



## Policy Document

Subject	Nursery Admissions Policy
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Updates P1 Legal Framework – Date Change - DfE Early years entitlements guide 2024-2025 P11 Non-Attendance – Added - Attendance and absence will be monitored in accordance with the Attendance and Absence Policy	

# Nursery Admissions Policy

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### **Why choose Ashwell Primary School's Nursery for your child?**

While your 15 or 30 hours free childcare can be used with many different providers, we believe there are some real benefits to attending our school nursery as your child's predominant provision. These include:

- ✓ A qualified and experienced class teacher working with the children every day
- ✓ A qualified and experienced Early Years Practitioner in the class
- ✓ A daily structure that compliments a Reception class which in turn, eases the transition process into full time school
- ✓ Lessons and routines that slowly build up in readiness for full time school entry
- ✓ Stability and assurance of being a bigger broader entity with a governing body and greater accountability
- ✓ The continuity that many children have as they move into our Reception class, already knowing the school, their peers and many of the staff
- ✓ Being able to access expertise and the extensive experience of staff across the school such as Special Educational Needs, Speech and Language, Behaviour and Emotional support and sports provision
- ✓ Being able to access our 'Premier' wrap around care (following your child's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday.)
- ✓ Involvement in the wider school community
- ✓ The convenience and enjoyment of being at the same school as older siblings
- ✓ A very similar uniform to the rest of the school, resulting in a sense of belonging
- ✓ PE lessons using school facilities
- ✓ Use of school grounds and equipment – resulting in a familiarity of the school (aiding transition)
- ✓ Use of the Nurture Garden, meadow areas each week during an outdoor learning day (Wellie Wednesday)
- ✓ Weekly visit to the modern, child themed, well stocked school library

## Statement of intent

Ashwell Primary School Nursery aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high-quality and geared towards a smooth transition into Reception class.

The Governing Board is the admission authority and is responsible for setting the nursery's Nursery Admissions Policy. This policy is written to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their education at 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 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- DfE 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE 'Early years entitlements: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2024 to 2025'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Nursery Fees Policy
- Data Protection Policy

### 2. Admission to Ashwell Primary School Nursery

Ashwell Primary School Nursery is a maintained school nursery setting which is part of Ashwell Primary School. Admissions to nursery are managed by the school's Governing Body. Admission to the Nursery does not guarantee a place at Ashwell Primary School. Applications for Reception must be made as a separate application via Herts County Council admissions page in accordance with the school admissions timeline.

**Ashwell Primary School nursery operates a single intake system, admitting all children at the start of the autumn term in September. This means that children are eligible to join our Nursery if they are 3 years old by 31<sup>st</sup> August.**

Our nursery can accommodate a maximum of **26** nursery children for the universal 15 hour 'Core Offer'.

The sessions offered to nursery children at Ashwell are as follows:

- **'Core Offer'** - All children 5x3 hour morning sessions between the hours of **8:45am-11:45am**
- **'Extended Offer'** For children eligible for 30 hours free childcare or those wishing to pay for additional provision – **Monday-Friday 8:45am until 3:15pm**

Offers are made to parents based on the Nursery's 'Core Offer' consisting of a place for five morning sessions per week (8:45am - 11:45am). In addition to the 'Core Offer', parents may access the extended provision offers available. (*See section 4 – Extended provision for full details*)

**Nursery places are offered on the condition that the universal 15 hours free child care should be accessed solely at Ashwell Primary School Nursery and cannot be split between us and another setting.**

More information on extended provision, fees and charges is outlined in our Nursery Fees Policy.

If the nursery is undersubscribed after the September cohort allocation has been made, then we may consider admitting children in January or April, the term after their third birthday. Parents and Carers are advised to contact the school office if they wish to see if a space is available midyear.

Parents may defer their child's entry to the nursery school until a year later but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age in the following academic year.

### **Admissions Criteria**

If there are fewer applications than places available, all applicants will be admitted.

