



Our children leave Mile Oak thinking big with no limit on their potential. The school family works together to inspire and support every child. They learn and achieve through inspirational teaching in a lively, ambitious environment. Every child is nurtured to gain the creativity, responsibility and full breadth of skills required to take an active and fulfilling role in society.

# Little Oaks Nursery: Admissions Policy

<b>Date</b>	<b>February 2023</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>February 2024</b>

## **Introduction**

Little Oaks Nursery seeks to provide high quality child centred nursery education to children and families in our local community. We will deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum through a range of balanced and stimulating learning contexts led and facilitated by early year's experts. Our aim is to offer a happy, fun, nurturing and exciting learning environment where each child can achieve their learning goals on an individual basis.

This policy sets out the way in which access and entitlement to the benefits of high-quality child centred nursery education, on a fair and equitable basis, is ensured.

Little Oaks Nursery is a 40-place nursery for children aged 2, 3 and 4 years. We accept children any time after they have turned 2, on the understanding that fees will be payable where children have not yet become eligible for funding.

The nursery manager, senior leadership of the school, together with the governor led nursery committee have absolute control over the number of places offered for each age range; the exact number of places is flexible depending on a variety of factors, including the needs to the individual children attending the setting.

**We aim to:**

- Establish an admissions policy governed by clearly defined criteria that may be articulated to parents/carers and other professionals
- Provide parents/carers access to information on the governments 'help with childcare costs' initiatives
- Help promote consistency of practice and procedure between nursery classes in Brighton and Hove
- Ensure, as far as possible, that all children who gain a place will fully benefit from nursery education

**1. Opening hours and fees**

1.1 We are a term time only setting (38 weeks of the year). Our opening dates match Brighton and Hove schools; you can find these here: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/brighton-hove-schools/school-term-and-holiday-dates>

1.2 In line with Brighton and Hove Schools, we are closed to children on bank holidays and for INSET days. The latter provide essential time for staff training and development. The INSET days can be checked on our school website: <https://www.mileoakschool.co.uk/info-for-parents/term-dates/>

1.3 Little Oaks nursery is open 8am-4pm and funded hours are offered in sessions, between 9am-3pm

1.4 Nursery children with siblings in the school are offered a soft start, this begins at 8.50am. Children who do not have siblings in the school will not be permitted until 9am unless parents/carers have paid for the early start hour (8-9am)

1.5 The current prices for non-funded places are as follows:

- 9-3 (6 hours): £34.50
- 9-12 (3 hours): £17.25
- 12-3 (3 hours): £17.25
- Additional hours (8-9/12-1/3-4): £5.75

**1.6 Any necessary increases to our fee structure will be communicated in writing 1 month in advance of the new price taking effect.**

## **2. Funding**

2.1 We offer funded places for 2-year-olds and 3/ 4-year-olds, subject to eligibility and availability. Please see the guidance below for further information on government funding options.

### **2.2 Funding for 3 and 4 years olds**

There are two types of free childcare for your 3- or 4-year-old:

- **Universal free childcare** - For all 3- and 4-year-olds. Children can use up to 570 hours each year, up to a maximum of 15 hours over 38 weeks
- **Extended free childcare (also known as 30 hours' free childcare)** - For eligible working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds. Children can use an additional 570 hours each year, up to a maximum of 30 hours per week over 38 weeks. Parents/carers must apply online through the Childcare Choices website: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> If eligible you will receive a 30 hours free childcare code and this must be provided before the place is allocated

2.3 Foster parent families may also be eligible for extended free childcare. You must be employed or self-employed outside of your fostering role and accessing additional hours must be in the best interests of the child. Speak to your foster child's social worker about whether you meet the eligibility criteria and how to apply.

