



Nursery Admissions Policy

Tonacliffe Primary School aims to provide a nursery experience that is affordable, high-quality, teacher-led and geared towards a smooth transition into Reception Class. The governing body is the admission authority and is responsible for setting the school's Nursery Admissions Policy. This policy is written to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their education at the school.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

Legislation

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation

Guidance

- DfE (2014) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- DfE (2018) 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE (2018) 'Early years entitlements: operational guide'

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Nursery Fees Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Data Protection Policy

1. Free Childcare Arrangements

- 1.1. The LA is required to secure free places offering 570 hours childcare a year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year, and up to 52 weeks of the year, for every eligible child in the LA in accordance with admission dates.

- 1.2. Children are eligible for free childcare from the relevant dates (outlined at paragraph 2.3) up until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.
- 1.3. With regards to the age criteria, pupils will be eligible as follows:
 - Born between 1 January - 31 March: eligible from the start of term beginning on, or following, 1 April after the child's third birthday
 - Born between 1 April - 31 August: eligible from the start of term beginning on, or following 1 September after the child's third birthday
 - Born between 1 September - 31 December: eligible from the start of term beginning on or following 1 January after the child's third birthday
- 1.4. The school can accommodate a combination of a maximum of 26 full time nursery children (30 hours) or 52 part time children (15 hours).
- 1.5. Parents wanting to access the universal 15 hours free childcare for three and four-year-olds do not need to apply for this through the digital childcare service.
- 1.6. For children who take up their place later in the year or have moved to the LA part-way through the year, the LA will secure a pro-rotated number of free hours. The total number of hours will be adjusted to reflect the portion of the year remaining.
- 1.7. The LA will ensure that any three or four-year-olds moving to England from another country can access their free place on the same basis as other children.
- 1.8. Parents wanting to access the 30 hours free childcare entitlement must apply to do so through the digital childcare service.
- 1.9. Parents are able to access the 30 hours of free childcare for 38 weeks out of the year – i.e. during term time – or the equivalent number of hours across more weeks per year, e.g. 22 hours a week for 52 weeks (if using other settings as well).
- 1.10. Parents will also be reminded of their possible eligibility for tax-free childcare through the digital childcare service to cover additional childcare costs, e.g. school holidays.
- 1.11. The sessions offered to nursery children are as follows:
 - For children eligible for 30 hours free childcare – 6 hours per day. Standard hours will be 9 – 3 pm if you would like your child to stay until 3.30 pm that can be offered at additional cost payable via ParentPay.
 - All other children (15 hours) will be taken between either as an a.m or p.m. session.

2. Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare

- 2.1. Parents of children aged three and four must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare:
 - Each parent earns, or is expected to earn, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage (unless in a 'start up' period – i.e. newly self-employed – in which case they do not need to meet the income criteria for 12 months)
 - The parent should be seeking the free childcare to enable them to work
 - One or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or are on statutory sick leave
 - One parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to work
 - If a non-European Economic Area national, the parent has recourse to public funds
- 2.2. Parents should check their own eligibility for the scheme using the government's Childcare Choices website or childcare calculator. If parents are eligible, they will be directed to the digital childcare service to apply.
- 2.3. Parents can only start claiming their 30 hours free childcare the term following the date they receive a decision from HMRC. For this reason, parents are urged to apply as soon as possible.
- 2.4. If eligible, parents must provide the school with their unique code to confirm they are eligible for the scheme, together with their National Insurance number and child's date of birth. As the free childcare cannot be claimed until the code has been verified, parents should provide the school with this information as soon as possible in order to avoid delay.
- 2.5. Parents will be prompted every three months by HMRC to reconfirm that they remain eligible for free childcare.
- 2.6. The LA will audit the eligibility codes at six points during the year to identify any children who have fallen out of eligibility.
- 2.7. The LA will notify the school as soon as possible where parents have fallen out of their eligibility. The school will then notify parents within five working days.
- 2.8. If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive a 'grace period' – i.e. they will continue to receive the 30 hours free childcare for a short period of time.

- 2.9. If a parent falls into their grace period before their child has started a 30 hours place, they should not take up their 30 hours place.
- 2.10. The grace period will not continue once a child has reached compulsory school age.
- 2.11. A child who becomes ineligible during the first half of a funding block will be funded until the end of that funding block (i.e. 31 March, 31 August, 31 December) or for as long as they remain under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter.

A child who becomes ineligible in the latter half of the funding block (i.e. up to the last day of the funding block) will be funded until the end of the following funding block or for as long as they remain under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter.

- 2.12. If a child becomes ineligible for the 30 hours free childcare, they will still be entitled to 15 hours of free care.
- 2.13. Consideration to extend the grace period will be taken in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if a parent has been forced to leave their home and paid employment.
- 2.14. Other information related to the 30 hours free childcare scheme can be found on the school's website.