Ashwell School follows the Local Authority admission rules. The oversubscription criteria, set out in priority order, are as follows:

- Rule 1: EHCP Section of the Education Act 1996 requires the Governing Body of all maintained schools to admit a child with an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) that names the school.
- Rule 2: 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.
- Rule 3: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school.
- Rule 4: Children who are already attending the nursery prior to September intake, which may include:
  - a) children who are deferring their reception start (see Hertfordshire admissions guidance on summer born children)
  - b) any child who has started in either the January or April for a 4 or 5 term nursery school place
- Rule 5: Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission
- Rule 6: Child's nearest school
- Rule 7: Children living closest to school (*distance will be measured in line with HCC admissions protocol*)

### **Requests for admission when deferring Reception start**

Some children may be admitted to the nursery if they defer their Reception start because the child is either summer born (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August) or if it has been agreed due to the child's special educational need.

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group when deferring their Reception start.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- Summer Born (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August)
- The Headteacher's views

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group when deferring their Reception start will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on

the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

### **Continuing Interest**

In the event of the school being oversubscribed, a continuing interest (CI) list will be maintained by the school. If a place becomes available during the school year, allocation will be made by applying the admissions criteria. New applications will be added to the waiting list in accordance with the priority order.

### **In-year admissions**

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round once it has been opened. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plans name the school will be admitted in consultation with the relevant persons.

Once the academic year's organisation has started, the nursery will allocate a space if they are able to accommodate an additional child based on its current structure.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, upon request your child's name will be added to a waiting list. When a space becomes available, it will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the admissions criteria. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

### **3. The Application Process**

The current timeline for applications for the next academic year's intake to nursery can be found on the school website – [www.ashwell.herts.sch.uk](http://www.ashwell.herts.sch.uk)

- 1) Nursery tours will take place from October through to the beginning of February. Please visit the school's website to book onto one of the tours or ring the school office.
- 2) Application forms can be completed online via the school website or a paper copy can be obtained from the school office or on our website.
- 3) All applications for places in the Nursery will be held by the school and considered once the application deadline closes.
- 4) Parents will receive an offer letter.
- 5) Places will need to be accepted in writing. After accepting the place, parents will need to send in their child's birth certificate and proof address.
- 6) After the closing date, the school will continue to offer places, if they are available. Once full, applications will be placed on a waiting list and places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

**Allocation of a Nursery place is strictly subject to the applicant's guarantee that the first 15 hours of Free Childcare Funding will be directed to Ashwell Primary School. This guarantee should be made on the Parent Declaration Form (available on our website or from the School Office)**

### **4. Extended Provision**

- All nursery age children are entitled to 15 hours free childcare. At Ashwell Primary School, this will be delivered through our core morning sessions that run from 8:45am – 11:45am, Monday to Friday.
- Your child is entitled to 30 hours free childcare if you (and your partner, if you have one) earn at least the National Minimum Wage of Living Wage for 16 hours a week on average (this would be £1,853.28 over a 3 month period). Parents on some benefits are also eligible. Full details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare>
- If you are entitled to 30 hours free childcare, you can use it on our extended afternoon provision. It is not unusual for parents to choose for their children to increase their hours as the year goes on in preparation for beginning full time school in Reception.

