day running of The Treehouse as you will be aware from the demands listed above. Please outline the contributions you are able to make to the school above and beyond this.

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Please tell us how you envisage travelling to school.

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Parents/carers name/s:

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Postal Address:

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Child's current school and year group:

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Telephone numbers:

Home:

Mobile:

Email address:

Signature of parent(s):

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Date: