



# Admissions Policy

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear, transparent and fair admission procedures for those parents wishing to access all strands of our education and childcare provision.

Please be aware that whilst we will make every effort to adhere to the procedures in this policy, the Headteacher has the right to make alternative decisions to maintain the financial stability of the school (particularly during the introduction of the 30 hour free entitlement) or to meet the particular needs of a specific child.

Chichester Nursery School's education and day care provision is provided in the following ways:

- The Up to 3s' Nursery – provides day care for children from 6 months to 3 years. This is a self-sustaining area of our provision and a charge is made for sessions taken, unless children are in receipt of 2 Year Old Funding (Part 1 of this policy)
- The Nursery School - this is a maintained setting providing 15 or 30 hours (if eligible against the government criteria) funded education for three year olds until transfer to primary school (Part 2 of this policy)
- Extra sessions for Nursery School children – enables parents to increase their child's 15 or 30 hour funded provision. This, again, is a self-sustaining area of our provision and a charge is made for extra sessions taken (Part 3 of this policy)

The Admissions procedures for all three areas of provision are different and will be treated - separately. However, it is our intention that our admissions procedures:

- Ensure consistency and fairness in admission to all strands of our provision
- Allow parents to effectively plan their child's education and day care, enabling them to meet their own needs and supporting their economic wellbeing
- Support all children and families in the local community, but especially vulnerable families
- Ensure children's wellbeing and high educational standards (led by qualified teachers) in all strands of our provision
- Promote involvement in the local community

## Part One – Admission to the Up to 3s' Nursery

On making an initial enquiry about a place in the Up to 3s' Nursery for their child, parents are usually invited to visit. During the initial enquiry it is ascertained when they would like their child to start and the sessions they would require.

Parents and carers are generally shown round the Up to 3s' Nursery by the Nursery or Senior Nursery Nurse, who explain the daily routine, the nursery's ethos. Parents are also given the opportunity to ask questions and, on completion of the tour, will be given an application form to complete (see Annex A).

Parents of children who have attended or currently attend the Up to 3s' Nursery, do not have to undertake a tour for the admission of subsequent children as they are already familiar with the setting, however they will still be required to complete an admissions form.

Children will only be considered for a place in the Up to 3s' Nursery once the completed admissions form has been received. All admissions forms are dated on receipt and filed. The date of receipt is used as part of the Up to 3s' admissions criteria, and although it does not necessarily give priority, it is recommended that parents return admissions forms as soon as possible. An offer of a place may be made at this stage or a child may be added to the waiting list.

We aim to be open and honest with all parents and if it is unlikely that an Up to 3s' place will become available within a realistic time scale, due to an extensive waiting list, parents will be informed of this during the initial enquiry.

### UP TO 3s' NURSERY SESSIONS

The Up to 3s' Nursery is open from 8.00am-6.00pm and the Nursery day is broken down into 4 sessions to try to make the Nursery as flexible and accommodating to parents' needs as possible. The sessions are detailed below:

Am Core Session	8.00am – 12.00am
Lunch Session	12.00am – 12:45/1.00pm
Pm Core Session	1.00pm – 5.00pm
Late Session	5.00pm - 6.00pm (5.00pm close on a Wednesday)

Parents are able to indicate their preferred sessions on the admissions form. However, places are subject to availability and the submission of an admissions form in no way guarantees that a place will be available.

Children must attend a minimum of 2 core sessions per week, to aid settling and to gain the most from their time at Nursery.

Children accessing 2 year funded places may be offered the sessions above or:

9.00 – 12.00	5 days a week
1.00 – 4.00	5 days a week

## **THE NEXT STEP**

Applications for a place in the Up to 3s' Nursery will be considered by the Up to 3s' Nursery Manager, or another member of the Senior Management Team.

The spreadsheet of children's sessions and projected forecasts will be checked and updated by the Up to 3s' Nursery Manager weekly, and any sessions which become available will be filled as quickly as possible.

Places will be allocated by matching available sessions to individual children's requirements, taking into account the child's age and the period that the sessions are available for. For example there may be a place available for only a 6 month period, which would suit a toddler, but not a young baby who will require a place for some time.

Every effort is made to offer places to children at the top of the waiting list, but due to the individual session requirements and lack of availability, this is not always possible. The complex 'jigsaw puzzle' nature of session availability means that places cannot always be allocated in strict waiting list order.

