

# Bell Farm Primary School Nursery Admissions Policy



## **Statement of intent**

Bell Farm Primary School aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high- quality and geared towards a smooth transition into Reception class.

The governing board 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.

## **1. Legal framework**

- 1.1. 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 UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- DfE (2018) 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE (2018) 'Early years entitlements: operational guide'
- DfE (2021) 'Early years entitlements: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2022 to 2023'

- 1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Transition Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## **2. Equal Opportunities**

- 2.1. The nursery will implement an effective policy that ensures equality of opportunities for all, provides a welcoming and caring environment that promotes and reflects cultural and social diversity, and is equally accessible to all.
- 2.2. Admissions to the nursery will be open, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

### **3. Free childcare arrangements**

- 3.1. 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 from the relevant dates outlined at 4.3.
- 3.2. Children are eligible for free childcare from the relevant dates (outlined at paragraph 4.3) up until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.
- 3.3. 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
- 3.4. Bell Farm School's Nursery can accommodate a maximum of 26 nursery children at a time.
- 3.5. The school offers 15 hours of additional childcare as an extension to the universal 15 hours free childcare.
- 3.6. The school is able to accommodate 20 children for 30 hours childcare.
- 3.7. 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.
- 3.8. 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.
- 3.9. Parents wanting to access the additional 15 hours free childcare entitlement must apply to do so through the [digital childcare service](#).
- 3.10. Parents are able to access the 30 hours of free childcare for 38 weeks out of the year – i.e. during term time.
- 3.11. The sessions offered to nursery children are as follows:
  - For children taking a 30-hour place in Nursery (including those eligible for 30-hours free childcare and those whose parents pay for the extra 15 hours, beyond the universal 15 hours) – Monday to Thursday 8.50am to 3.30pm and Friday 8.50am to 12.10pm.
  - For children taking up the universal 15-hour free childcare only – either 15-hour morning places: 8.50am – 11.50am or 15-hour afternoon places: 12.30pm – 3.30pm

#### **4. Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare**

- 4.1. 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 is 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.
- 4.2. 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. Details of how to apply for a 30-hour code are available on Surrey CC's website. [www.surreycc.gov.uk/30hourschildcare](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/30hourschildcare).
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. Parents will be prompted every three months by HMRC to reconfirm that they remain eligible for free childcare.
- 4.6. Surrey CC will audit the eligibility codes at six points during the year to identify any children who have fallen out of eligibility.
- 4.7. Surrey CC will notify the school as soon as possible where parents have fallen out of their eligibility. The school will then notify parents as soon as possible.
- 4.8. 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.

- 4.9. 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.
- 4.10. The grace period will not continue once a child has reached compulsory school age.
- 4.11. 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.
- 4.12. A parent who becomes ineligible during the first half of a funding block will have their free childcare funded until the end of that funding block (i.e. 31 March, 31 August, 31 December) or for as long as their child remains under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter.
- 4.13. A parent 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 their child remains under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter.
- 4.14. If a parent becomes ineligible for the 30 hours free childcare, they will still be entitled to 15 hours of free care for their child. Parents/Carers will, however, be expected to pay for the additional 15 hours until a 15-hour place becomes available.
- 4.15. Other information related to the 30 hours free childcare scheme can be found in the school's Charging and Remissions Policy.

## **5. Extension of 30 hours to children in foster care**

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. Children in foster care will continue to be eligible for the universal 15 hours regardless of the working status of their foster parents.
- 5.5. There is no requirement to access the full 30 hours if this is not necessary.

- 5.6. To apply for the additional hours, foster parents must apply directly to the LA – there is no requirement to apply via the childcare service.
- 5.7. When initiating an application, foster parents are required to inform the child's social worker.
- 5.8. 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
  - An independent reviewing officer appointed by the LA to protect the child's interests throughout the care planning process.
- 5.9. 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.
- 5.10. 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.
- 5.11. 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
- 5.12. 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 6.1.
- 5.13. 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.
- 5.14. Once foster parents have received the code, the process is the same as that outlined in 5 of this policy.
- 5.15. Foster parents will be required to re-confirm their eligibility every three months and will be prompted in advance of the deadline.

5.16. 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.

5.17. 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.

## **6. Application timetable**

- 6.1. A child can be admitted to our Nursery from the September before their fourth birthday.
- 6.2. Application forms can be obtained from the school's website [www.bell-farm.co.uk/nursery-admissions](http://www.bell-farm.co.uk/nursery-admissions) or from the school office.
- 6.3. The school will need to see a copy of the child's birth certificate.
- 6.4. In order to be considered in the initial allocation of Nursery places the application form needs to be returned by the date given in the application form, usually around the end of March.
- 6.5. Parents/carers must indicate their preference of 15-hours am, 15-hours pm or 30-hours on the application form.
- 6.6. Parents/carers will be notified by the school if their child has been allocated a place after the above date.
- 6.7. Once parents have been notified that a place has been allocated for their child they must confirm their acceptance, in writing, by the date stipulated in the letter.
- 6.8. The final decision as to when a child is admitted and the allocation of morning, afternoon or 30-hours sessions rests with the headteacher and governing body.
- 6.9. Where places are remaining, later admissions are possible, up to the agreed admissions limit.
- 6.10. Places offered are available to the child from the date the place is offered, until the end of the summer term.
- 6.11. 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
- 6.12. The LA is not required to secure additional free hours where the parent has applied after 31 August, 31 December or 31 March, or for any codes issued after the dates outlined above.

