

Terms and Conditions for
Music
SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

**Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service
(THAMES)**

September 2026 to July 2027



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Service Level Agreement

Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service (THAMES)

Parties

This agreement is made between the Headteacher/Governing Body of the school (the client) and the Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service (the service provider).

It is not made with any individual teacher employed by the service.

Duration

This agreement will run from 1st September 2026 to 31st July 2027.

Intent

The intent is to regulate dealings between the parties by school and lay out the respective obligations relating to performance and payment for services.

Service Overview

THAMES is part of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) and sits within the Children's Services Directorate (Commissioning & Youth). It supports arts and music for all schools in Tower Hamlets and the City of London. The aims of THAMES are to:

- Enhance pupil attainment and achievement through the arts.
- Widen access to arts and music for all young people.
- Encourage and develop all pupils' potential, enjoyment and creativity through participation in the arts.
- Develop pupils' confidence, motivation, self discipline and self awareness.
- Provide arts and music support for schools, teachers and pupils.

THAMES provides a wide range of charged activities for schools.

a) Whole class instrumental and vocal teaching

Whole class/Half class instrumental teaching at KS1 and 2 offers pupils first access to learning an instrument whilst supporting whole school improvement. Class teachers and/or teaching assistants are encouraged to learn alongside the pupils. Lessons are normally taught in units of 30 minutes minimum for KS1. Lessons are normally taught in units of 45 minutes minimum for KS2. Depending on the provision, schools may be charged an additional 30 minutes per tutor per week to allow for tutors' planning time, setting up and packing away time. Depending on the instrument, one or two THAMES tutors are recommended to deliver this work.

b) Small group instrumental and vocal tuition

A range of orchestral instruments, world music instruments, and contemporary instruments are taught. Singing teaching is also offered. The group size and duration of the lessons will be determined by THAMES in partnership with the school. Lessons are recommended to be taught in units of 30 minutes minimum.

c) Ensemble tuition

THAMES can provide experienced tutors to help schools develop music-making opportunities for pupils and by providing advice and leadership with ensembles. This could range from directing bands, orchestras, vocal groups, or world music groups such as steel pans, djembe and samba. This is negotiated individually with each school.

d) Curriculum music teaching

It is the school's responsibility to ensure that all pupils are engaged in practical music-making to ensure progression and continuity in the National Curriculum and in accordance with the National Plan for Music Education. THAMES will work with schools to help to achieve this through a School Music Development Plan. THAMES may also be able to provide curriculum music tutors through the SLA, subject to availability.

e) Early Years Music

THAMES can provide a range of options for EYFS and Nursery Music, including bespoke projects.

f) Advisory Support for Schools

THAMES can provide advice on music and arts education and school improvement. This is negotiated individually with each school.

To further support schools there is a £110 per term Service Charge which includes:

- Free in-service training
- Free instrument loan service
- Instrumental playing days
- Singing days
- An Awards programme for children with musical talent and commitment (KS2)
- Access to a range of live concerts and performances
- A Saturday Music Centre (There is a termly charge to pupils who attend this centre, with a remissions policy in place)
- A twilight Wednesday Music Centre (There is a termly charge to pupils who attend this centre, with a remissions policy in place)
- An inclusive ensemble for disabled and non-disabled young musicians
- A range of Children's/Youth Choirs and Ensembles designed to offer advanced pupils the chance to play or sing in top quality music ensembles
- Support for resources, accommodation and teacher recruitment

In addition, THAMES offers a range of arts/music projects and workshops for schools. Some of these projects are free but some may incur a small charge and are therefore not the subject of this agreement.

Number of Lessons in the Academic Year

All teaching sessions are provided for 33 weeks of the academic year. Due to the average length of terms, we suggest that Tutors deliver 12 weeks in the Autumn Term, 10 weeks in the Spring Term and 11 weeks in the Summer Term. However, schools can suggest an alternative distribution of the teaching weeks per term to fit their own setting. Some schools may wish to purchase all 38 weeks in the academic year, and this can be negotiated with THAMES. Tutors are expected to arrange their teaching dates in advance of each term through mutual negotiation with their schools. If a school is closed for any reason during the agreed weeks, provided sufficient notice is given (see below), dates may be rearranged by mutual agreement between the school and the tutor. If insufficient notice is given tutors must still be paid and schools will be invoiced for hours not worked.

