

# NURSERY ADMISSIONS POLICY



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 Signed Chair of Trustees	

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*WHERE LEARNING IS UNSTOPPABLE AND ASPIRATIONS HAVE NO LIMITS*

# NURSERY ADMISSIONS POLICY

Orwell Multi Academy Trust (OMAT) is the admission authority and has responsibility for setting these admission arrangements and for making decisions regarding admissions applications to Nursery classes in trust schools.

In setting this policy we have noted the principles outlined in the DfE School Admissions Code, the 2010 Equality Act and the Statutory Guidance for LAs, Early Education and Childcare.

These admission arrangements aim to ensure that:

- practices and criteria used to decide the allocation of places are fair, clear and objective
- parents can clearly understand how places have been allocated
- oversubscription criteria are reasonable, clear, objective and procedurally fair and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation
- arrangements do not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group or a child with a disability or SEN
- parents are not discouraged from applying for a place because of other policies
- arrangements include an effective, clear and fair tie-breaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated.

**Attendance in a school's nursery class does not guarantee a place in the reception class of that or any other OMAT school as the Trust follows the Suffolk Admissions policy for entry into school.**

OMAT Nursery classes admit children eligible for Early Education Funding. All 3 and 4 years olds become eligible for Early Education Funding from the start of the term following their third birthday.

<b>Birthday</b>	<b>Free early education from beginning of</b>
1st September to 31st December	Spring Term (after Christmas holiday)
1st January to 31st March	Summer Term (after Easter holiday)
1st April to 31st August	Autumn Term (after Summer holiday)

## **2. Session times**

Individual session times offered may vary between schools in the Trust. Specific arrangements for individual schools can be seen in the appendices from p7.

## **3. Purchased hours**

Most schools will offer lunchtime provision and some may offer additional hours when not oversubscribed (see session times below). When charged for, the hourly rate for lunchtime childcare or additional hours is set by each Nursery. Depending on local school arrangements, parents may also purchase a school lunch at

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standard school lunch prices or they may provide their child with a packed lunch. Additional hours may be available within session times by negotiation with the school. This would only be the case when the nursery is under-subscribed and after all 15 hour and 30 hour application requests have been placed.

## **4. Key Dates\***

**Please see details for individual nurseries in Appendix 1 p7 (Grace Cook Primary) and Appendix 2 p11 (Springfield Infants & Nursery).**

## **5. Number of places at our Nurseries**

The number of children that can be admitted to our nurseries will depend on a number of factors including:

- The children who are already in attendance
- Their ages
- The floor space and the staffing ratios we must have
- The demand for places
- The ages of the children

Each school reserves the right not to run nursery sessions if the demand for places does not make it financially viable.

If there is unexpectedly high demand we will let Suffolk Early Years and Childcare Service know and work with them to support parents to find places in the locality for their children. If there is an increase in the demand for places the Trust may decide it is possible to increase the number of nursery places at the start of the following term in order to accommodate children on the waiting list or to reduce the places if there is a very low demand. Wherever possible, we will try to give your child a place at our nursery. Sometimes we may be able to offer you a place but the exact sessions you have requested may not be available. If this is the case, we will let you know and we can have a discussion about what we can offer. If there are no places available we will add your child's name to our waiting list. We would also advise you to contact the Family Information Service on 0345 60 800 33 who will be able to support you to find a place for your child. Sometimes there are fewer places than the number of children wanting them. If this happens, we use these oversubscription criteria to help us decide who will be offered places.

## **6. Oversubscription criteria:**

Please note that children aged three or four years old who have an Education, Health and Care plan which names the school nursery will be offered a place. If there are more applications than places available, the school will use the following criteria, in the order stated, to allocate places:

1. Children in care (looked after children) and children who were previously in care (children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been in care, including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care

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outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted).

2. Children who are the subject of a recognised child protection plan (under current legislation and drawn up by social care services) where a specific school nursery placement is identified
3. Children who are already in our provision and wish to extend their funded hours with us
4. Children wanting to take their full free entitlement with us (30 or 15 hours)
5. Siblings - children who are brothers and sisters of children already at the school, or who have already been offered a place, and are still there at the time of admission

## **Where the school has a catchment area**

6. Children who are ordinarily resident in the catchment area in date of birth order (oldest to youngest)
7. Children who are ordinarily resident outside the catchment area in date of birth order (oldest to youngest)

Using the above criteria places will be allocated until all of the session times are full.