3. Extension of 30 hours to children in foster care

- 3.1. Children in foster care are also eligible for the additional hours, provided that they meet the following criteria:
 1. Accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision-making;
 2. That, in single parent foster families, the foster parent engages in paid work outside their role as a foster parent; and
 3. In two parent foster families, both individuals engage in paid work outside their role as a foster parent.
- 3.2. In accordance with criteria 3, if one individual is not a foster parent, then they must be in qualifying paid work and earn a minimum of the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage to be eligible.
- 3.3. There is no requirement on the type of work or number of hours that a foster parent must work in order to access the 30 hours, and there is no minimum earnings limit – although they must be engaging in paid work.

- 3.4. Children in foster care will continue to be eligible for the universal 15 hours regardless of the working status of their foster parents.
- 3.5. There is no requirement to access the full 30 hours if this is not necessary.
- 3.6. To apply for the additional hours, foster parents must apply directly to the LA – there is no requirement to apply via the childcare service.
- 3.7. When initiating an application, foster parents are required to inform the child's social worker.
- 3.8. A designated individual, as determined by the LA, will counter-sign the foster parent's application to confirm eligibility. This may be, for example:
 - The child's social worker; or
 - A supervising social worker; or
- 3.9. An independent reviewing officer appointed by the LA to protect the child's interests throughout the care planning process. In some cases, the LA may deem it appropriate for the application not to have a second signature – this will be agreed between the LA and foster parent before the application is made. The signed form (by the parent only) will be sent directly to the contact within the LA who is responsible for issuing codes.
- 3.10. The LA has the flexibility to develop a policy and procedure for establishing the eligibility of children in foster care. Any process developed will be proportionate, flexible and aligned with existing process as far as possible, with the focus being ensuring consistency with a child's specific care plan.
- 3.11. All foster parents will have access to the LA's locally agreed policies and procedures for determining eligibility. In particular, foster parents will be provided with the following:
 - The role of the designated person
 - Who the designated person is and how to contact them
 - What evidence the foster parents should be expected to provide
 - How the foster parent should pass the form to the LA
 - How/if the evidence will be stored once the form is completed and approved
 - The timeframe by which the designated person will response to any application – this will be no later than four weeks from the receipt of the application
- 3.12. Where the LA determines that an application for the additional hours is not consistent with a child's care plan, they will not be eligible, regardless of whether parents satisfy the other criteria outlined in paragraph 5.1.

- 3.13. Where an application is approved, details will be entered onto the eligibility checking system where a record will be created for the child. Once the code is generated, this will be sent to parents via email and the child's social worker will be informed that the code has been issued. The foster parents will then follow the process in the same way as above. They will also be expected to re-confirm their eligibility every three months.
- 3.14. The LA is free to determine the exact evidence required from foster parents to re-confirm eligibility, which will be made clear to parents during the initial application. At a minimum, the LA will be satisfied that:
- The placement is still ongoing;
 - Accessing the additional hours is still consistent with the child's care plan; and the foster parents are still engaging in paid work outside their role as a foster parent.
- 4.17 If a foster parent is unhappy about the decision made by the LA, they should follow the LA's complaints process and contact the child's social worker.

4. Application timetable

- 4.1. A child is deemed to be of nursery-age from the beginning of the term following their third birthday.
- 4.2. Parents can register their child from birth up to the age of 3. If you do register, this does not guarantee a place.
- 4.3. Formal applications for nursery places must be made as follows:
- For places in the Spring term – apply by October
 - For places in the Summer term – apply by January
 - For places in Autumn term – apply by May
- 4.4. Application forms can be obtained from the main office.
- 4.5. Acceptance and non-acceptance letters are sent out on the following dates:
- For places in the Spring term – start of December
 - For places in the Summer term – Start of March
 - For places in Autumn term – during June
- 4.6. Where places are remaining, later admissions are possible, up to the agreed admissions limit.

- 4.7. Places offered are available to the child from the date the place is offered, until 31 August following their fourth birthday.
- 4.8. The LA will consider securing additional free hours for parents who have applied or re-confirmed by the deadline, but receive their valid 30 hours eligibility code after the beginning of the term, up to the dates set out below:
 - Application/re-confirmation by 31 August – code start date between 1-14 September
 - Application/re-confirmation by 31 December – code start date between 1-14 January
 - Application/re-confirmation by 31 March – code start date between 1-14 April
- 4.9. The LA is not required to secure additional free hours where the parent has applied after the dates outlined in 4.8 above.