THAMES Responsibilities and Quality Assurance

THAMES is a member of Music Mark. The Service adheres to the national standards as well as DfE guidelines. THAMES reports, via the East London Music Alliance (ELMA) – the Music Hub for London East, to Arts Council England (ACE) who distributes funds to Music Hubs on behalf of the DfE. As a condition of its grant THAMES is required to gather data and from time to time will request pupil data from schools.

All THAMES tutors are:

- Subject to DBS clearance in line with Tower Hamlets policies and other pre-employment clearances
- Required to have mandatory and regular training on Safeguarding and Child Protection and Health and Safety issues
- Trained musicians and music educators
- Kept up to date through a full programme of in-service training
- Monitored by managers within THAMES as part of the service's tutor support and development programme
- Required to attend regular staff briefings to co-ordinate and develop their work
- Required to provide annual reports for pupils who are involved in individual and small group lessons
- Engaged to work for THAMES for the whole academic year based on schools' requests

All teaching is carried out in accordance with guidelines for tutors set by THAMES. THAMES has arrangements in place in line with Council guidelines to insure against its liability as may reasonably be required.

All tutors are required to comply with providing a timetable sheet showing lesson/session times, dates and (for individual/small group teaching) names of pupils. These should be clearly displayed in schools for pupils and school-based staff to refer to. These lesson times can be on a rota system if required by the school.

All tutors can access THAMES Lesson Planning and Recording templates and Schemes of Work. They will also keep a record of pupil progress and provide each pupil with a Pupil Practice Book (except in half-class or whole-class teaching).

Any Curriculum Music teaching undertaken will be in liaison with the school to match its own Schemes of Work, Programmes of Study and examination boards.

Where possible, THAMES will provide schools with the loan of instruments free of charge. These remain the property of THAMES. However, when this is not possible the Service will provide professional advice on the best and most cost-effective source for hire or purchase of instruments.

All tutors are required to report to the School Office or Reception when arriving at a school. THAMES tutors are required to wear their ID badges.

Tutors will not communicate directly with parents without having first sought the permission of the Headteacher or their representative.

THAMES absence procedure requires all tutors who are sick, or unable to teach, to telephone their first school in the morning prior to the start of their session and then telephone the THAMES office to record their absence. In turn the THAMES office will then contact the other schools that the tutor is due to attend to inform them of any absences. This is in line with Council policy.

THAMES advocates an open access policy. THAMES can assist schools in the selection of pupils for tuition. Pupils should be selected if they can demonstrate enthusiasm, interest and aptitude. THAMES can provide guidance on how to recognise aptitude in music.

THAMES will not disclose to any other party any information relating to the provision of individual schools unless agreed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

During the Spring Term THAMES will send the SLA to every School to enable requests to be made for teaching for the following academic year.

To allow for efficient and accurate timetabling it is important that schools return these forms by the date specified.

Whilst THAMES is sympathetic to specific requests regarding the timing of THAMES tutors' visits, schools are asked to remain as flexible as possible. Timetabling THAMES tutors is a complex process and whilst every effort will be made to accommodate a school's wishes, it may not always be possible to do so.

Client Responsibilities

Visiting THAMES tutors should be helped to feel as much a part of the school as other staff (access to staff room, staff toilets etc).

All issues relating to the employment of tutors, including any changes to their hours should be directly negotiated with THAMES managers and **NOT** with individual tutors.

Any additional sessions must be agreed in advance with THAMES managers.

Teaching location and conditions should be suitable for the task, e.g. sufficient space; visual access, through a window or glass-panelled door; heated room. This space should also conform to Health & Safety; Fire Regulations; and Child Protection guidelines.

Basic equipment should be provided by the school e.g. piano (or keyboard if necessary); music stands; sheet music; access to audio equipment; a photo-copying facility for teachers' own worksheets, practice exercises and registers; and other materials as necessary.

The school has a joint responsibility with THAMES for the organisation of lessons and pupil attendance. A member of school-based staff should be designated as the named coordinator of instrumental/vocal teaching in the school. It is expected that they provide suitable channels of communication between the THAMES tutor and the school.

The school should inform THAMES immediately of any unexpected non-attendance of THAMES tutors.

The school should give tutors adequate notice of key dates e.g. events, festivals, school closures or GCSE/A level performance dates. Schools are required to give THAMES tutors **at least seven calendar days notice** of changes to set teaching dates, or they will be invoiced for days lost by tutors.

