

## Little Hayes and Speedwell Nursery Schools Federation

### Admissions and Allocation of Places Policy

#### Rationale

All children should have an equal opportunity to access Early Years provision. Parents/carers need to be aware of the priorities and criteria for admission and the procedure for the allocation of places needs to be clearly understood by all.

#### Aims

- To ensure a fair and consistent process in the allocation of places.
- To ensure that families are able to express their needs and the needs of their children.
- To uphold equal opportunities whilst also maintaining a balance in which all children may benefit and thrive.
- To reflect Bristol City Council policy on Early Years Education and the allocation of places, whilst mindful of current research on best practice for Nursery aged children.

#### Offer

**Earlybirds @ Kingfisher** currently provides 15 and 30 hour places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48 children from Monday to Friday term time only.

**Little Hayes Nursery School** currently provides 15 and 30. Hour places for 2,3 and 4 year olds for up to 140 children, Monday to Friday, term time only.

**Speedwell Nursery School** provides 15 and 30 hour places for 2,3 and 4 year olds for up to 160 children, Monday to Friday, term time only.

#### General guidance about applying

- Eligible Two Year Olds and all 3 and 4 Year Olds are eligible from the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Children born between:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Sept – 31<sup>st</sup> Dec can access their free place from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Jan – 31<sup>st</sup> Mar can access their free place from 1<sup>st</sup> April.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Apr – 31<sup>st</sup> Aug can access their free place from 1<sup>st</sup> Sept.
- When a parent/carer enquires about a place for a child in the Nursery they will be invited to visit the setting. A member of staff will be available to show them around and answer any questions. Parents/Carers will then be able to complete an application form.
- All application forms will be held on our database according to the child's eligible start date.

- Places are offered for 2, 3 and 4 Year Olds in accordance with their eligible start date
- All parents will be offered a home visit prior to the child's start date and given a new starters pack.
- Parents must be available to stay with their child/children for at least the first 3 days.
- All children's original birth certificates will need to be provided and a copy taken.
- No places will be held vacant for children (in need or otherwise) who might apply for places during the school year.
- In the event of more applicants than places available, an admissions panel will meet to ensure a fair and transparent process in the allocation and offer of places at any of the settings. This panel will include the Head Teacher (or Deputy Head Teacher) and at least one governor. Please see the section below 'Admission Priorities' for further details.

### **Applying for Eligible 2 Year Old Places and 30 Hours Free Childcare**

- For all age children, there is also the opportunity to buy additional hours if numbers and staffing ratios can accommodate this.

### **Eligible 2 Year Old Places**

- Parents/Carers of children wishing to access a Free Early Education place for their 2 year old can check their eligibility at [www.bristol.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/earlyyears). Once Bristol City Council confirms eligibility, Speedwell Nursery School will be notified and we will make contact with the parents/carers. If no place is available at that time the child will be added to our waiting list.
- Bristol City Council is responsible for administering applications for Free Early Education 2 year old places. All completed applications will be sent directly to the Early Years' Service, who will then process and allocate to settings through monthly cluster meetings. The Early Years' Service will then inform the Nursery School of those allocated.
- There are a small number of paid day care places available for 2, year olds ineligible for Early Education funding.

### **30 Hours Free Childcare**

- Children aged 3 or 4 years are eligible for Universal Free Hours of 15 hours per week, term time only, from the term after their third birthday.
- Children who are 3 and 4 year olds from working families may be eligible and for Extended 15 Free Hours, making a total of 30 free hours per week, term

time only. Parents/Carers can check their eligibility by visiting [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) and applying online with HMRC or by calling 0300 1234 097.. Successful families will be issued an 11 digit code by HMRC (which usually starts with a 500...). Parents must present the 30 hours code to the school prior to the first free session to allow the school to validate the code. No extended hours will be offered without a valid code. Codes are not needed if the child is only accessing their Universal Free Hours (i.e. their first 15 free hours per week).

- Parents will be prompted every 3 months by HMRC to reconfirm their details. They will be prompted by HMRC by email or text 4 weeks before, then again, 2 weeks before if they have not reconfirmed. If parents miss this deadline, their code will become invalid and the 'grace period' will come into effect.
- The grace period is a short period of time after a 30 hours' code becomes invalid where the child can still claim Extended free hours. If a code has been issued and has already fallen into the grace period before the school makes the first claim, the parent will not be permitted to claim Extended free hours and will be asked to reconfirm their code with HMRC.
- If a family no longer meets the criteria for 30 hours free childcare and the grace period has expired, the child will return to only accessing their 15 Universal free hours. We will discuss session changes with families should this happen.

### **Allocation of Places**

- Offer letters are sent out in the spring term or early in the summer term. The majority of children will start in the September following their third birthday.
- If there are further places available they will begin in January to children who have reached their third birthday before December 31<sup>st</sup>. Offers of place will be sent out in the first week of November.
- If there are any remaining spaces, or if spaces become available, they will begin in April. Offers of places will be sent out at the end of February.
- Places may be offered mid-term to children as they turn 3 if the conditions in the Nursery School enable this to take place (staffing ratios, whether existing group of children are fully settled).

### **Admissions Priorities**

**If there are more children than places available, places will be allocated in the following order of priority:**

1. Children with Social Care involvement i.e.- Looked after children, children under a Child Protection Plan or Children in need
2. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan.
3. Children no longer in care, who have been adopted or are unable to return home, e.g. children with a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order.
4. Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
5. Children who are siblings of current pupils (defined as brother, sister, ... adopted, looked after children or same family home half brothers and sisters living in the same family home .

### **Definitions of terms**

#### **Looked After Children**

Section 22 Children Act 1989 states the general duty of the Local Authority in relation to children looked after by them.

Children who are in the care of the Local Authority or who are provided with accommodation (for a continuous period of more than 24 hours) pursuant to any functions of a social care authority are “looked after” by the authority. Section 22(3) imposes the duty on a Local Authority looking after a child to safeguard and promote her/his welfare and to make such use of services available for children cared for by their parents as appears to the authority to be reasonable in her/his case.

#### **Children in Need**

The term “Children in Need” is defined in the Children Act 1989 and these children are identified as:

- Those referred by Social Care with particular reference to those considered to be at risk in terms of child abuse. High priority should be given to consider full time places for any child on a Child Protection Plan if appropriate.

#### **Children with SEND**

Children who have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

#### *Note*

*It is important to note that it is the decision of the Head teacher whether a child is*

*considered to be a child of a family with specific needs and this decision can be based on the information known to the Head Teacher and staff. The Head Teacher will ask health professionals etc. to add any comments they wish to make in respect of individual children in writing and keep copies of these views as evidence for the decision regarding the allocation of places. The Nursery application form will give parents the opportunity to provide any relevant information which they wish the school to take into consideration. It is recognised that not all children who meet these criteria will necessarily be vulnerable; however it is recommended that if any of the criteria apply, then an assumption is made that the child could become vulnerable.*

**Last Updated November 21**

**Date for next review November 23**