



# Admissions Policy

2026- 27

This policy should be read in conjunction with Surrey County Council's admission arrangements for maintained nursery schools and classes. The local authority has delegated the admissions of nursery children to the Governing Body of The Wharf Nursery School.

The Wharf is a local authority Nursery School for children aged 2 to 5 years maintained and funded primarily by Surrey County Council. Children would normally leave to start school in the September following their fourth birthday.

The Admissions Committee will work with the Headteacher to allocate places following the admissions criteria set out below. Parents wishing to apply for a place for their child, must complete the application form and submit it directly to school either electronically or in paper form.

## **2. Allocation of places**

For the purposes of admissions, 'parent' will refer to any person who has parental responsibility for a child. This may be a carer or guardian.

We strongly encourage all families to visit The Wharf before making an application to enable you to get a feel for the provision. Parents wishing to apply for a place for their child, must complete the application form and submit it directly to the school. The allocation of places usually starts at the end of February for the following September entry. Sometimes places are available mid-year in which case they will be offered as soon as is possible. Once a child has been offered a place, the parent must return a signed confirmation to accept the place.

Places at The Wharf Nursery School are prioritised for children living in the Borough of Waverley. Any applications outside of this area will be considered after all other places are allocated in accordance with the criteria below.

We offer universal entitlement for eligible two, three and four year olds subject to space being available. This includes funded entitlement for eligible two year olds, entitlement for working families of two year olds, universal funding entitlement for three and four year olds as well as the additional entitlement for working families, where space allows.

## **3. Places for two year olds (known at The Wharf as Little Stars)**

We have capacity to provide 18, part time spaces for two year olds over the course of the week. Children may be admitted in the term after their second birthday, if places are available. We admit two year olds who meet the eligibility criteria to receive Funded Early Education for Two year olds (FEET) and children who meet the criteria for working parent entitlement. We offer different patterns of provision, some morning places and some 2.5 day places to try to meet families needs.

Children must attend for a minimum of two sessions up to the maximum allocation of 15 hours (as available). Children will not automatically transfer to 15 hours when they are eligible, as this will depend on spaces available and individual need. However, in the September following their third birthday children will be automatically entitled to take up a 3 year old place in the Nursery Rocket group. Oversubscription criteria will be followed if applications exceed the number of places.

Places are offered under the following criteria:-

Where there are more applications than places available, eligible children will be ranked according to the following criteria:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
  - a. Children who are registered as being in the care of a Local Authority
  - b. Children who have previously been in the care of a Local Authority
2. Children with an exceptional social/medical need for a place.

There should be documentary evidence to support this claim such as a doctor, paediatrician, consultant, therapist such as a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social worker, health visitor, housing officer, the police, family centre practitioner, Home Start.

3. Children of staff.
4. Children who have a sibling expected to be attending the nursery on the date of admission.
  - a. A sibling is 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.
5. Children who will be 4 years old between 1st September 2024 and 31st August 2025 as they are likely to have only one year at Nursery.
6. Younger siblings of children who have attended in the last three years.

#### **4. Group for children aged 3-4 (known at The Wharf as Rockets)**

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

All children attend for a minimum of 15 hours a week (two six-hour days and one three-hour day on a Wednesday). If possible, the Nursery will try to accommodate the parent's preference for either 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 for working parents set by the Government (see online information provided by Surrey County Council or Gov.uk) or who wish to pay for the additional hours. Parents will need to re-confirm their eligibility every 3 months for the extended 15 hours.

If a parent chooses to split this funding between two Nurseries, The Wharf Nursery school must receive the 15 hours universal entitlement.

Children are normally eligible for a place in the Nursery Rocket group, the term after their third birthday. Admission will be subject to an application being received and a place being available. 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. All rising threes must attend for a minimum of two sessions.

Where there are more applications than places available, eligible children will be ranked according to the following criteria:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
  - a. Children who are registered as being in the care of a local authority
  - b. Children who have previously been in the care of a local authority
2. Exceptional social/medical need -

Supporting evidence is required from relevant professional, such as a doctor, paediatrician, consultant, therapist (such as speech and language, occupational therapist, physiotherapist), educational psychologist, social worker, health visitor, housing officer, the police or family centre practitioner.

3. Children of staff
4. Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission
5. Children who will turn 4 years old between 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026 (this is to give priority to older children who will be due to transfer to Reception in 2026 and hence only have one year left to attend nursery)

6. Children who will turn 3 years old between 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026 (these children will be able to stay on in nursery for another year in 2026/27 as they will not be due to start Reception until September 2027)

7. Any other children

## **5. Procedures for admission**

Where any category is oversubscribed, children will be ranked according to the straight line distance that they live from the school with priority being given to children who live closest to the school and within the Borough of Waverley. The home address must be supplied, which is the child's normal place of residence, not a relative or childminder. In the case of shared custody, it will be up to the parents to agree which address to use. We will not accept a temporary address if we believe it has been used solely or mainly to obtain a school place when an alternative address is available to that child. All distances will be measured by the computerised Geographical Information System by Surrey admissions team. Where this gives the same answer, we will contact Surrey Admissions to prioritise the admissions list.

In all cases, admission will be subject to an application being made and places being available. We will endeavour to inform applicants of the outcome of their application in writing, at least one term before admission. If an applicant is offered a place, parents must confirm acceptance directly with the school by the date stipulated. The final decision with regard to admission and the allocation of sessions rests with the Governing Body.

Where the Nursery is oversubscribed it will maintain a waiting list in criteria order. Due to the large number of children placed on waiting lists, it is likely that all admissions will take place in the September after which a child turns 2 or 3.

## **6. Fee paying sessions**

The Wharf allows parents to pay for extra nursery provision, beyond their funded entitlement, however, such requests will only be considered once all applications for funded early years entitlement have been processed and where there is space available.

## **7. Closing date for applications**

The closing date for September 2026 admissions is the 15th January 2026, all applications will be reviewed on this date regardless of the date they were handed into the nursery by the Governor Admissions Panel. Applications received after this date will

be added to our 'expression of interest' list and will be managed in accordance to the above criteria.

Approved by the Governing Body: date