Marsh Hill
Nursery School

Admissions Policy 2026-2027

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Marsh Hill Nursery School Vision and Values

At Marsh Hill Nursery School we pride ourselves on providing a safe, happy and stimulating environment for all children. We place our children at the centre of everything we do. We believe every child is unique and we treat all children as individuals and nurture every child's individual learning. We strive to help our children grow in confidence and work purposefully to help each child develop and achieve to the best of their individual abilities. We want children to feel happy, safe and secure in an environment that promotes children's learning and well-being.

Here at Marsh Hill Nursery School we enjoy a strong partnership between home and school, external agencies and the local community. We enjoy working together to provide the best opportunities for the children who attend Marsh Hill Nursery School.
Marsh Hill Nursery School is an inclusive setting. We will never discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity of any person and always make sure all children can access our curriculum, enjoy learning and make individual progress.

1. Legal framework

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

Policies reference:

- Childcare Act 2006 & 2016
- School Admissions Code
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework
- Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy

2. Application process

The nursery is a local authority-maintained nursery. Admissions to nursery provision will not in any way increase children's chances of admission to primary school; primary schools have their own admissions policies governed by the Local Authority.

Parents choosing to send their child to the nursery will have to register their interest. Once they have completed the registration, they will be added to the waiting list. The nursery will be in regular contact with those on the waiting list to keep them updated and to formally offer them a place if and when one is available.

Once a place is available, parents will receive a formal written offer which they will need to accept or decline in writing. After accepting the place, they will need to send in their child's birth certificate and proof address.

Parents who secure a place will be offered a date to begin the transition programme to ensure they and their child have time to settle.

Parents who would like a part-time place will be asked to state a preference for morning or afternoon; however, the nursery may need to take account of the balance between morning and afternoon places, so it cannot guarantee all parents' requests will be fulfilled.

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. Free childcare arrangements

The Local Authority is required to secure free places offering 570 hours childcare a year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year (school calendar).

Children may be 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 may 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

The nursery can accommodate a maximum of:

2-3 year olds: 16 AM

2-3 year olds: 16 PM

3-4 Year olds: 60 AM

3-4 Year olds: 60 PM

Marsh Hill Nursery School offers 30 hours free childcare as an extension to the universal 15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds. 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.

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 – i.e. during term time.

The sessions offered to nursery children are as follows:

- AM session 8.45am - 11.45am
- PM session 12.20pm - 3.20pm
- Full time 30 hours: 8.45am - 2.45pm

5. 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 should speak to the school office.

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 nursery 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.

6. Eligibility for two-year-olds

The LA is required to secure free places offering 570 hours a year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year.

A child is entitled to the free hours from the term after both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- The child has reached the age of two; and
- The parent meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare section of this policy

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

The LA will ensure that a child has a place at the nursery no later than the beginning of the term following the child or parent meeting the eligibility criteria.

The LA will ensure that two-year-olds who have met the eligibility criteria continue to receive a place once it has been secured, up until the child becomes eligible for the universal entitlement, as outlined in the Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare section of this policy. For two-year-old children who take up their place later in the year or have moved to the 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.

7. Application timetable

A child is deemed to be of nursery-age from the beginning of the term following their third birthday, or second birthday, where eligible. Parents may register their interest in a place at the nursery at any time during the year following their child's third birthday, or second birthday, where eligible.

Formal applications for nursery places must be made as soon as possible.

Application forms can be obtained from the main office.

Places offered are available to the child from the date the place is offered, until 31 August following their fourth birthday.

The LA will consider securing additional free hours for parents who have applied or re-confirmed by the deadline, but receive their valid 30 hours eligibility code after the beginning of the term, up to the dates set out below:

- Application/re-confirmation by 31 August – code start date between 1 - 14 September
- Application/re-confirmation by 31 December – code start date between 1 - 14 January
- Application/re-confirmation by 31 March – code start date between 1 - 14 April

The LA is not required to secure additional free hours where the parent has applied after 31 August, 31 December or 31 March, or for any codes issued after the dates outlined above.

8. Additional costs

The 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
- Baby wipes
- Sun cream
- School trips

Where charges are made in line with the above, parents are expected to pay for these. 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.

9. 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 nursery's admissions manager to determine an appropriate place, in accordance with the LA's Fair Access Protocol.

The governing board 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 the nursery.

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

1. LAC 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. Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission
4. Children of staff who have:
    - Been employed at the nursery or school for two or more years at time the application for admission is made
    - Been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a skill shortage
5. Children living within the catchment area for the nursery
6. 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. The 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.

10. 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 six weeks
- A child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education
- A family registering their child at two maintained settings

11. Non-attendance

Parents must inform the nursery as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend for the whole or part of a day when they are due to attend.

12. 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.

13. Data protection

The 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.