If appropriate, the school should inform THAMES tutors of any relevant additional needs or medical conditions that a pupil may have and what procedures are in place in case of emergency.

Any THAMES staffing issues should be reported to THAMES Link Managers as soon as possible. THAMES will then respond in accordance with LBTH procedures.

The Headteacher, or representative, is responsible for ensuring that school-based staff release pupils for their instrumental lessons as a matter of school policy.

Tutor claim forms are submitted at the end of each calendar month. Each THAMES tutor is required to have the claim form signed by each school in which they teach. It is the school's responsibility to check the hours being claimed before it is submitted to THAMES. Tutors will be expected to submit Claim Forms for the exact hours agreed in the SLA.

At the start of each academic year, schools should provide all visiting THAMES tutors with detailed and specific relevant information on health & safety procedures. This will include signing in and out; fire; first aid, evacuation; and other emergency procedures; Child Protection advice; and any other security measures or protocols.

It is the role of the school to assist with regular attendance of pupils. Each THAMES tutor maintains a Weekly Attendance Register. Schools can ask to see these at any time. If a child misses lessons the tutor will inform the school.

It is not the role of the THAMES tutor to search for pupils who are missing from a group lesson as this will take time away from other pupils.

Once SLA request forms are submitted and received by THAMES, this form represents a binding request from the school for the required teaching for the whole of the following academic year. It is not possible to reduce teaching provision during an academic year, unless in exceptional circumstances by agreement with the Head of THAMES.

The client will not disclose to any other party any information relating to the provision of THAMES unless agreed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Schools are required to provide THAMES with the relevant data and statistics of pupils who are learning with THAMES. This is to ensure that progression and development of learners can be actively monitored and tracked. In addition, THAMES is required to comply with and make returns on all Arts Council England and DfE surveys.

Schools will be loaned instruments for the duration of the SLA. These instruments remain the property of THAMES and schools should take due care in ensuring that they are stored effectively. Schools will be charged for any wilful damage or loss of instruments whilst instruments are in their care.

Charges and Invoicing

Schools must purchase the THAMES Annual SLA Package 2026-2027 via SLA Online. Arrangements for Academies may differ – THAMES Link Managers will provide advice. THAMES will charge schools on a termly basis based on the agreed SLA for regular instrumental, vocal and class teaching and direction of ensembles. Invoices will reflect the suggested teaching schedule:

Autumn Term – estimated 12 weeks

Spring Term – estimated 10 weeks

Summer term – estimated 11 weeks

Adjustments will be actioned in arrears, added to the following term's invoice. If a tutor has not delivered 33 lessons over the course of the academic year, then the school will be credited with the shortfall. There will be additional charges for any agreed extra hours worked by THAMES staff. Ad hoc work delivered by the tutor (for example music concerts and half or one-day music workshops, INSET, school reviews etc) will be added to the following term's invoice.

Every endeavour will be made to provide supply cover for long-term tutor absence due to illness or maternity leave. The school will not be charged when a tutor is unable to attend and the teaching does not take place.

When pupils are not available for teaching (due to school closures, school visits, INSET days etc) then the school will be charged for the hours timetabled, unless they have negotiated a changed date with THAMES and the tutor. **At least seven days' notice must be given.** Schools should note that THAMES has an obligation to pay staff and therefore the school will be invoiced for tutors' time.

Teaching cannot commence until the purchase has been made on SLA Online. Academies will need to agree to the SLA and to be invoiced in writing.

Schools Making a Charge for Instrumental Tuition

Whilst THAMES does not charge pupils for weekly instrumental lessons schools may wish to make a charge to parents/carers. However, Headteachers should note the following:

- Instrumental and vocal tuition, which takes place during the school day, and is subject to the parent/carer requesting the tuition, can be charged for
- Instrumental and vocal tuition, which is part of the National Curriculum or the first programme in which the whole class engages with the KS2 Programme of Instrumental and Vocal Tuition cannot be charged for
- Instrumental and vocal tuition for children in care cannot be charged for
- It is against the law for schools to charge pupils who are learning instruments as part of their GCSE and 'A' Level courses i.e. charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s)
- Governors should decide the charging policy, which should include criteria for the remission of fees
- Governors should decide the level of charge
- The DfE regulations do not cover lessons which take place outside school hours, at weekends or during school holidays

What each school needs to provide for Instrumental/Vocal Lessons

- The school must **identify one member of staff** to act as the point of contact for THAMES staff.
- The school must provide a **suitable storage** space for the instruments in close proximity to where the teaching will be taking place.
- The school must provide a **teaching space** that will be large enough for pupils to sit and play their instruments and have room for pupils to walk and move about. In order to set up and pack away, the space will also need to be available for at least 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after the session.
- If the allocated space is a classroom, the school (class teacher, TA, or premises manager) should **assist with the moving of tables** before and after the lesson.
- If the allocated space is the school hall or large non-class space, please provide **suitable chairs** to sit on.

