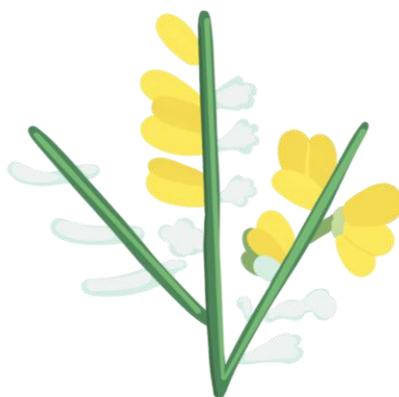


Broomhill First School



Nursery Admissions Policy

Date policy last reviewed: 1/10/21

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

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Statement of intent

Broomhill First School offers a vibrant, nurturing, early years learning environment for children. We aim to provide a nursery experience for children aged 3-4 that is affordable, high-quality and geared towards a smooth transition into Reception class.

The Governing Body is the admission authority and is responsible for setting the Broomhill First School's Nursery Admissions Policy. This policy is written to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their education in our school nursery.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- DfE (2018) 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE (2018) 'Early years entitlements: operational guide'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- The School Charging Policy (including Nursery Fees)
- Admissions Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. Free Childcare Arrangements and the Application process

The Local Authority (LA) is required to secure free places offering 570 hours childcare a year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year (term-time), for every eligible child in the LA from the relevant dates outlined below.

Children are eligible for free childcare from the relevant dates outlined below up until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.

With regards to the age criteria, children will be eligible as follows:

- Born between 1 January - 31 March: eligible from the start of term beginning on, or following, 1 April after the child's third birthday
- Born between 1 April - 31 August: eligible from the start of term beginning on, or following 1 September after the child's third birthday
- Born between 1 September - 31 December: eligible from the start of term beginning on or following 1 January after the child's third birthday

We have 26 part or full time places available in our school nursery. Places will be allocated at least 8 weeks before a child is due to start, or sooner where possible.

Our part time places of 15 hours per week are offered across 5 morning sessions. Where a child attends one other setting, the remainder of the 15 hours entitlement can be offered in our school nursery on one or more of these morning sessions. This is subject to availability. Funding will be divided accordingly. A reduced number of sessions is a possibility, but this would be to support a child's individual needs and would usually be supported by the allocation of additional funding, an EHCP, care or medical plan.

We can offer a maximum of 24 full time (30-hours) places for children of eligible working families, as an extension to the universal 15 hours free childcare. Each of the 24 places for the 30-hours free

childcare are allocated on a first come first served basis on the production and confirmation of a valid eligibility code. *Please note, parents wanting to access the universal 15-hours free childcare for three- and four-year-olds do not need to apply for this through the digital childcare service.* Allocation of a full-time place is on the basis that the offer is accepted in its entirety. No variations to the hours offered can be accommodated.

Should spaces be available for full-time provision, we may be able to offer the potential for parents/carers in receipt of a 15-hour (morning only) place the option to pay for an afternoon session. If available, afternoon sessions can be purchased on day-by-day basis (more information on fees and charges is outlined in the School Charing Policy. Please contact the school office for more information).

For children who take up their place later in the year or have moved to the Northumberland LA part-way through the year, the LA will secure a prorated number of free hours. The total number of hours will be adjusted to reflect the portion of the year remaining.

The LA will ensure that any three- or four-year-olds moving to England from another country can access their free place on the same basis as other children.

Parents wanting to access the 30-hours free childcare entitlement must apply to do so through the [digital childcare service](#). Parents are able to access the 30-hours of free childcare for 38 weeks out of the year during term time. Parents will also be reminded of their possible eligibility for tax-free childcare through the digital childcare service to cover additional childcare costs, e.g. school holidays. Please note, as we are a school nursery, we do not offer provision during the school holidays.

The sessions offered to nursery children are as follows:

- For children eligible for 30-hours free childcare – six hours daily (plus lunch at an additional cost) between the hours of 8:45am-3:00pm. The Department for Education's *Early Education and Childcare: operational guidance* states '*15 or 30 hours a week of free, high-quality flexible childcare is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional activities. Parents can therefore expect to pay for any meals offered by the provider. Parents can also expect to pay for other consumables or additional activities, such as nappies or trips.*'
- All other children – three hours free childcare daily, between the hours of 8:45am-11:45am (morning only sessions).

