The Drive Community Primary School

Admission Policy for Funded Nursery Entitlement for Two, Three and Four Year-olds

September 2026 – September 2027

Admission Policy for Funded Nursery entitlement for

Three- and Four-Year Olds.

All children are entitled to **15 hours funded** nursery provision provided over 38 weeks (Universal Entitlement).

Some children will be entitled to **an additional 15 hours** (Extended Entitlement – total entitlement 30 hours).

At **The Drive Community Primary School,** we offer the following patterns of provision:

Universal entitlement – 15 hours

5 mornings a week or 5 afternoons a week

8.45am-11.45am or 12.15pm-3.15pm

Extended Entitlement – 30 hours

08.45am until 3.15pm 5 days per week

The morning or afternoon 3-year-old provision can accommodate a maximum of 26 children.

The 30-hour 3-year-old provision can accommodate a maximum of 26 children.

Two Year Olds.

All children are entitled to **15 hours funded** nursery provision provided over 38 weeks (Universal Entitlement).

At **The Drive Community Primary School,** we offer 15 hours funded nursery provision for 2-year-olds.

5 mornings per week or 5 afternoons per week

8.45am-11.45am or 12.15pm-3.15pm

The morning or afternoon 2-year-old provision can accommodate a maximum of 5 children per session.

We do not currently offer 30-hour provision for 2-year-olds

We do not currently offer top up provision for 2-year-olds.

Admission Criteria

All children, subject to the availability of places, will normally be admitted to the nursery class immediately after their 2nd or 3rd birthday for 15 hours funded provision.

If your child is eligible for the extended entitlement (30 hours) please speak to the School Office.

This school has an induction procedure to support children in settling successfully into nursery and becoming familiar with school life. The arrangements will be determined in consultation with the Nursery Teacher and Headteacher. During this period, children may attend reduced hours until they are fully settled.

To apply for a place in our nursery, you must complete and return your application form to the School Office as soon as possible and no later than the term before you wish your child to start.

Month of child's birthday	Deadline for applications (before their 2nd or 3rd birthday)
September, October, November and December	April 30th
January, February, March and April	August 31st
May, June, July and August	December 31st

Applications submitted after the deadline will only be considered for admission if the provider is not full or a place becomes available. If a place does not become available, the application will be considered at the deadline for the following term.

If, at the application deadline date, there are more places available than there are applications, then all children will be offered a place. Subsequent applicants will be offered places until the provision is full. Once full, all applicants will be placed on a waiting list, and places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Eligibility for 30 hours funded childcare

Parents of children aged three and four must meet one of the following criteria to be eligible for 30 hours funded 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 funded 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-hour funded 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 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 funded childcare cannot be claimed until the code has been verified, parents should provide the school with this information as soon as possible to avoid delay.

Parents will be prompted every three months by HMRC to reconfirm that they remain eligible for funded childcare. **It is the parent's responsibility to reconfirm the code.**

The LA will audit the eligibility codes at six points during the year to identify any children who have fallen out of eligibility.

If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive a 'grace period' – i.e., they will continue to receive the 30 hours funded 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 cannot take up their 30 hours place.

A child who becomes ineligible during the first half of a funding block will be funded until the end of that funding block (i.e. 31 March, 31 August, 31 December) or for as long as they remain under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter.

A child 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 they remain under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter.

If a child becomes ineligible for the 30 hours funded childcare, they will still be entitled to 15 hours of funded care.

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 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 funded 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 funded 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.

Oversubscription Criteria

If there are not enough places available for all applicants, we will allocate places in the following order:

- Children who will have their fourth birthday during the academic year for which they are applying for a place and would only have the opportunity to benefit from three terms of nursery education.
- Children who will have their third birthday during the autumn term of the academic year for which they are applying for a place.
- Children who will have their third birthday during the spring term of the academic year for which they are applying for a place.
- Children who will have their third birthday during the summer term of the academic year for which they are applying for a place.

The places will be offered according to a child's date of birth. Places can only be offered to younger children if we can confirm that a place is not needed for a child who will become four years of age during the during the relevant academic year for which admission is being sought.