An offer of a place is made initially by phone, to be followed by a formal written offer letter, often sent via email. A contract for signature and a request for a security deposit equal to 1 month's fees will either be enclosed with the letter or sent out subsequently. This deposit does not replace the first month's fees, which will also need to be paid in advance. The deposit paid will be refunded in full when the child leaves Nursery. In the case of an unborn baby, a place will be offered and reserved, but no deposit will be taken until the baby is born.

The initial offer of a place will be made by telephone. If there is no answer to the call, a message will be left and a letter sent asking the parent concerned to make contact with the Up to 3s' Nursery Manager as soon as possible. If no reply has been received within 14 days of the initial phone call/letter, one further phone call will be made. If there is no response to this within 48 hours the place will be offered to the next person on the waiting list.

Parents who are offered a place in the Up to 3s' Nursery, which exactly matches their stated preferences, but choose to decline it at that time, can stay on the waiting list, but will go to the bottom.

## **ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

On reviewing the waiting list in order of admissions forms received, places will usually be offered to children whose requirements match the sessions available. However places cannot solely be offered on this basis, and children listed in the categories below will be given priority over existing children already on the waiting list (Number 1 having highest priority):

- 1 Children looked after by the Local Authority
- 2 Children who are in receipt of Two Year Old Funding
- 3 Children with Special Educational Needs
- 4 Siblings of children already on roll in the Up to 3s' Nursery
- 5 Children referred by outside agencies (e.g. health visitors, social workers etc)
- 6 All other children not covered by the above

Children who are on the waiting list for a place in the Up to 3s' Nursery and are only a few weeks away from being eligible to start in Nursery School may not be admitted to the Up to 3s' Nursery, even if there is availability. It is generally considered too disruptive for a child to start in the Up to 3s' Nursery for a few weeks before having to transfer to the Nursery School and begin the settling process again in a different part of the setting and with a new keyworker. In these cases, they may be offered an 'early' place in the Over 3s', depending on the availability of spaces.

In exceptional circumstances, however, this cannot be avoided and therefore may be waived at the discretion of the Nursery Manager and Headteacher.

## **TWO YEAR OLD FUNDING**

West Sussex County Council offers free early education and childcare to disadvantaged two year olds and their families, who fulfil certain criteria.

Children in receipt of Two Year Funding receive 15 hours free, high quality, flexible childcare and education per week. Sessions available for 2 Year Funded children attending the Up to 3s' Nursery are described earlier in this policy. Children in receipt of 2 Year Old Funding attending the Nursery School will attend the Nursery School sessions, according to the place they are taking up, detailed later in this policy.

Children in receipt of Two Year Old Funding are given a higher priority in our admissions criteria.

## **THE INDUCTION PROCESS**

The Up to 3s' Nursery Manager will contact parents nearer to the child's starting time with information about taster sessions, the home visit and exact start date. Induction dates are normally arranged two weeks prior to the child starting at Nursery and generally consist of two taster sessions at the Nursery and a home visit, the times for these are quite flexible and will be arranged with the child's keyworker at a time that suits parents and the Nursery. Siblings of existing children will not require a home visit unless it is thought to be of benefit by the keyworker and parent.

## **NON-PAYMENT OF FEES**

The Up to 3s' Nursery has the right to withdraw sessions for a child if payments are not being made in accordance with our Non-Payment of Fees Protocol.

# **Part Two – The Nursery School**

West Sussex County Council is the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled maintained schools. The admissions arrangements are determined by the County Council, after statutory consultations. The governing bodies of maintained nursery schools have the delegated responsibility for admission arrangements and their implementation on behalf of the County Council.

## **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE FOR NURSERY SCHOOL**

On making an initial enquiry about a place for their child, parents are invited to visit the Nursery School. They are normally shown round by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, who will explain our general philosophy of how young children learn in our setting, and significant aspects of the Nursery School provision. On completion of the tour parents will be given an application form (see Annex B). Parents of children who have had siblings in the Nursery School do not have to undertake a tour for the admission of subsequent children as they are already familiar with the way in which the Nursery School works.

Children will be considered for a Nursery place once the completed admissions form, signed and dated by the parent, has been received. All admissions forms are further date stamped on receipt in Nursery. The date of receipt is used as part of the Nursery School's admissions criteria, and although it does not necessarily give priority, it is recommended that parents return application forms as soon as possible.

