

Nursery Admissions Policy



At this time awaiting Governor approval – Feb 2023

Statement of intent

Manor Park School and Nursery aims to provide a nursery experience for pupils of the highest quality. Education at Manor Park will be carefully planned to support a smooth and positive transition into a Reception class, while supporting the needs and unique characteristics of each individual in our care.

The Governing Body is the admission authority and is responsible for setting the school's Nursery Admissions Policy. This policy is to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their education at the school.

1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

Legislation

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation

Guidance

- DfE (2014) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- DfE (2018) 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE (2018) 'Early Years entitlements: operational guide'

- 1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Nursery Fees Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. Free childcare arrangements

- 2.1. The LA is required to secure free places offering 570 hours of childcare a year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year, and up to 52 weeks of the year, for every eligible child in the LA from the relevant dates outlined at 2.3.
- 2.2. Children are eligible for free childcare from the relevant dates (outlined at paragraph 2.3) up until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.
- 2.3. With regards to the age criteria, pupils 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
- 2.4. The school can accommodate a maximum of 48 nursery children.
 - 2.5. The school offers up to 30 hours free childcare as an extension to the universal 15 hours free childcare.
 - 2.6. 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. Forms are sent out once a term to parents.
 - 2.7. For 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 pro-rata'd number of free hours. The total number of hours will be adjusted to reflect the portion of the year remaining.
 - 2.8. 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.
 - 2.9. Parents wanting to access up to the full 30 hours free childcare entitlement must apply to do so through the [digital childcare service](#).
 - 2.10. Parents are able to access up to 30 hours of free childcare for 38 weeks out of the year – i.e. during term time.
 - 2.11. 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.
 - 2.12. The sessions offered to nursery children are between the hours of 8.45am-3.30pm (morning session 8.45am – 11.45pm, afternoon session 12.30pm – 3.30 pm). If a child attends a session they will be booked in for the entire 3 hour session.

3. Eligibility for up to 30 hours free childcare

- 3.1. Parents of children aged three and four must meet 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 should be 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
- 3.2. 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.
 - 3.3. 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 but are only eligible to use their funded hours the term after their child's third birthday.
 - 3.4. If eligible, parents must provide the school 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 school with this information as soon as possible in order to avoid delay.
 - 3.5. Parents will be prompted every three months by HMRC to reconfirm that they remain eligible for free childcare.
 - 3.6. The LA will audit the eligibility codes at six points during the year to identify any children who have fallen out of eligibility.
 - 3.7. In accordance with 3.6, the LA will notify the school as soon as possible where parents have fallen out of their eligibility. The school will then notify parents within five working days.
 - 3.8. If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive a five-day 'grace period' – i.e. they will continue to receive the 30 hours free childcare for 5 days.
 - 3.9. If a child becomes ineligible for the 30 hours free childcare, they will still be entitled to 15 hours of free care.
 - 3.10. 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.
 - 3.11. Other information related to the 30 hours free childcare scheme can be found in the school's Nursery Fees Policy.

4. Extension of 30 hours to children in foster care

- 4.1. Children in foster care are also eligible for the additional hours, provided that they meet 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.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. Children in foster care will continue to be eligible for the universal 15 hours regardless of the working status of their foster parents.
- 4.5. There is no requirement to access the full 30 hours if this is not necessary.
- 4.6. To apply for the additional hours, foster parents must apply directly to the LA – there is no requirement to apply via the childcare service.
- 4.7. When initiating an application, foster parents are required to inform the child's social worker.
- 4.8. 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.
- 4.9. 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.
- 4.10. 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.

4.11. 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

4.12. 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 in paragraph 5.1.

4.13. 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.

4.14. Once foster parents have received the code, the process is the same as that outlined in [section 3](#) of this policy.

4.15. Foster parents will be required to re-confirm their eligibility every three months and will be prompted in advance of the deadline.

4.16. 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.

4.17. 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.