If within any one group, there are more applicants than places available then places will be allocated by applying priorities 1 to 7 listed below:

1. Looked After Children (children in public care and as deemed under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989).
2. Children who will access their full universal entitlement within this nursery (15 hours)
3. Children who live in the school's catchment area.
4. Children who live in Gateshead and who will have a brother or sister at the school during the coming academic year.
5. Children who have exceptional medical or social grounds. (See point A below).
6. Other children who live in Gateshead.
7. Children who live outside Gateshead, but only if places are otherwise likely to remain available during the academic year.

Places can only be offered to younger children if we can confirm that a place is not needed for a child who will become four years of age during the relevant academic year for which admission is being sought.

Point A

We can consider exceptional individual applications, particularly in cases involving medical or social needs. If you wish to apply on medical or social grounds you must provide written evidence from relevant registered health professionals i.e. a doctor or social worker. The evidence must demonstrate why the chosen school is more appropriate and what difficulties would be caused if your child were to travel to and attend alternative schools. We will not consider such applications if the relevant professional evidence is not provided. This evidence will be assessed by a panel of Governors and the Head Teacher. No assumption should be made that submission of the relevant evidence will, in itself, be sufficient to allocate a place.

Tie Breaker

If, after applying all of the above, there is a tie between two or more children then priority will be given to the child or children that live nearest to the school measured as the crow flies i.e. in a straight line from the centre of the home residence to the main entrance of the school.

Pattern of Attendance

Parents/carers are invited to indicate their preferred pattern of attendance. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate these preferences, places and attendance patterns will be allocated based on availability and the operational needs of the setting. Where a particular pattern of attendance is oversubscribed, places will be allocated as follows:

• In order of age, starting with the oldest child and continuing until all places within that attendance pattern have been filled.

Children who are admitted into Nursery are expected to attend regularly and punctually. Parents/carers should contact the school to advise of any non-attendance providing a reason for their child's absence. In the event that attendance drops below 90% or there is a prolonged period of absence (any longer than 3 weeks) the Head Teacher reserves the right to withdraw the nursery place, except where absence is authorised or there are exceptional circumstances.

Address

For the purposes of deciding whether a child lives in the catchment area of a school we will use the parent or legal guardian's address or the address of a relevant adult who has parental responsibility (as defined under the 1989 Children Act) for the child.

Waiting list

If places become available, all applications on the waiting list will be considered. The waiting list will be maintained by the Head Teacher from the start of the academic year and be kept for the rest of the academic year. All applicants on the waiting list will be placed according to the admission criteria and priorities set out above. The length of time a child has been on the waiting list cannot be considered if places become available. If you apply late, your child's name may be added to the list by using the priority order described above.

Additional Sessions and Charges

Additional sessions are subject to availability

Each session of 3 hours will be charged at £12.00 per session. This charge will be reviewed annually.

Additional sessions must be booked 2 weeks in advance in agreement with the school office.

Parents will be invoiced on the 1st of each month for those sessions booked in for the month ahead. Payment will be expected within 7 days of the invoice.

Should parents wish to cancel any booked additional sessions, 2 weeks' notice is required, and this should be done in writing / by email to thedriveprimary@gateshead.gov.uk. We reserve the right to charge for any sessions should parents not provide written notice within the time frame stated above.

Once additional sessions have been allocated, they will continue to be included in the termly session timetable unless:

1. Parents have given 2 weeks written notice to cease the additional sessions
2. The child leaves our Nursery.
3. Payment for additional sessions has not been made within the payment terms.
4. The child has not been attending the additional sessions regularly (whether sessions have been paid for or not).

No refund or fee reduction will be available for periods of absence due to illness, as the setting's staffing and operational costs continue regardless of a child's attendance.

In the case of prolonged unexpected absences e.g., serious illness, fees will be refunded at the discretion of the Governing Body.

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 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.

Complaints

If you feel that the admissions criteria stated above have not been fairly applied to your child then you may register a complaint with the Governing Body using their normal complaints procedure.

Admission into Reception

Obtaining a place in our school nursery class does not guarantee your child a place in our school for entry to Reception class. There is a different admission policy that applies for admission to infant and primary school entry. You must apply again in the September before your child's 4th birthday for admission to an infant or primary school.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body

Date: September 2026

Review: September 2027