## NURSERY SCHOOL OPTIONS

The Nursery School provides places for children who are entitled to both 15 hours funding and 30 hours funding. For children in receipt of 15 hours funded nursery education entitlement we offer parents and carers 4 options for taking this up, as shown below:

Option A (mornings Mon – Fri)  
9.00 – 12.00

Option B (afternoons Mon – Fri)  
12.45 – 3.45

Option C (limited number of places)  
Monday and Tuesday 9.00 – 3.45\*  
Wednesday 9.00 – 12.00

Option D (limited number of places)  
Wednesday – 12.45 – 3.45  
Thursday and Friday 9.00 -3.45\*

\* Charge for lunch on these days

Children who are in receipt of 30 hours free entitlement and fulfil government criteria will generally be offered sessions that run from 9am – 3.45pm Monday to Friday. Not included in these hours is a 45 minute lunchtime session, which is available for parents to select for a small charge, or opt out if they choose. The lunchtime session includes a cooked lunch – the Nursery School does not allow children to bring in their own packed lunches but dietary requirements, due to medical conditions, can generally be accommodated by our lunch suppliers.

Parents are invited to express their preference for a 30 hour place on the Admissions form (see Annex B) but this is no guarantee that they will be offered this option, as this will depend on the number of places available and their child's rating against the admissions criteria (see 'Admissions Criteria' below).

## THE NEXT STEP

### 30 Hour Places

Applications for a 30 hour Nursery place will be considered by the Deputy Headteacher, or another member of the Senior Management Team. 30 hour places will be allocated on a termly basis. Those applications received by the termly deadlines will be considered first. Late applications i.e. those received after the termly deadlines, will be considered after 'on time' applications, should places still be available. The termly deadlines for applications are as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> May - for admission in the Autumn cohort for children who are three before the last day of the Summer term
- 1<sup>st</sup> November - for admission in the Spring cohort for children who are three before the last day of the Autumn term
- 1<sup>st</sup> February - for admission in the Summer cohort for children who are three before the last day of the Spring term

NB Children whose third birthdays fall after **30<sup>th</sup> Nov**, within **3 weeks of the end of the Spring term** and after the **30<sup>th</sup> June** respectively will be offered places alongside their cohort, if available, but will

be given a start date at the beginning of the next term. This is to avoid admitting children at the very end of term as this can cause settling problems.

For children in receipt of 30 hours funded entitlement parents and carers will have the option to split their funding with another setting, providing they take up 15 hours of their sessions at Chichester Nursery School. Children only eligible for 15 hours funded entitlement will not have this option to split their funding with another setting.

### **15 Hour Places**

Applications for a 15 hour Nursery place will be considered by the Deputy Headteacher, or another member of the Senior Leadership Team. 15 hour places will be allocated up to a year in advance for A and B places, i.e. places will be allocated in the Autumn Term for children starting in the following Autumn Term.

### **MOVING FROM 15 HOURS TO 30 HOURS**

Parents who are only eligible for a 15 hour place or are eligible for 30 hours but have chosen to occupy a 15 hour place, can request for their child to move to a 30 hour/5 day a week place should their circumstances change. The Nursery will do its best to accommodate such requests but this might not be possible if all the 30 hour places have been allocated. In this situation the waiting list system described below would come into operation.

### **ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

In allocating 15 Hour Nursery School places children are rated against the following admissions criteria. This is particularly important as the Nursery School is frequently over-subscribed and the allocation of places needs to be fair, consistent and transparent. The criteria are as follows (with number 1 being children with the highest priority for places):

1. Children looked after by the local authority/children with a statement of Special Educational Need, specifically naming Chichester Nursery School as the recommended provision
2. Children already 'on roll' attending the Up to 3s' Nursery (see later paragraph)
3. Children referred by outside agencies (e.g. health visitors, social workers, etc) who believe attendance at Chichester Nursery School would be of benefit.
4. Children who live at specific post codes in the East Ward of Chichester (based on a list compiled from the Index of Multiple Deprivation)
5. Siblings of children who have attended Nursery School in the past
6. Children who already attend some aspect of Children's Centre provision e.g. Toddler group etc; and siblings of children who are already attending the Nursery School
7. Other applications received before the termly deadline
8. Applications received after the termly deadline

In the case of children who fulfil the same criteria competing for a limited number of places the date of the receipt of their admissions form will be used as the deciding factor.

Children in receipt of 30 Hours Free Entitlement Funding will be admitted on a termly basis and the above criteria will not apply although they do need to fulfil the Government criteria.

### **CHILDREN TRANSFERRING FROM THE UP TO 3s' NURSERY**

Children who attend the Up to 3s' Nursery will be asked to express a preference for a place in the Spring term of the year before they are due to transfer to Nursery School. (Places will be allocated up to a year ahead for 15 hour A and B places and by the termly deadline for 30 hour places and C

and D places). They will be given priority within the termly allocation of 30 hour and C and D places. They will also be expected to use their place for the full 15 or 30 hours per week as soon as they move through to Nursery School, depending upon the number of hours they are funded for. However, 30 hours places can be split with another setting (see above).