### **2.4 When does my child become eligible?**

All 3- and 4-year-olds become eligible the term after they become 3 years of age

This means a child born on or between:

- 1 April and 31 August - will become eligible for funding from the beginning of the term starting in September
- 1 September and 31 December - will become eligible for funding from the beginning of the term starting in January
- 1 January and 31 March - will become eligible for funding from the beginning of the term starting in April
- Eligible working parents wishing to access the extended free childcare must apply for, and receive a 30 hours code the term before taking up an extended free childcare place

### **2.5 Funding for 2-year-olds:**

Free childcare (also known as free entitlement) is provided by the Government. It allows *some* 2-year-olds 570 hours each year, or a maximum of 15 hours over 38 weeks.

### **2.6 When does my child become eligible?**

- Forty per cent of 2-year-olds are eligible for free entitlement. To qualify, the child must be of eligible age and the parent(s)/ carers in receipt of one or more specific income-based benefits or meet other specific criteria
- To check eligibility, visit the Childcare Choices website (See above). You will need to provide evidence when you apply
- An eligible child born on or between:

- 1 April and 31 August - can apply online from 1 April. If the application is approved, can then access funding from the beginning of the term starting in September, following their second birthday
- 1 September and 31 December - can apply online from 1 September. If the application is approved, can then access funding from the beginning of the term starting in January, following their second birthday
- 1 January and 31 March - can apply online from 1 January. If the application is approved, can then access funding from the beginning of the term starting in April, following their second birthday

### **3. Little Oaks Nursery Attendance Options and Guidelines**

3.1 We strongly recommend that parents and carers choose attendance options that fit with our patterns and guidance. We know that children accessing nursery education regularly and consecutively settle quickly, develop stronger relationships with their teachers and peers and make the best progress in their learning and growth

#### **3.2 Little Oaks Nursery Attendance Patterns**

- **Option 1, Full Time:** Monday-Friday 9-3 (30 hours)
- **Option 2, beginning of the week:** Monday, Tuesday 9-3 and Wednesday 9-12 (15 hours)
- **Option 3, end of the week:** Wednesday 12-3, and Thursday, Friday 9-3 (15 hours)
- **Option 4, mornings:** Monday-Friday 9-12 (15 hours)
- **Option 5, afternoons:** Monday-Friday 12-3 (15 hours)

3.3 Our lunch session runs from 12 -12.30. For those children attending morning sessions only, the lunch period is not included. It is possible, subject to availability, to extend morning only sessions to include the lunch period. This is at a cost of £5.75.

3.4 Little Oaks Nursery reserve the right to adjust the attendance options to meet the needs of the children and the nursery. Families will be given one school terms notice before any changes take effect.

#### **3.4 Little Oaks Nursery Attendance Guidelines**

##### **2-year-olds: non-Funded:**

- A minimum of 2 sessions must be taken (sessions are 3 hours: 9-12/ 12-3)

##### **2-year-olds: Funded (15 hours for families that meet specific criteria):**

- Choose an attendance pattern (options 2-5)
- After settling period completes, a minimum of 2 sessions must be taken, within in the pattern
- Work towards attending full 15-hour pattern

##### **3- and 4-year-olds: Universally Funded (15 hours available for all children of correct age):**

- Attendance patterns only
- Full entitlement should be taken, unless exceptional circumstances

##### **3-Year-olds: Extended funding (30 hours for working families that meet specific criteria):**

- Attendance patterns only

- Preference given to those taking their full 30-hour entitlement
- A minimum of 15 hours, unless exceptional circumstances

**Additional sessions:**

- Lunch hour (12-1) can be added to morning sessions, for £5.75
- We offer flexible booking for sessions (8-9am/9-12pm/12-1pm/1-3pm/3-4pm) with available space; these can be booked a week in advance and can be a one-off booking. These sessions are strictly, subject to availability

**4. Making an application**

4.1 The majority of places become available in September but, subject to availability, we are able to accept intakes all year round

4.2 Parents and carers, who wish to consider sending their children to our Nursery, are encouraged to visit by appointment. Once you've visited and decided that Little Oaks Nursery is the right place for your child and your family, it's time to make an application