## **7. Oversubscription**

- 7.1. Children who have an EHC plan that apply for a place at Bell Farm's nursery are admitted before the oversubscription criteria is applied.
- 7.2. The oversubscription criteria, set out in priority order, are as follows:
- Looked after children or children who were previously looked after but have subsequently been adopted or become subject to a residence or special guardianship order (parents/carers must state which local authority and provide evidence of this with their application form).
  - Children with a social, medical need who have been referred by a social worker, health professional, educational psychologist, outreach worker or inclusion officer (evidence must be provided with the application).
  - Children of members of staff who have:
    - been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the nursery is made;
    - been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage
  - Children who will have a sibling attending the main school at the time of admission or are expected to have a sibling attending the main school (Names of siblings to be given on the application form).
  - Children who turn 4 years old between 1 September of the year of admission and 31 August in the following year. This gives priority to older children who will be due to transfer to reception in the next academic year and hence only have one year to attend Nursery.
  - Children who live closest to the school according to a straight-line measurement.
  - All other children.

- The governing board may also give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children eligible for the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium, or the service premium.
- Where there is a tiebreak scenario within the criteria, priority will be given firstly to a child who lives closest to the nursery based on a straight-line measurement, then by date of birth, with the older child given priority.

## **8. Waiting 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 waiting list in order of the criteria and not by date of application.
- 8.2. If a place becomes available, the school will contact the parents of the child at the top of the list.
- 8.3. 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.
- 8.4. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available.

## **9. Withdrawing offers**

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

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

## **10. Delayed starts**

- 10.1. Following receipt of a completed admissions booklet, following the offer of a place, the start date can only be delayed once, and only be delayed by one month, before the child's reserved place will be open to others and the child's name added back onto the waiting list.
- 10.2. Notice of a delayed start or withdrawal must be made in writing.



## **11. Non-Attendance**

- 11.1. Parents must inform the nursery by 9am if their child is unable to attend for the whole or part of a day when they are due to attend.
- 11.2. Parents paying for the additional 15 hours will be charged the full cost of the care, regardless of whether or not their child attends nursery.

## **12. Refusal of admission**

- 12.1. A child is only refused admission if one of the following criteria are met:
  - The school has reached its nursery admissions limit
  - The child is not of the appropriate age
- 12.2. As nursery education is not compulsory, parents do not have a statutory right to appeal against the admission authority's (governing body) refusal to award a place to their child.
- 12.3. Parents may appeal to the SEND tribunal against the provision named by the authority in the EHC plan.

## **13. Admission to Reception**

- 13.1. A place in Bell Farm Primary School's Nursery does not guarantee a place in Reception at the school.
- 13.2. Surrey County Council is the admission authority for Bell Farm Primary School. Bell Farm School website ([www.bell-farm.co.uk/admissions](http://www.bell-farm.co.uk/admissions)) and Surrey CC website ([www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions)) give details of when and how to apply for a place in reception.

## **14. Transition arrangements**

- 14.1. Parents are invited to visit the school prior to the transition into Reception. Dates for the school tours are advertised on the school website.
- 14.2. During the summer term, children who are staying at Bell Farm and transitioning into reception are invited to sessions held with their future reception teachers.
- 14.3. 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.
- 14.4. Further information relating to the transition between Nursery and Reception can be found in the school's Transition Policy.

## **15. Data protection**

- 15.1. The nursery will act in compliance with the Data Protection Policy when processing personal data.

15.2. When processing and publishing information, the nursery will ensure it meets its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. 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.

## **16. Other information**

16.1. The Headteacher and Governors reserve the right to change any nursery sessions following discussions with the parents, if this is deemed necessary for the well-being of the child and fellow pupils. This will always be carried out in partnership with the parent and the aim will always be to ensure that the child is able to manage the full number of hours allocated as soon as possible.

16.2. Certain items are not provided by the school and parents/carers are expected to provide these if necessary

- Nappies
- Nappy sacks/bags
- Wet wipes
- Sun Cream

16.3. Parents/Carers need to provide a healthy lunch for those children that stay for lunch. The school's packed lunch policy must be adhered to and the lunch must be nut free and not contain chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks.

Policy source: Nursery Admissions Policy Schoolbus website, dated August 2022.

<b>Status of Non-Statutory Policy</b>	<b>Date</b>
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