A child will be guaranteed 3 terms in nursery, however, if our nursery is under-subscribed this may mean some older children could have up to 5 terms in nursery depending on their date of birth. Children usually start nursery at the start of the Autumn or Spring term following their third birthday. However, depending on capacity, there may be opportunity to admit children born between 1st January and 30th April when they reach their third birthday. This situation would be explained to qualifying parents in a letter from school and at an associated welcome meeting. The admission of children straight after their third birthday, even when possible, will in part be dependent on the needs of the other children in our Early Years Foundation Stage at that time and on our capacity to meet the individual needs and abilities of the child requesting the place.

Application forms are available upon request from the main school office. Once an application form is received it is filed in birthday order for admission after the child's third birthday depending on intake and numbers on roll.

Where demand for places is high and to offer a fair and efficient system, we use the following criteria when allocating places, advised by the Local Authority: -

Priority will be given to children who are age 3 by the 31st of August prior to the academic year in question.

1. Looked After Children or children who were previously looked after but have subsequently been adopted or become subject to a residence or special guardianship order;
2. Children with a social or medical need who have been referred by a social worker, health professional, educational psychologist, outreach worker or education welfare officer
3. Child's date of birth;
4. Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission;
5. Children living within the catchment area for the nursery - Distance on a map from the front door of the school to the front door of the pupils house as the crow flies;
6. All other children.

On some occasions, priority may be given to a child who does not necessarily meet the criteria but whose special needs, as supported by other professionals, may make them eligible.

Regular attendance is crucial to a child's education in nursery. Attendance that falls below 90% will be reviewed by school leaders and may result in the allocated place being withdrawn. Every effort will be made by school to support families to improve their child's attendance so that it is in line with our whole school target of 96%.

Prior to admission, all parents / carers will be invited to a meeting at the nursery, where they will be given relevant information about our Early Years Foundation Stage, including information about starting nursery at Broomhill. Parents will be given the opportunity to meet key staff, observe and interact with the learning environment and make an appointment for a home visit and for drop in sessions.

Prior to starting nursery, children are visited at home by a member of nursery staff, where this has been requested by parents. All families are encouraged to attend drop in sessions with their child before they start. Broomhill Nursery staff work closely with other settings and childminders to support children who attend more than one setting or who move from a previous setting. Reciprocal visits are offered. Entry arrangements are personalised depending on individual, family and school needs. This is facilitated by the school office and Early Years Foundation Stage staff. Any offer of a place will be held open for ten days from the date of the offer; no response shall be deemed a rejection and the place will be withdrawn without further notice and offered to the next applicant waiting.

IMPORTANT

It is important to note that there is no automatic right to transfer from Broomhill First School's nursery into the Reception here at Broomhill. All children must reapply if they wish to start Reception at Broomhill by completing the relevant application form that comes from our Local Authority.

Where a child has been offered a reception class place in this or another school, they would not be offered a nursery place as an alternative. However children with summer birthdays (May-Aug) can choose to join the school year following their fifth birthday in accordance with NCC's admission policy.

3. Equal opportunities

The nursery will implement an effective policy that ensures equality of opportunities for all, provides a welcoming and caring environment that promotes and reflects cultural and social diversity, and is equally accessible to all.

Admissions to the nursery will be open, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

4. Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare

Parents of children aged three and four must meet one of the following criteria in order to be eligible for 30 hours free childcare:

- Each parent earns, or is expected to earn, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage (unless in a 'start up' period – i.e. newly self-employed – in which case they do not need to meet the income criteria for 12 months)
- The parent is seeking the free childcare to enable them to work
- One or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or are on statutory sick leave
- One parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to work
- If a non-European Economic Area national, the parent has recourse to public funds

Parents should check their own eligibility for the scheme using the government's [Childcare Choices](#) website or [childcare calculator](#). If parents are eligible, they will be directed to the digital childcare service to apply.

Parents can only start claiming their 30 hours free childcare the term following the date they receive a decision from HMRC. For this reason, parents are urged to apply as soon as possible. If eligible, parents must provide the school office with their unique code to confirm they are eligible for the scheme, together with their National Insurance number and child's date of birth. As the free childcare cannot be claimed until the code has been verified, parents should provide the nursery with this information as soon as possible in order to avoid delay. Parents will be prompted every three months by HMRC to reconfirm that they remain eligible for free childcare.