Review Procedures

Monitoring of all work and quality assurance is a continuous process undertaken by THAMES in partnership with the school.

Responses to urgent enquiries will normally be within one working day.
All other enquiries will be answered as soon as possible and within one week.

Towards the end of each financial year (Spring Term) there will be a review between THAMES managers and the Head Teacher. This will consider the performance of the Service and the school's needs within the context of this agreement. Adjustments to timetabling, which may follow as a result of the review, will take place from the following September.

Queries, Concerns and Complaints Procedure

Any compliments, letters of thanks or similar regarding the work of staff and/or of provision are always welcome and will be passed onto the appropriate member of staff.

Any queries, concerns or complaints should be made in writing to a named manager at THAMES (marked as an Urgent Enquiry). If after 5 working days there is no satisfactory outcome, the matter should be referred to the Head of THAMES (address below). Clients should note that where these issues relate to staff competency, THAMES has an obligation to follow HR procedures in line with LBTH policy.

Clients who feel that they have not received an adequate response from the Head of the Service could appeal in writing to the Director of Children's Services

**Director of Children's Services
Tower Hamlets Council
Town Hall
160 Whitechapel Road
London
E1 1BJ**

In exceptional circumstances and if mutual confidence in the operation of this SLA is not restored, it may be terminated by either side by giving a half term's notice in writing.

Music Service Contacts

Matters arising from this agreement should be referred to:

**Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service (THAMES)
Shapla Centre
19 Ensign Street
E1 8JD**

Telephone: 020 7364 0431 (Office Number)

Email: thames.admin@towerhamlets.gov.uk

THAMES Office hours: 8.30am - 5.00pm (Monday to Friday)

Appendix A

THAMES Saturday Music Centre

The THAMES Saturday Music Centre runs every Saturday morning, 9am – 12.30pm, during term time and is open to students who are **already** receiving instrumental/vocal lessons during the week.

Students are placed into ensemble groups based on the instruments they play, and the experience they have. Ensembles include orchestras, chamber music ensembles, jazz and wind bands, contemporary ensembles, an inclusive ensemble for disabled and non-disabled musicians, world music groups and a wide variety of choirs.

The SMC holds three concerts throughout the year for students to showcase their musicianship. It also offers further performance opportunities and projects through working with creative partners.

Terms and Conditions

- Pupils must be between 7 – 18 years old and having instrumental lessons during the week.
- They must live, or attend school, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Following the receipt of application forms, parents/carers will be contacted by the Head of the Centre
- New pupils who are eligible will be invited to join the Centre from the start of the next term.
- Fees are payable per term. This is currently set at £11.00 per week from September 2026. Reductions are available for a second child (or more) to attend. Exemptions may apply.
- First term is free of charge to new members.

For further information and application form please see our website.

[THAMES Website Home](#)

Appendix B

THAMES Wednesday Music Centre

The THAMES Wednesday Music Centre runs from 4.00 – 5.45pm on Wednesdays at Globe Primary School.

The WMC is open to younger students at the early stages of learning string, woodwind or brass instruments, and who are **already** receiving instrumental lessons during the week.

The centre has a choir for all members, followed by either a string or wind & brass ensemble. The session culminates in a full orchestra for all.

There will be a concert at the end of every term for students to showcase their musicianship, as well as further performance opportunities and projects, including working with creative partners.

Terms and Conditions

- Pupils must be between 7 – 13 years old and having instrumental lessons during the week.
- They must live, or attend school, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Following the receipt of application forms, parents/carers will be contacted by the Head of the Centre
- New pupils who are eligible will be invited to join the Centre from the start of the next term.
- Fees are payable per term. This is currently set at £5.30 per week from September 2026. Reductions are available for a second child (or more) to attend. Exemptions may apply.
- First term is free of charge to new members.

For further information and application form please see our website.

[THAMES Website Home](#)