5. Application timetable

5.1. A child is deemed to be of nursery-age from the beginning of the term following their second birthday.

- 5.2. Parents may register their interest in a place at the nursery any time by completing an expression of interest form and returning this to the School Office.
- 5.3. Once the due date for return of the applications has passed, places will be allocated according to the criteria set out in this policy.
- 5.4. Places are guaranteed from the date the child starts nursery, until the 31st August date following the child's fourth birthday.

6. Deposits

- 6.1. The nursery charges a refundable deposit of £50.00.
- 6.2. The purpose of the deposit is to secure places for childcare and provide assurance to the nursery that parents will take up the place.
- 6.3. If parents fail to take up the place, the nursery is not obliged to refund the deposit.
- 6.4. Nursery will use their discretion where requesting a deposit may prevent take up of places, such as for disadvantaged families, and will review the requirements in light of this.
- 6.5. Deposits will be returned to parents within five days of their child starting nursery.

7. Additional costs

- 7.1. The nursery is able to charge additional costs as part of a free entitlement place – this includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - School trips
 - School lunches
 - Lunch time provision
- 7.2. Where charges are made in line with 7.1, parents are expected to pay for these.

8. Oversubscription

- 8.1. Children who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan that names the school are admitted before the oversubscription criteria is applied.
- 8.2. Children with an EHC plan that does not name the school will be referred to the school's admissions authority to determine an appropriate place, in accordance with the LA's Fair Access Protocol.
- 8.3. 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 of staff employed at Manor Park School, for a period of two years or more, at the time the application for admission is made.
- 4) Children who have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time the application for admission is made.
- 5) Distance measurement – A child's home will be the address at which the child normally resides and which has been notified to the nursery and other relevant agencies as being the child's normal place of residence. Priority will be given to those children who live closest to nursery using a straight line measurement taken from Ordnance Survey Data from the nursery building's main reception to the main entrance of the child's home. Where a child resides in a block of flats, the distance will be measured from the nursery building's main reception to the main entrance of the building in which the flats are located.

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

8.5. Any applications received between April and September for that academic year will be treated as late applications and a place will only be allocated if available after all applications received by the end of April have been considered first.

8.6. Where a place is unavailable the application details will be held on a waiting list which is ranked according to the above criteria set out in paragraph 8.3. If a place becomes available it will be offered to the family at the top of that list. If the place is no longer required it will be offered to the next family on the list until the end of the waiting list is reached.

9. In Year Applications and Waiting List

9.1 Applications received during the academic year are considered as in-year applications.

9.2 A response to the application will be made within two school weeks.

9.3 If a place is available it will be offered with a start date at the beginning of the following term.

9.4 If a place is not available the applicants details will be added to the waiting list and ranked according to the criteria set out in paragraph 8.3.

10. Withdrawing offers

10.1. Nursery has the right to withdraw offers of a place in the following circumstances:

- Offers made on the basis of fraudulent applications
- Offers made on the basis of intentionally misleading applications or where a parents / carer has not disclosed all known information regarding their child that would allow the school to accurately assess the application and suitability of the provision.
- Parents not responding to an offer within one week
- A child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education
- The Nursery cannot meet the needs of the child without additional emergency funding from the Local Authority (the place will be re-allocated when funding is secured).

11. Refusal of admission

11.1. 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

11.2. Parents do not have a statutory right to appeal against the school's refusal to award a place to their child.

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

12. Admission to Reception

12.1. Children reach compulsory school age as follows:

- Children turning five-years-old between 1 January and 31 March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1 April
- Children turning five-years-old between 1 April and 31 August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1 September
- Children turning five-years-old between 1 September and 31 December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1 January.

12.2 Families whose children attend the nursery will have to apply for a place in a Reception Class through the Local Authority.

12.3 Places for Manor Park School Reception Class will be allocated according to the criteria set out in the School Admission Policy. A place in the nursery does not guarantee a place in the schools Reception Class.

13. Data protection

- 13.1. When processing and publishing information, the nursery will ensure it meets its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.
- 13.2. Where personal information is processed, the nursery will ensure it is kept up-to-date and will ensure that the rights of data subjects are reserved at all times.
- 13.3. The nursery will act in compliance with the CAT Data Protection Policy when processing personal data.