The LA will audit the eligibility codes at six points during the year to identify any parents who have fallen out of free childcare eligibility. The LA will notify the nursery as soon as possible where parents have fallen out of their eligibility. The nursery will then notify parents within five working days.

If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive a 'grace period' – i.e. they will continue to receive the 30 hours free childcare for a short period of time. If a parent falls into their grace period before their child has started a 30-hour place, they should not take up their 30-hour

place. The grace period will not continue once a child has reached compulsory school age. Consideration to extend the grace period will be taken in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if a parent has been forced to leave their home and paid employment.

A parent who becomes ineligible during the first half of a funding block will have their free childcare funded until the end of that funding block (i.e. 31 March, 31 August, 31 December) or for as long as their child remains under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter. A parent who becomes ineligible in the latter half of the funding block (i.e. up to the last day of the funding block) will be funded until the end of the following funding block or for as long as their child remains under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter. If a parent becomes ineligible for the 30 hours free childcare, they will still be entitled to 15 hours of free care for their child.

Other information related to the 30 hours free childcare scheme can be found in the nursery's Nursery Fees Policy.

5. Extension of 30 hours to children in foster care

Children in foster care are also eligible for the additional hours, provided that they meet all of the following criteria:

1. Accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision-making;
2. That, in single parent foster families, the foster parent engages in paid work outside their role as a foster parent; and
3. In two parent foster families, both individuals engage in paid work outside their role as a foster parent

In accordance with criteria 3, if one individual is not a foster parent, then they must be in qualifying paid work and earn a minimum of the equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage to be eligible. There is no requirement on the type of work or number of hours that a foster parent must work in order to access the 30 hours, and there is no minimum earnings limit – although they must be engaging in paid work. Children in foster care will continue to be eligible for the universal 15 hours regardless of the working status of their foster parents. There is no requirement to access the full 30 hours if this is not necessary.

To apply for the additional hours, foster parents must apply directly to the LA – there is no requirement to apply via the childcare service. When initiating an application, foster parents are required to inform the child's social worker. A designated individual, as determined by the LA, will counter-sign the foster parent's application to confirm eligibility. This may be, for example:

- The child's social worker; or
- A supervising social worker; or
- An independent reviewing officer appointed by the LA to protect the child's interests throughout the care planning process.

In some cases, the LA may deem it appropriate for the application not to have a second signature – this will be agreed between the LA and foster parent before the application is made. The signed form (by the parent only) will be sent directly to the contact within the LA who is responsible for issuing codes.

The LA has the flexibility to develop a policy and procedure for establishing the eligibility of children in foster care. Any process developed will be proportionate, flexible and aligned with existing process as far as possible, with the focus being ensuring consistency with a child's specific care plan.

All foster parents will have access to the LA's locally agreed policies and procedures for determining eligibility. In particular, foster parents will be provided with the following:

- The role of the designated person
- Who the designated person is and how to contact them
- What evidence the foster parents should be expected to provide
- How the foster parent should pass the form to the LA
- How/if the evidence will be stored once the form is completed and approved
- The timeframe by which the designated person will response to any application – this will be no later than four weeks from the receipt of the application

Where the LA determines that an application for the additional hours is not consistent with a child's care plan, they will not be eligible, regardless of whether parents satisfy the other criteria outlined at the start of this section.

Where an application is approved, details will be entered onto the eligibility checking system where a record will be created for the child. Once the code is generated, this will be sent to parents via email and the child's social worker will be informed that the code has been issued. Once foster parents have received the code, the process is the same as that outlined in the [Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare](#) section of this policy.

Foster parents will be required to re-confirm their eligibility every three months and will be prompted in advance of the deadline. The LA is free to determine the exact evidence required from foster parents to re-confirm eligibility, which will be made clear to parents during the initial application. At a minimum, the LA will be satisfied that:

- The placement is still ongoing;
- Accessing the additional hours is still consistent with the child's care plan; and
- The foster parents are still engaging in paid work outside their role as a foster parent.

If a foster parent is unhappy about the decision made by the LA, they should follow the LA's complaints process and contact the child's social worker.