4.2 The first step in securing a place for your child is to complete our Little Oaks Registration Form. This is available on our website or you can request one by emailing or calling the school, or by popping in to see our friendly admin team - [office@mileoak.brighton-hove.sch.uk](mailto:office@mileoak.brighton-hove.sch.uk) / Tel: 01273 077114

4.3 Please be sure to complete all sections of the registration form as this helps us to allocate places quickly and fairly. Please be note that **completion of the form itself doesn't guarantee a nursery space**

4.4 On receipt of the above, the school admin team will make telephone contact to acknowledge and inform parents/ carers when further contact will be made. This is usually in the half term before children are due to start at Nursery

4.5 You will receive a call from our admin team the half term before your child is due to start at nursery – they will confirm the details on your registration form. You will then receive confirmation of your child's place in writing, the half a term before they are due to start at Nursery. Places will be confirmed as follows:

- Autumn places will be confirmed in the previous May
- Spring places will be confirmed in the previous October
- Summer places will be confirmed in the previous February

4.6 It may be possible for places to be confirmed more quickly, depending on when the application is made and the availability at the time of receipt

4.7 The confirmation letter will also include 'settling in' information and provide guidance on further information to be shared and requested

4.8 If preferred sessions are unavailable, you will be contacted to discuss any alternative sessions that are available. Should none of the available sessions be convenient, you will be placed on a waiting list for your preferred sessions

4.10 Please note, whilst the wait list is an effective way to register your interest in preferred sessions. We do not operate on a solely "first come, first served" basis. When the nursery is

oversubscribed or full for specific sessions, new places are offered in accordance with our priority criteria (see below).

4.11 The registration forms on the waiting list will naturally be reviewed in the following half term however consideration can take place in advance of this

## **5. Allocation of places**

### **5.1 Priority criteria**

If there are insufficient places available to meet demand, all places, regardless of age, will be allocated to children in accordance with the following list of priorities:

1. Children living in North Portslade home postcode BN41 2 in the care of the local authority, or who were previously in the care of the local authority
2. Children living in North Portslade home postcode BN41 2 with compelling medical or other exceptional reasons for attending the school in accordance with appendix A
3. Children living in North Portslade home postcode BN41 2 who have an elder sibling in the school or those that will have an elder sibling joining the school, in the coming September
4. Other children living outside North Portslade but within the city of Brighton & Hove. Such places will be offered in accordance with the criteria set out in points 1-2 followed by those living closest to the nursery

### **We also consider:**

- A balance of age ranges catered for by the nursery class, including terms of birth
- Preference will be given to children accessing their full 15 or 30-hours funding entitlement within one of our attendance patterns and those following out attendance guidance above
- The Individual needs of children and their families

5.3 Decisions will be made by the Nursery Manager, Senior Leadership team and the Panel of the Nursery's Governing Committee. Decisions to offer a place will be based on the criteria and procedures laid out in this admission policy. Decisions will be final and there is no right of appeal

5.4 The offer of a nursery place DOES NOT in any way mean automatic entitlement to the main school

5.6 Parents who accept a place will be expected to commit to their chosen hours on a term-by-term basis. Any requests to reduce hours, require written notice 4 weeks in advance, unless there are exceptional circumstances

5.7 Any requests to increase hours, for example when a child becomes eligible for funding/further funding, will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with the admissions policy and are subject to availability. Current attendance at Little Oaks does not guarantee an increase request

5.8 Should work patterns change meaning a child will no longer be entitled to the 30 hours, they will automatically be entitled to the 15 hours if they follow one of our attendance patterns

## **6. Starting at Little Oaks**

6.1 Once your place has been confirmed, you will be given a starter pack containing key nursery information. This includes how to create various parent accounts, order milk and lunches (optional) along with key policies to read and/or sign. The nursery information booklet will provide you with further information about our nursery curriculum, staffing, vision and values and essential tips about what to bring