## **7. Supporting notes:**

**Previously looked after children:** Children previously in care (previously looked after children) includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 6 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. This includes children who were in state care outside of England but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted only. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

**Siblings:** Children who are brothers and sisters of, or who live as a family at the same address as pupils who are already at the school or who have already been offered a place, and who will still be there at the time of admission. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap. If you have more than one child at the school, please name the youngest one.

**Twins, triplets and other multiple births:** Where applications are received from families with multiple birth siblings (twins, triplets, etc.) places will be allocated together at the nursery wherever possible. This recognises the exceptional nature of the emotional bonds between multiple birth siblings. Where that is not possible, parents will be invited to decide which of the children should be allocated the available place(s) or seek places at an alternative setting with sufficient vacancies to accommodate both or all of the multiple birth siblings.

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**Ordinarily resident:** By 'ordinarily resident' we mean the place where your child usually lives. We may need proof of this address. We will not treat your child as ordinarily resident if you rent or own a second home in the catchment area or if you use another address to give the impression that your child lives in the catchment area so that you have a higher priority for a place at the nursery. Where a child lives with separated parents who have shared responsibility, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Both parents must provide evidence in writing to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.

**Distance from the school:** If it is necessary to distinguish between children in a particular category, priority will be determined on the basis of distance between home and school. If it is necessary to use a tie-breaker to distinguish between two or more applications, a distance criterion will be used. We will give priority to applicants who live nearest to the school as measured by Admissions at Suffolk County Council. Where two or more children reside within a block of flats, they will be deemed to live at an equal distance from the School. In the event that two applicants competing for a single place at a school live the same distance from the school, the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn.

**Children of UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces):** OMAT school nurseries support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. For children of UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces) and returning Crown Servant families the school will consider a family posted to the area as meeting residence criteria for the designated area even if a residential address has not been identified. The school may allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or Quarters area address.

**Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers:** We recognise that these children may have difficulty securing an early education place. We therefore work closely with Suffolk Family Information Service and may prioritise these children for a place at our nursery if that is deemed to be the best way to meet the needs of the child and family.

**Tie Break:** If it is not possible to distinguish between applicants in a particular category (a tie break), schools will hold a drawing of lots with at least one independent person present.

**Waiting lists:** The nursery will keep a waiting list of applications that have not been allocated a place at the admissions meeting. If a place later becomes available it will be offered using the criteria above to the next child. Applications received after the closing date will be added to the waiting list and the criteria applied. Parents should be aware that children may move up or down the waiting list. Applications will not be considered on the length of time on a waiting list or by date of

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application. Once offered places cannot be deferred but new applications must be made for the following term.

**Places not taken up:** It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure contact details are kept up to date on the application form. Reasonable attempts will be made to contact the parents when a place is being offered which will include an email, a written letter to the home address and a follow up telephone call. If no response is received by the date indicated in the correspondence the offer will be automatically withdrawn and the place will be allocated to the next child on the waiting list. No further notification will be provided.

**Appeals:** There will be no right to an appeal but parents should be given the opportunity to receive an explanation from the Headteacher in writing and personally if requested. In cases where parents feel that this policy has not been applied correctly they should write to the CEO who will consider their appeal.

**Absence:** Any child with unauthorised absence for a period of 15 consecutive school days may have their place withdrawn. Any child with a withdrawn place must make a fresh application for a place and, if necessary, be considered in the following term's allocation process.

**Eligibility for 30 Hours:** To benefit from 30 hours free childcare, parents and carers will need to check their eligibility and apply via the government pages:  
<https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare>

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## Appendix : Grace Cook Primary School and Nursery

The Nursery admits children aged from two to four years old. Children can join the Nursery from the term after their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday and can stay in the Nursery until the end of the summer term after their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. The nursery is open for 48 weeks of the year from 7.45am – 6pm and a range of session options are available.