5. Deposits

- 5.1. The nursery charges a refundable deposit of £50.00 if accessing the 30 hours entitlement for three and four-year-olds. The purpose is to secure places for childcare and provide assurance to the nursery that parents will take up the place. Parents will be informed during the application process that if they fail to take up their place, the nursery is not obliged to refund the deposit.
- 5.2. The LA will use their discretion where providing a deposit may prevent take up of places, such as for disadvantaged families, and will review the requirements in light of this.
- 5.3. Deposits will be returned to parents within five weeks of taking up a reserved place. If a parent does not take up a reserved place, deposits will not be returned.

6. Additional costs

- 6.1. The nursery is able to charge additional costs as part of a free entitlement place – this includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Snacks
 - School trips
 - Additional hours
- 6.2. Where charges are made for additional hours, parents are expected to book and to pay for these in advance via ParentPay.
- 6.3. School trips are generally voluntary contributions. Unfortunately, if we do not receive enough contributions then trips would not be able to take place.

- 6.4. Where parents are not willing to provide snack money, they will be permitted to provide their own healthy snacks for their child.

7. Oversubscription

- 7.1. Children who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan that names the school are admitted before the oversubscription criteria is applied.
- 7.2. Children with an EHC plan that does not name the school will be referred to the LA to determine an appropriate place, in accordance with the LA's Fair Access Protocol.
- 7.3. The governing body may increase the priority of an application where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child, which can be appropriately met by the school.
- 7.4. The oversubscription criteria, set out in priority order, are as follows:
- LAC or children who were previously looked after but have subsequently been adopted or become subject to a residence or special guardianship order.
 - Children with a social or medical need who have been referred by a social worker, educational psychologist, health professional or outreach worker or educational welfare officer.
 - Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission
 - Children living within the catchment area for the nursery school
 - All other children
- 7.5. Where there is a tiebreak scenario within the criteria, priority will be given firstly to a child who lives closest to the school based on a straight-line measurement, then by date of birth, with the older child given priority.

8. Reserve List

- 8.1. In circumstances where more applications are received than places are available, and where the oversubscription priority criteria has been applied, children who are not offered places will be added to a reserve list in order of the criteria and not by date of application. The reserve list is not a waiting list – if a request is made by a parent whose child has higher priority according to the admissions criteria, other children are moved down the list.
- 8.2. If a place becomes available, the nursery will contact the parents of the child at the top of the list.

- 8.3. Placing a child's name on the reserve list does not guarantee that a place will become available.

9. Withdrawing Offers

- 9.1. Once a written offer has been made, there are limited circumstances in which an offer can be withdrawn – these are as follows:

- Offers made on the basis of fraudulent applications
- Offers made on the basis of intentionally misleading applications
- Parents not responding to an offer within six weeks
- A child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education
- A family registering their child at two maintained settings

10. Refusal of Admission

- 10.1. A child is only refused admission if one of the following criteria are met:

- The nursery has reached its admissions limit
- The child is not of the appropriate age

- 10.2. Parents do not have a statutory right to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to award a place to their child.

- 10.3. Parents may appeal to the SEND tribunal against the provision named by the authority in the EHC plan.

11. Admission to Reception

- 11.1. Children reach compulsory school age as follows:

- Children turning five-years-old between 1 January and 31 March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1 April
- Children turning five-years-old between 1 April and 31 August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1 September
- Children turning five-years-old between 1 September and 31 December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1 January

- 11.2. Parents have the choice of how and when their child starts Reception class until they reach the compulsory age.

- 11.3. If parents wish for their child to remain in a nursery or early years setting until they reach compulsory school age, and access 15 hours of free early learning rather than taking up a place in Reception, they must:

- Discuss their choice with the school.

- Complete a Reception application form by 1 January, to ensure their child has an offer of a place in Reception from the following September in case they cannot be re-admitted.
- Complete a nursery re-admission application form and return it to the setting by 1 January.

12. Transition Arrangements

- 12.1. Parents are invited to visit the school prior to the transition and further visits can be arranged according to the child's needs.
- 12.2. During the Summer term, Reception teachers from the primary schools to which the children will transfer may come in to meet with the children.
- 12.3. During the visit, the child's key worker provides the teacher with information about the child's progress across all the areas of learning and will spend time talking to the teacher about the child's social, health and emotional needs.
- 12.4. Details of children with SEND or particular educational requirements are shared, including their development throughout the year, support given and needed, and details of any other agencies involved.

13. Data Protection

- 13.1. When processing and publishing information, the nursery will ensure it meets its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.
- 13.2. Where personal information is processed, the nursery will ensure it is kept up-to-date and the LA will ensure that the rights of data subjects are reserved at all times.
- 13.3. The nursery will act in compliance with the Data Protection Policy when processing personal data.

14. Policy Review

- 14.1. This policy is reviewed annually by the governing board and headteacher.
- 14.2. The scheduled review date for this policy is September 2020.