



Birches First School

*Believe, Grow, Succeed ...*

*...to be the best 'me' I can be.*

# Nursery Admission Policy

For

September 2022

## Statement of intent

Birches First 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 Birches First School.

### 1. Legal framework

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

#### Legislation

- Children Act 2004
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education and Adoption Act 2016
- Childcare Act 2016

#### Guidance

- DfE (2014) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- DfE (2017) 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE (2017) 'Early years entitlements: operational guide'

### 2. Free childcare arrangements

3. Birches First School can accommodate a maximum of 39 nursery children within one session.
4. The school offers 30 Hours Free Childcare as an extension to the universal 15 Hours Free Childcare.
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.
6. Parents wanting to access the 30 Hours Free Childcare entitlement must apply to do so through the digital childcare service.
7. Parents are able to access the 30 Hours Free Childcare for 38 weeks out of the year – i.e. during term time.
8. The sessions offered to nursery children are as follows:

- For children eligible for 30 Hours Free Childcare comprising of: – six hours daily (plus a daily charge for lunch and lunchtime care). There is also an option for Before and After Nursery provision charged at an additional cost)
- All other children – 15 hours comprising of three hours childcare daily (free for children from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday) – morning or afternoon session. (Optional, additional

sessions are available at an additional cost providing Wrap-a-round care – for example, for morning children; breakfast club, add-on afternoon sessions and afterschool care at Birches Club. For afternoon children; lunch and afterschool care at Birches Club.)

## 9. Eligibility for 30 Hours Free Childcare

10. 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

11. 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.

12. Parents can only start claiming their 30 hours free childcare the term following the date they receive a decision from HMRC. The eligibility code must be valid on the first day of the term in order for funding to be received for that term. For this reason, parents are urged to apply as soon as possible. Parents are responsible for ensuring their codes are valid.

13. 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 their 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.

14. Parents will be prompted every three months by HMRC to reconfirm that they remain eligible for free childcare.

15. The LA will audit the eligibility codes at six points during the year to identify any children who have fallen out of eligibility.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. The grace period will not continue once a child has reached compulsory school age.

19. 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.
20. 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.
21. If a child becomes ineligible for the 30 hours free childcare, they will still be entitled to 15 hours of free childcare.

## 22. Eligibility for Rising 3s

It may be possible for a child to start Nursery as a 'Rising 3' before their 15 Hours Free Childcare entitlement begins. For example, a child turning 3 in September could start at an agreed time shortly after their birthday instead of waiting for the start of the next term in January. This would be subject to availability, admissions criteria and additional charges.

Priority will be given to 3 and 4 year old children who are eligible for the free early years entitlement before allocating Rising 3 places.

Universal 15 hours free childcare entitlement as follows...

(Some children will be eligible for 30 hours childcare.)

Child turns three between....	Universal 15 hours free childcare entitlement begins the following...
1 September and 31 December	January
1 January and 31 March	April
1 April and 31 August	September

For example, a child who turns 3 on October 4<sup>th</sup> could, if places are available and subject to admissions criteria, start...

- as a Rising 3 from the 5<sup>th</sup> October (subject to daily charges)
- in the January following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday (for either 15 or 30 free hours, depending on eligibility, plus optional wraparound care).

Or

- in the September following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday (for either 15 or 30 free hours, depending on eligibility, plus optional wraparound care).

Children joining the Nursery class as Rising 3s (just after their third birthday) or in the January or April following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday will NOT automatically keep the Nursery Class place in the following September. **They will need to reapply for a place** for the September which will be subject to the Nursery admissions criteria.

The September following a child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday to the following July is termed as 'the Nursery year'

## 23. Application timetable

24. All children are entitled to 15 Hours Free Childcare from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Some children will be eligible for 30 Hours Free Childcare.
25. Parents may register their interest in a place at the nursery at any time.
26. Application forms can be obtained from the main office and accessed on the school's website.

For the academic year 2022-2023;

Applications will open 01/1/21

Applications will close 25/3/22

27. Acceptance and non-acceptance letters are sent out on the following dates:

Offer letter posted on 8/4/22

Acceptance letter to be returned to Birches First School by 6/5/22 (Parents declaration form MUST be included)

- For places in Autumn term – September 2022

28. Where places are remaining, later admissions are possible, up to the agreed admissions limit.
29. Places offered are available to the child from the date the place is offered, until 31 August following their fourth birthday.

## 30. Oversubscription

31. Children who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan that names the school are admitted before the oversubscription criteria is applied.
  32. Children with an EHC plan that does not name the school will be referred to the School Admission Team to determine an appropriate place, in accordance with the LA's Fair Access Protocol.
  33. 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. The 2021 School Admissions Code (the Code) requires children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted to be given equal first priority in admission arrangements. This advice refers to these children as internationally adopted previously looked after children – "IAPLAC".

- Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission *(For admission purposes, a brother or sister is a child who lives at the main address provided and either: have one or both natural parents in common; are related by a parents marriage; are adopted or fostered by a common parent or are unrelated children who live at the main address, whose parents live as partners.)*
- Children of staff who have:
  - Been employed at the school for two or more years at time the application for admission is made.
- Children living within the catchment area for the nursery school.
- All other children

34. 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.

### 35. Reserve list

- 36. 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.
- 37. If a place becomes available, the nursery will contact the parents of the child at the top of the list.
- 38. 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.
- 39. Placing a child's name on the reserve list does not guarantee that a place will become available.

### 40. Withdrawing offers

- 41. 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 four weeks
  - A child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education
  - A family registering their child at two maintained settings

### 42. Refusal of admission

43. 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

- 44. Parents do not have a statutory right to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to award a place to their child.
- 45. Parents may appeal to the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) tribunal against the provision named by the authority in the EHC plan.

#### 46. Transition arrangements

- 47. Parents are invited to visit the school prior to the transition.
- 48. Further visits are arranged according to the child's needs.
- 49. Separate transition meetings are held for children with EHC plans, involving all agencies.