### Application Process

Parents/carers are welcome to apply for a place at Grace Cook Nursery at any point in the year. When a parent/carer contacts the Academy enquiring about a place for their child in the Nursery, the administration process will be explained. They will be informed whether there is currently a place available for their child and/or when a place may become available. If a place is available, the parent/carer will be invited to visit the Nursery; if the parent/carer agrees to abide by all the terms and conditions of administration, including the fees and arrangements for payment, they will be asked to arrange a home visit and free induction visit/s, and a start date for the child will be agreed.

If places are available, children can be admitted to the Nursery at the start of the term following their second or third birthday.

Parents may request a part time place. However, the nursery may need to take account of the balance between morning and afternoon places so it may not always be possible to fulfil all parents' requests.

Parents will need to accept the place offered in writing and will be asked to provide their child's birth certificate and proof of address.

Home visits will be carried out prior to a child taking up their place. Parents will also be asked to bring their child for a visit to the Nursery setting prior to the child starting, to meet staff and familiarise themselves with their new surroundings.

### Offer of Places

- The offer of places for September will take place in June.
- The offer of places for January will take place in November.
- The offer of places for April will take place in February.

In most circumstances, the school aims to have termly admissions in order to minimise disruption and to support induction arrangements. However, if spaces are available, children **may** be admitted at any point during the term following their second or third birthday.

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Unsuccessful applicants will be considered with the next group of applications.

## Places

**Free Universal Entitlement** – 15 hours per week, term time only, available from the term after the child's third birthday.

- Parents can register their child for a place at Grace Cook Nursery from their 2nd birthday, by completing a Nursery registration form
- All registrations to be considered and places offered to children will follow the criteria outlined in the Nursery Admissions Policy.
- Children who are three and four will be offered 15 free hours of nursery education, term time only, subject to availability from the term after their third birthday
- Places will be filled across the year if available, in accord with this Admission Policy

**Free Extended Entitlement** – 30 hours per week, term time only, available from the term after the child's third birthday for families who meet the following criteria:

- Both parents must be working – or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family
- Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage
- Each parent must have an annual income of less than £100,000
- One/both parent(s) is away on leave (parental, maternal etc.) or one/both parent(s) is on Statutory sick pay
- Parents on zero-hours contracts will be eligible, as are those who are registered as self-employed
- One parent is employed and the other parent has either: substantial caring responsibilities and/or disability; is a foster carer with their own three-and four-year-old children

To register eligibility for a 30hr Nursery Place parents must register on-line at <https://childcaresupport.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>

Only a valid 30 Hours Code will guarantee the funding of the extended 15 hours under this entitlement and it is the parent(s)/carer(s) responsibility to provide this.

Parents will be asked to renew their 30 Hours Code **every 3 months**.

The nursery will not hold a place for a child whose parent/carers is still 'applying' or 're-applying' or has lost their eligibility code.

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HMRC will prompt parents by email or text 4 weeks and then 2 weeks before, to renew their 30 Hours Code if they have not reconfirmed their eligibility.

If a 30 Hours Code cannot be renewed, or the parent chooses not to renew the code, after 6 weeks the code will enter a 'grace period'. This is a short period of time in which extended 15 hours can still be offered by the nursery.

When the grace period lapses the place will revert to a universal 15 hour place. If the place is filled by the time the code is refreshed/renewed a further 30 hour place can be refused.

**The financial sustainability of Grace Cook Nursery is essential and therefore we reserve the right to fill any vacant spaces.**

**Early Education for eligible children aged 2** - targeted offer of 15 hours per week for the most vulnerable 2 year old children, whose families meet the criteria. Available from the term after the child's 2nd birthday.

- Parents/Carers of children who wish to access a free 2 year old place should apply to the Local Authority (Suffolk) who will confirm eligibility.
- If the child is eligible the Local Authority will inform Grace Cook Nursery and provide the parent/carer with a Golden Ticket.
- Once we have received authorisation from the Local Authority or received the golden ticket, we will make contact with the parent/carer to discuss and offer places if available.
- If there is not a place available the child's name and details will be added to a waiting list and children on the waiting list will be admitted in date of birth order, no earlier than the term after the child's second birthday as this is when funding is allocated.