Children will transfer to Nursery School in the term after they turn three. They will then be expected to take up their allocated 15 or 30 hour place as soon as they move through.

## **THE INDUCTION PROCESS**

Parents and carers who are successful in gaining a place for their child at Chichester Nursery School will be notified by an official offer letter the term before their child would be eligible to start. They will be asked to formally accept the place by returning a tear off slip at the bottom of the letter. A further letter will be sent with details of the induction process including information about taster sessions, their child's keyworker, home visits and start dates. The induction process is flexible to meet the needs of individual parents and their children.

Parents are expected to be flexible during their child's first few days in Nursery School, supporting their child's smooth transition. Further information on supporting children's transition to nursery can be found in our parent information booklet. Parents who have further needs or questions should speak to their child's keyworker or the Headteacher.

## **WAITING LIST AND DEFERMENT PROCEDURE**

Parents who fail to secure the session of their choice, or any place for their child at the Nursery School, will be notified in good time and certain options will be open to them:

- They may choose to accept an alternative session (if offered) and be placed on a waiting list to transfer to their preferred session should a place become available
- They may choose to be placed on a waiting list and/or defer until the session of their choice is available

Children who have not been successful in securing places, usually children who become three in the Summer Term, will be given priority in the allocation of places for the Autumn Term.

Children will be allowed to move group once to secure a place in a preferred session, but it is not Nursery School policy to allow subsequent moves.

## **Part 3 – Extra Sessions for Nursery School Children**

Subject to availability parents and carers are able to increase their child's 15 hours nursery education by the addition of daycare sessions, for which there is a charge. If sessions are available parents/carers are able to access education and childcare from 0800-1800 five days a week throughout the year. The Nursery School is closed for a week in late August and over the Christmas period, and also for statutory inset training days for staff of which there are 5 per year – childcare will not be available at these times.

Extra sessions are offered as follows:

**For children in receipt of 15 Hours Free Entitlement:**

Breakfast	08.00am - 09.00am
Morning Session	09.00am - 12.00pm
Lunch Session	12.00pm - 12.45pm *
Afternoon Session	12.45pm - 15.45pm
Tea Session	3.45pm - 5.00pm
Late Session	5.00pm - 6.00pm (5.00pm on Wednesdays)

*\* Due to the lunch needs of children accessing 30 hour places, lunch spaces for children accessing 15 hour places may be limited or only available for a short duration.*

**For children in receipt of 30 Hours Free Entitlement:**

Breakfast	08.00am - 09.00am
Lunch Session	12.00pm - 12.45pm
Tea Session	3.45pm - 5.00pm
Late Session	5.00pm - 6.00pm (5.00pm on Wednesdays)

Requests for extra sessions must be made in writing to the school office, either on the initial application form or on an Extra Session Request Form (also available from the office). Every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of the parent and their child, spaces permitting, priority being given to children already on roll in the Nursery School and children of working parents. Children will only be able to access extra sessions once the signed contract has been received back from the parent accompanied by a deposit of one month's fees. The Nursery School reserves the right to withdraw extra sessions from a child if payments are not being met in accordance with our Non-Payment of Fees Protocol.

Extra sessions must be paid for and cannot be added ad hoc to make up a 30 hour package.

A waiting list system is in operation for all sessions should they be full.

**NON-PAYMENT OF FEES**

The Nursery School has the right to withdraw sessions for a child if payments are not being made in accordance with our Non-Payment of Fees Protocol.

**CASUAL AND EMERGENCY SESSIONS**

We recognise that occasionally a parent may need additional, unplanned and "one off" childcare. In these situations we are sometimes able to offer short term childcare for children already on roll in the setting, subject to availability. Extra sessions taken will be charged at the normal rate and an additional £5 administration fee will also be levied. Requests should be made verbally to the School office in the first instance, and be followed up with the submission of an Occasional Session Request Form. The office will confirm that an extra session has been booked. The parent will then be liable for meeting this cost even if they subsequently decide not to take up the session.



## **RIGHT TO APPEAL**

Parents and carers have the right to appeal against any admissions practice which they perceive to be contrary to the content of this policy or if they feel they have extenuating circumstances. Complaints and appeals should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors, and an appeal panel will then be convened to look into the matter.

**Date:** Autumn 2019

**Review date:** Autumn 2022