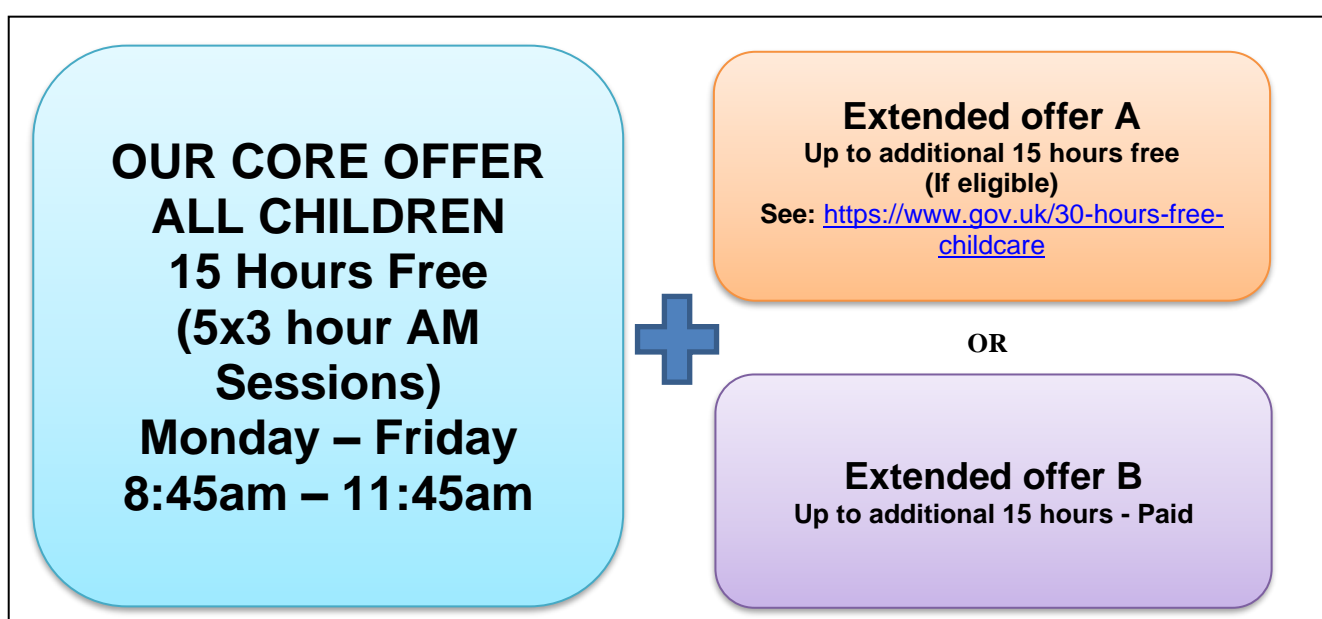
- If your child is not entitled to funded 30 hour provision, you can still access our extended provision by paying for your child to attend additional sessions each week.
- We run two types of extended provisions. A lunch club from 11:45am until 12:45pm (Monday – Friday) or a full afternoon session from 11:45am until 3:15pm (Monday – Friday).

**Please note that, due to EYFS staffing ratios, we may have to implement a maximum capacity for lunch and PM sessions. This will be reviewed on annual basis.**

**Initially, priority will be given to:**

1. Those eligible for Government Funded 30 hour provision
2. Those wishing to book full afternoon sessions (11:45am – 3:15pm)
3. Those wishing to book the lunch club (11:45am – 12:45pm)

Following initial allocation, places will be offered on a first come, first served basis.



**Extended Provision Pricing (for those who are not eligible for 30 hour free childcare)**

**2024-25 Academic Year**

Extended Provision	Details	Price
*Lunch Club (11:45am – 12:45pm)	Monday – Friday	£6.00 per day**
*Full afternoon session (11:45am – 3:15pm)	Monday – Friday	£21 per day**

**2025-26 Academic Year**

Extended Provision	Details	Price
*Lunch Club (11:45am – 12:45pm)	Monday – Friday	£6.30 per day**
*Full afternoon session (11:45am – 3:15pm)	Monday – Friday	£22 per day**

**Extended provision prices are set for an academic year and reviewed annually in November for the following cycle.**

\* A lunch must be provided – either a packed lunch from home or by ordering a paid school lunch.  
 \*\*Late pick up charges apply - £5 for first 15 minutes and £1 per 5 minutes thereafter.

### **Terms & Conditions of extended provision**

- For children attending Ashwell Primary School nursery extended provision, 4 weeks' notice in writing is required to amend sessions. This is the case for all cancellations of sessions.
- In order for us to plan and timetable staff, you are required to book all additional sessions, beyond the 'Core Offer', in half termly blocks.
- Those who are not eligible for the 30 hour free funding are required to book and pay for all additional sessions, beyond the 'Core Offer', in half termly blocks.
- We will apply a late pick-up charge of £5.00 for the first fifteen minutes and then £1.00 per every 5 minutes after this. It is necessary to do this as this has an impact on our staff and running of the school.

### **How to book additional sessions and lunch club**

We use Arbor for registering, booking and payment of additional Nursery sessions and lunch club. All parents wishing to use the extended provision will need to register via the Arbor Parent Portal or download the Arbor App.

Once registered you will be given access to the booking process enabling you to book sessions and make payment as required, at a convenient time for you.

For further information about Arbor please visit:

<https://support.arbor-education.com/hc/en-us/sections/201716749-Using-Parent-Portal-and-the-Arbor-App-as-a-parent>

Payment will be via one of the following options:

- Government Funded (for those eligible)
- Tax Free Childcare - <https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>
- Childcare Vouchers
- Card payment (we do not accept cash or cheques)

### **Ad hoc Bookings**

It is important that parents using the extended provision on a regular basis, book their sessions in line with the terms and conditions set out above. We do recognise that there are occasions when parents may need to use the provision on an ad hoc basis as a result of a change in circumstance or last-minute emergency. The school will do all they can to accommodate these requests providing that we remain within the required staffing ratio. We ask that any ad hoc bookings are made with as much notice as is feasibly possible.