6. Additional costs

As previously mentioned, our school nursery is able to charge additional costs as part of a free entitlement place – this includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Meals and snacks
- Nappies
- Sun cream
- School trips
- Specialist tuition

Where charges are made in line with the above, parents are expected to pay for these; however, payments are voluntary. Where parents are not willing to provide costs for the above, they will be permitted to provide their own supplies to the nursery. The nursery may also consider waiving or reducing the costs of meals or snacks, particularly for disadvantaged parents –this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

7. Oversubscription

Children who have an EHC plan that names the nursery are admitted before the oversubscription criteria is applied. Children with an EHC plan that does not name the nursery will be referred to the Headteacher and Early Years Lead to determine an appropriate place, in accordance with the LA's Fair Access Protocol.

The governing body may increase the priority of an application where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child, which can be appropriately met by our school nursery.

The oversubscription criteria, set out in priority order, are as follows:

1. Looked After Children or children who were previously looked after but have subsequently been adopted or become subject to a residence or special guardianship order
2. Children with a social or medical need who have been referred by a social worker, health professional, educational psychologist, outreach worker or education welfare officer
3. Child's date of birth
4. Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission
 1. Children living within the catchment area for the nursery - Distance on a map from the front door of the school to the front door of the pupils house as the crow flies
5. All other children

The governing board may also give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children eligible for the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium, or the service premium. Broomhill First School's nursery must be named in the admission arrangements, and its selection will be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.

Where there is a tiebreak scenario within the criteria, priority will be given firstly to a child who lives closest to the nursery based on a straight-line measurement, then by date of birth, with the older child given priority.

8. Withdrawing offers

Once a written offer has been made, there are limited circumstances in which an offer can be withdrawn – these are as follows:

- Offers made in error
- Offers made on the basis of fraudulent applications
- Offers made on the basis of intentionally misleading applications
- Parents not responding to an offer within 10 days
- A child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education

- A family registering their child at two maintained settings

9. Delayed starts and withdrawn places

Following receipt of a registration form, the start date can only be delayed once, and only be delayed by one month, before the child's reserved place will be open to others and the child's name added back onto the waiting list.

If parents decide to withdraw their child from the nursery after being offered a place, they must give the nursery at least four weeks' notice. Parents may be charged for this period, or it may come out of their nursery entitlement.

Notice of a delayed start or withdrawal must be in writing.

10. Non-attendance

Parents must inform the school as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend nursery for the whole or part of a day. Attendance that falls below 90% will be reviewed by school leaders and may result in the allocated place being withdrawn. Every effort will be made by school to support families to improve their child's attendance so that it is in line with our whole school target of 96%.

Parents must give a minimum of four weeks' notice if they wish to reduce the level of provision their child receives. This requirement applies both before and after provision begins. This enables us to ensure that the nursery is always appropriately staffed.

11. Refusal of admission

A child is only refused admission if one of the following criteria are met:

- The nursery has reached its admissions limit
- The child is not of the appropriate age

As nursery education is not compulsory, parents do not have a statutory right to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to award a place to their child.

Parents may appeal to the SEND tribunal against the provision named by the authority in the EHC plan.

12. Transition arrangements

Parents must apply to Northumberland County Council for a Reception place for their child.

Parents are invited to visit the school prior to the transition, and further visits are arranged according to the child's needs.

A photograph book displaying aspects of the school is used to prepare children for their transition.

As the children and staff in our Early Years Foundation Stage work closely together, nursery children will be familiar with the Reception teacher and teaching assistant(s). In the summer term, the

nursery staff will provide the Reception teacher with information about the child's progress across all the areas of learning and will spend time talking to the teacher about the child's social, health and emotional needs.

Details of children with SEND or particular educational requirements are shared, including their development throughout the year, support given and needed, and details of any other agencies involved. Separate transition meetings are held for children with EHC plans, involving all agencies, including visits to new settings with staff.

13. Data protection

The school nursery will act in compliance with the Data Protection Policy when processing personal data.

When processing and publishing information, the nursery will ensure it meets its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Where personal information is processed, the nursery will ensure it is kept up-to-date and the LA will ensure that the rights of data subjects are reserved at all times.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every three years by the governing body and headteacher.

The scheduled review date for this policy is 1st October 2024