

The Wharf Nursery School

Admissions

Valid from: January 2021 Amended: July 2021

Next review due: January 2022

Admissions Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with Surrey County Council's admission arrangements for maintained nursery schools and classes.

The Wharf is a local authority Nursery School for children aged 2 to 5 years maintained and funded mainly by Surrey County Council. Children would normally leave to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. It is possible to delay a child's start into Reception and continue their education in the nursery if it is agreed by parents and staff that this would be in the best interests of the child- and there are spaces available.

The local authority has delegated children's admission to the Governing Body. Admissions and session allocation are decided by the Headteacher (HT) in the first instance (supported by the Office staff). Where places are oversubscribed, a final decision rests with a panel of governors on behalf of the governing body.

Group for children aged 2-3 (Little Stars)

There are eight or twelve children in this group, at any one time.

Children may be admitted in the term after their second birthday, if there are places available. Priority will usually be given to FEET funded children and remaining places will be self-funded. Children must attend for a minimum of two sessions up to the maximum allocation of 15 hours (as available). Parents/ carers should meet with the HT or Lead Practitioner, to discuss individual needs. Children with complex special educational needs will be considered on an individual basis in the same way as three and four year olds.

Transition into the three to four year old group:

Children will not automatically transfer to 15 hours when they are eligible, as this will depend on spaces available and individual needs.

Children will be integrated into some of the sessions as part of normal play and are supported to join group-time and lunch sessions in the summer term. They will then be offered July and September play sessions, a home visit, as well as a gradual induction into the main nursery. This process is adapted to meet the individual needs of each child.

Oversubscription criteria will be followed in the same way as the main nursery, if applications exceed the number of places.

Group for children aged 3-4 (Rockets)

The maximum number of children in a session would not normally exceed 48.

Many children attend for 15 hours a week (two six-hour days and one three-hour day at the beginning or end of the week). If possible, the Nursery will try to accommodate the parent's preference for one end of the week, but the oversubscription criteria will be followed, once all places have been allocated.

30 (15+15) hour places are available for families who meet the criteria set by the Government (see the online information provided by Surrey County Council or Gov.uk) or who wish to pay for the additional hours (please note that parents will need to re-confirm their eligibility every 3 months for the funded +15 hours). Parents who meet the criteria for 15+15 hours may choose to accept 15 hours at The Wharf.

Children are normally eligible for a place in the main nursery, the term after their third birthday. Admission will be subject to an application being received; places being available and if appropriate, an agreement that the setting can cater for a child's needs (see 'priority need').

Children who meet the criteria for FEET funding or who are self-funded can be admitted in the term in which they are three if there are spaces (see criteria for 'children without priority need'). All rising threes must attend for a minimum of two sessions.

The Application Process

Names are accepted onto the 'expression of interest' list at any time, but most children start in September and these places are usually allocated by the end of the Spring term. If there are spaces, children may start as soon as they are eligible.

Post Covid, parents/carers should make an appointment to visit the nursery and complete an application form. They are encouraged to access a virtual tour via a link on the website. Families are asked to contact the nursery again before their child is two to share any additional information and confirm that they would still like a place.

When the demand for places exceeds the number available, the priority for admission is given according to the oversubscription criteria set out below.

Discussions with professionals involved and representatives from Surrey may form part of this process where there are family or individual needs.

Resourced Place Allocation

Surrey County Council Early Years Governance panel allocates resourced, 15 hour places for 3-4 year olds with identified special educational needs- for example, global developmental delay, speech , language and communication needs (including Autism or physical and sensory needs). The panel sits in the Spring term before the child starts in September and is made up of local authority representatives; health professionals; Early Years professionals and teachers (SENCOs and Portage). The panel considers where the child's individual needs can best be met and funding arrangements are confirmed.

Criteria for oversubscription to the five named places

These places are allocated to children with a learning need for a place, where it can be demonstrated that no other nursery can meet these needs. Resources available and the number of children already accessing additional support will be considered. This includes children with complex medical needs

Where any category is oversubscribed, applicants will be ranked according to date when the nursery received the application form and HT has the final say.

A child who meets the criteria for a named place may be eligible for discretionary funding or an inclusion grant and they may be offered a place on these terms.

Oversubscription criteria for 15 hour / plus 15 hour places (30 hours)

Children with a priority need:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
2. Children with a social/medical need for a place. There should be documentary evidence to support this claim and children do not have to fit the 'named child' criteria. This may be as a result of Early Years Pupil Premium, subject to a Child Protection plan or have English as an Additional Language.
3. Children who have a sibling expected to be attending the nursery on the date of admission.

Other factors which will be considered for children without priority need:

- 3-4s:** 1. Children who will be 4 years old during the year, as they are likely to have only one year at

Nursery.

2. Children who were FEET funded as 2 year olds
3. Younger siblings of children who have attended in the last three years

- 2-3s:**
1. Children who will be three in that academic year.
 2. Younger siblings of children who have attended in the last three years

Tie breaker

Where two or more children share priority for a place (and are at the same point on the 'expression of interest list') governors will draw lots to determine which child should be offered the place.

Expression of interest

Where there are more applicants than places available, lists will be kept for each year according to the oversubscription criteria. Parents should complete an application form before places are allocated at the end of February, ready for the September start (the deadline may be changed for children who are not eligible for a place at that time).

Definition of terms

Looked after and previously looked after children

Looked after and previously looked after children will be considered to be:

- Children who are registered as being in the care of a Local Authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989(a), e.g. fostered or living in a children's home, at the time an application for a school is made; and
- Children who have left care through adoption (in accordance with Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002), a residence order (in accordance with Section 8 of the Children Act 1989) or special guardianship order (in accordance with Section 14A of the Children Act 1989).

Social/Medical Need

Supporting evidence is required from a professional such as a doctor, consultant or other medical professional for medical cases or a social worker, health visitor, member of Family Centre staff or a family support worker for other social circumstances.

This evidence must confirm the circumstances of the case and must set out why the nursery is the most appropriate school for the child.

Providing evidence does not guarantee that a child will be offered a place and in each case a decision will be made based on whether the evidence demonstrates that a priority placement should be made and whether the child's needs can be met.

Siblings

A sibling will be considered to be a brother or sister (that is, another child of the same parents, whether living at the same address or not), a half-brother or half-sister or a stepbrother or stepsister or an adoptive or foster sibling, living at the same address.

Home address

The child's home address excludes any business, relative's or childminder's address and must be the child's normal place of residence. In the case of formal equal shared custody, it will be up to the parents to agree which address to use. In other cases, it is where the child spends most of the time.

Agreed and Signed off by	FGB
Policy Type	Statutory
Valid From	January 2021 Amended July 2021
Next Review Due	January 2022