### **5. 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.

When making decisions about admissions the nursery will ensure that it aims to improve the outcomes of all children and reduce inequalities whilst upholding its duties under the Equality Act to put in place adjustments for children with SEND as required to prevent any disadvantage.

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

### **6. Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare**

Your eligibility depends on:

- if you are working
- your income (and your partner's income, if you have one)
- your child's age and circumstances
- your immigration status

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 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, and 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.

#### **7. Extension of 30 hours to children in foster care**

If you foster your child, you cannot use the online application to get 30 hours free childcare. Speak to your social worker and your local authority if you want to apply.

#### **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
- 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.

#### **9. 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 **four** weeks
- A child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education
- A family registering their child at two maintained settings

### **10. 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.

### **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. The nursery will require a minimum of two weeks' notice, or parents may be subject to paying the full cost of the care, regardless of whether or not their child attends nursery that day.

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.

Attendance and absence will be monitored in accordance with the Attendance and Absence Policy

### **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. Admission to Reception**

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

If parents wish for their child to remain in a nursery or early years setting until they reach compulsory school age, and access **15** hours of free early learning rather than taking up a place in Reception, they must:

- Discuss their choice with the school.
- Complete a Reception application form by the LA deadline, to ensure their child has an offer of a place in Reception from the following September in case they cannot be re-admitted.
- Complete a nursery re-admission application form and return it to the setting by **1<sup>st</sup> January**.

#### **14. Transition arrangements**

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

During the summer term, the Reception teacher will meet with the child's key worker which provides the 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.

#### **15. 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.

#### **16. Monitoring and review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing board and Headteacher.

## 17. Frequently Asked Questions

**How do I apply?** – Online. Please refer to the Admissions Policy on our website or follow the pop-up link to the admissions form, if applicable.

**How are places offered out?** - Priority will initially be given to funded 30 hour children, following this it will be based on a first come first served basis.

**Who is eligible for 30 Hours Free Childcare?** – To check eligibility, go to [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

**How will the school know who eligible parents are?** – From HMRC

**How do we apply for 30 hour provision at Ashwell?** – Parents/ Carers will need to apply for 30 hours on our application form, once you have received your eligibility confirmation.

**How is 30 hours delivered at Ashwell School?** - For those parents who are eligible for their child to receive 30 hours childcare provision, this will be arranged so that your child attends Ashwell School Nursery School for the 15 hours a week core offer (8:45 to 11:45 daily), the additional 15 hours can be taken from our extended offer in the afternoons (11:45 to 15:15 daily). 8:45 to 15:15 is a total of 32.5 hours, anything over 30 hours would be on a fee paying basis.

**What if I need more than 30 hours?** – Ashwell School offers up to 32.5 hours in class, further hours beyond 15:15 are available from Premier Education wraparound care once your child has turned 4 this is on a fee-paying basis.

**Do I have to use my full 30 hours allocation?** – You must attend Ashwell School Nursery every morning, as part of the Universal 15 hour allocation. However, you do not need to use your extra 15 hours allocation, but your child is entitled to use the full allocation. Lots of parents do not use the full 15 extra hours when their child first starts Nursery, but build up to it as the term progresses. We do ask that if you are not using your full allocation, you use the same booking pattern every week.

**When do I need to send my child's voucher code?** – Once your place at Ashwell School Nursery has been confirmed, you will need to send through the voucher code as soon as possible. The code will be 11 digits long and normally begins with a "5". When sending the code please do not forget to include your child's full name.

**What happens if I lose eligibility for the 30 hours?** – Please confirm to the school as soon as possible but be aware that HDC (Hertfordshire District Council), give each child a "terms grace", which means 30 hours eligibility will continue to the end of that term.

**What happens if I get 30 hours eligibility part way through a term?** – If your circumstances change mid-way through a term, you will then receive a 30-hour code, unfortunately we will be unable to provide 30 hours provision until the beginning of the next term, space permitting.

**Do codes expire?** – Yes, codes do expire and need to be renewed every three months on the HMRC website. Please note that codes must be valid on the 31st August for September; 31st December for January and 31st March for April.