## **Day Care Invoicing**

- To confirm registration we require a £30.00 registration fee.
- All fees are due on the first of the forthcoming month's childcare.
- Any extra sessions / hours will be added to the following month's invoice.
- Fees are due regardless of non-attendance – holidays and illness.
- A late payment fee of £20.00 is charged for any payments received after the first working day of the month (except for prior arrangement in writing with the manager)
- Any late collections of children will be charged at £3.00 for every 15 minutes.
- A 10% discount is given to siblings.

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- For term time only registration 50% of the normal fee is required to be paid during school closure time.
- Fees are reviewed annually in January and one month's notice will be given of any changes.
- A full month's notice in writing is required if parents/carers wish to remove their child from the nursery. In the absence of such notice a full month's fees must be paid.
- Refunds are not given under any circumstances.

## **Notice period**

- We ask parents to make a termly commitment to the Grace Cook Nursery as signed in the declaration form.
- If parents/carers decide to move their child mid-term, the funding will remain with Grace Cook Nursery until the end of that term – this may affect the transfer of the child to a new Nursery.

## **Notice period for Paying Day Care**

- The notice period for changes to contract or termination of contract is 1 month and must be put in writing to the Nursery Manager

## **Bank Holidays**

- Bank holidays are not funded by Suffolk County Council
- If the free entitlement falls on a Bank Holiday we are not able to swap the day for the day missed

## **Start dates**

- Children's start dates are arranged to meet each child/family's individual needs
- The start date will take into account our settling procedures which have been developed to ensure all children are feeling safe and happy to be left, feel calmed by their key person and are able to be alongside other children and access their learning environment
- Children may not receive their full free entitlement during this period.

Our setting is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at all times and expects everybody working within this setting to share commitment.

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## Appendix 2: Springfield Infants and Nursery School.

Our Nursery welcomes children from the September after they become 3 years old for 15 or 30 fully government funded hours each week.

It is a 52 place nursery with 26 children attending the morning session (8:45- 11.45) and 26 children attending in the afternoon (12:15 - 3:15) every day.

If your child is entitled to 15 funded hours they will be offered a morning or afternoon place 5 days per week.

If your child is entitled to the 30 hours funded option the hours are 9.00am-3.00pm Monday - Friday.

Consistent attendance on a regular basis is expected of all children in line with our whole school attendance policy.

We do not offer flex in this attendance pattern unless there are specific circumstances relating to the child's needs which have been discussed with the Headteacher and SENCo.

The final decision on when the child is admitted, and the allocation of afternoon or morning sessions rests with the headteacher and governing committee of the school.

*Parents can apply for a place at Springfield nursery at any time up until the closing date by completing the application form and returning it to the school. Closing and offer dates for nursery admissions for 2023 will be as follows:*

<b>Child's term of admission</b>	<b>Deadline for application</b>	<b>Offers sent to parents by</b>	<b>Parents must accept offer by</b>
January 2023	17.10.22	7.11.22	21.11.22
April 2023	6.2.23	27.2.22	13.3.23
September 2023	28.4.23	12.5.23	26.5.23

*Applications for the following term's entry that are received after the closing date, will be processed after the 'offers sent' date and responded to within two weeks.*

*It is possible, however, for children to start nursery at any point with the agreement of the school if a place is available.*

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*Schools offer open days/session visits for parents who are thinking about applying for a place and induction days and home visits prior to nursery school entry.*

## **Eligibility**

Any child can attend Springfield Infant School's Nursery Unit, there is no catchment area. Your child can stay in nursery until the September following their 4th birthday, when they will move to a reception class in a school.

Sometimes there are fewer places than the number of children wanting them. If this happens, we use the oversubscription criteria detailed in this policy to help us decide who will be offered places.

In the unlikely event that our Nursery is not full we will consider offering 4 or 5 term places to children in the term after they become 3 years old.

## **How to apply:**

Please click on the link on the school website 'Parents' – you can then either click 'About Our Nursery' and click the link at the bottom of the page 'Applying for a place at our school/Nursery' then click 'Nursery' and apply for a place **'HERE.'**

Alternatively on the website click on 'Parents' 'Applying for a place at our school/Nursery' then click 'Nursery' and apply for a place **'HERE.'**

You can also obtain an application form from the school office, complete it and then bring it to the school office with your child's birth certificate.

Applications can be made at any time from the time of the child's birth but it is the parent/carers responsibility to keep the school informed should any information (address, telephone numbers) change between time of application and offer of place.