### **6.2 Settling**

- Joining a pre-school is a big step for the child and the family alike. Each settling period will be tailored to suit individual children but this usually consists of 3 sessions, over the course of a week, with their familiar adult reducing the time they spend each time
- During our busiest intake months, we will offer 'stay and play' sessions for all new starters
- Please see our nursery information booklet for more details on our settling process

### **6.3 Lunches**

- Hot meals provided by Caterlink can be ordered daily for £2.20. It is essential that you let the nursery know on drop off the meal chosen for your child. Alternatively, you may send your child with a **cold** packed lunch – please see our nursery information booklet for further information on nursery lunches
- Little Oaks reserves the right to increase the charge to parents/carers for lunches at short notice and without a full fee review in the event that Caterlink increase their costs

## **7. Paying fees**

7.1 Where payment is required, invoices will be sent in advance of the month they are due

7.2 Fees still not received after an initial chase letter has been sent and the grace period of a week has past, will incur a, discretionary, 5% fee which will be added to the following months invoice

7.3 Where absence or organised holidays fall on normal paid sessions, full payment is required; there is no option to exchange

7.4 There is not a charge for training days and bank holidays

7.5 When closed for conditions beyond the nursery's control, there will be a charge for the first three consecutive full days, if the nursery remains closed for a longer period, any further decisions will be taken by the nursery management team

7.6 Payment can be made through 'tax free childcare' accounts. Please ensure you set up the transaction from your childcare account in a timely fashion so that no late payment charges are incurred

7.7 Payment can be made through 'childcare vouchers' but it is essential that you check that your provider is registered with our accounts department. Please contact the school admin team to do this

## **8. Leaving the nursery**

8.1 If a child is withdrawn from nursery, parents and carers must give notice in writing, 4 weeks before they wish to leave. This can be discretionary, for special circumstances – which should be discussed as soon as possible with the nursery management

8.2 The place of a child who has been withdrawn cannot be held open for a trial period and will be automatically made available

8.3 If parents/ carers later wish their child to return to the nursery, the fact that a child has previously been in the nursery class will in no way influence the decision on being offered a place

## **9. Attendance and loss of nursery place**

9.1 If attendance and punctuality is poor or erratic the nursery manager will talk to parents/carers and remind them that, for the child to benefit fully from nursery education, attendance needs to be regular and punctual. This conversation should be recorded on school systems

9.2 If after a period of two weeks attendance and punctuality remain poor, a letter will be sent to the parents / carers inviting them to meet with the headteacher or an alternative member of the senior leadership team

9.3 If, following the meeting, there is no sustained improvement in attendance within an agreed period, then the child **may** lose their place. Parents/ carers will be notified of the loss of place in writing

9.4 If a child is absent for a period of three weeks without any contact from the parents/ carers and the school has been unable to make contact within this time, the child **may** lose their place. This will be decided by the nursery manager, senior leadership team and approved by the governing committee



## APPENDIX A

### Description of Special, Medical & Social Needs

- a. The child is unlikely to achieve or maintain or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health and development without the provision of services by the local authority
  - b. The child's health or development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired without the provision of such services
- Vulnerable children and families
- c. The child has special or additional needs
  - d. Children with medical conditions where the effect on the child's health, development or family relationships requires enhanced health visitor support
  - e. Developmental concerns where liaison with other professionals confirms the level of significance to the child or family
  - f. Emotional and behavioural difficulties that require prolonged health visiting intervention and/or more specialist referral
  - g. Other family circumstances which might include domestic violence, parental mental or physical ill health and/or substance abuse, isolated families who may be from a different cultural background, siblings of children with special needs, parenting abilities, environmental deprivation

Whilst this list is reasonably comprehensive, there may be other circumstances which make a compelling case for admission as a special medical or social need. These needs will have to be certified by a doctor, health visitor, family support worker or social worker