

# **Winnington Park Primary School and Nursery**

## **Nursery Admission Policy 2025-26**



September 2025

Review: September 2026

## **Introduction**

Winnington Park Primary School and Nursery is committed to providing high-quality early years education in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. We offer both funded and paid nursery places that support children's learning and development in a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment.

This policy outlines the admissions process and ensures fair, consistent access in accordance with statutory guidance and local authority funding criteria.

## **Aims**

- To ensure admissions are fair, transparent, and consistently applied.
- To provide equitable access to funded early years education.
- To work collaboratively with parents/carers and the local authority to meet childcare and educational needs effectively.

## **Nursery Places**

We offer part-time and full-time nursery places for children aged 3 and 4, in line with the EYFS framework (DfE, 2023).

The Nursery offers the following places:

39 part time places (39 mornings and 39 afternoons) or 1 full day, 2 full days, 3 full days, 4 full days, or 5 full days up to a capacity of an equivalent of 39 full time places.

The Nursery will work with families to support patterns of attendance but requests that patterns are adhered to once agreed and four weeks' notice is provided if these are to be changed.

The Nursery can have more than 39 children on roll at any one time if part time attendance arrangements allow for this. Priority will be given to children in the order they have joined the Nursery if demand exceeds supply. Every effort will be made to support all families' childcare needs and the Nursery expects all families to offer flexibility where they have capacity to do so to accommodate all children.

## **Nursery Sessions**

The sessions offered to nursery children are as follows:

Morning Session 8.45am to 11.45am (3 hours)

Afternoon Session 12.15pm to 3.15pm (3 hours)

Lunchtime 11.45am-12.15pm (30 minutes)

For children eligible for 30 hours free childcare: 6 hours daily

For children eligible for 15 hours only: 3 hours free childcare daily

## **Applications**

Applications are made directly through the School office.

[admin@winningtonpark.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@winningtonpark.cheshire.sch.uk) 01606 74371

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

Parents/carers should complete the nursery application form, stating session preferences and funding eligibility. Proof of date of birth and address is required. A waiting list will be kept by the School.

Visits to the School and Nursery are encouraged.

### **Free childcare arrangements**

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, and up to 52 weeks of the year, 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
- 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 prorated number of free hours. The total number of hours will be adjusted to reflect the portion of the year remaining.

### **Eligibility for 15 hours free childcare for three and four year olds**

All children in England can receive 570 hours free childcare per year.

These hours are usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but parents may choose to take fewer hours over more weeks.

'15 hours' free childcare is available from the term following a child's third birthday.

### **Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare for three and four year olds**

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 must apply for and validate a 30-hour code via the Childcare Choices website before the start of term. This is parental responsibility. This must be validated and given to the school office before the start of the following term.

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.

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

## **Fees**

Parents are charged for care provided outside of the following provision:

- Universal 15 hours free provision a week for all three to four-year-olds
- Extended 30 hours free provision a week for eligible three to four-year-olds
- Extended 30 hours free provision a week for children in foster care

All hours offered in our Nursery must be funded through this free entitlement of either 15 hours or up to 30 hours for those families entitled to access these extra hours.

The charges are as follows:

- **£17.00** per additional 3-hour session

School lunches are paid for via School Gateway and can be ordered on the day. Menus are online.

Once an attendance pattern is agreed with the Nursery, parents are expected to adhere to this. A monthly invoice will be provided to parents for lunchtime supervision and other regular consumable costs which is payable via School Gateway.

The 30 hours free childcare offer cannot be used to pay for meals, other consumables, e.g. nappies or sun cream, additional hours or additional activities e.g. trips. The school may charge a fee for these additions. If parents choose to pay for these, it will be an arrangement between the parent and the school.

The 30 hours free childcare offer cannot be used to pay for wrap around care (before and after school club). This is booked online and paid for upfront, 48 hours in advance of the sessions.

Parents will not be required to pay any fee as a condition of taking up a '30 hours' place.

Parents who wish to take their child home over the lunchtime period are entitled to do so.

Families are responsible for the validation of their funding code. If funding codes are not accepted families are liable to pay the total fees for the sessions used. If funding codes are split between another setting and there is a shortfall of funded hours for this setting, families are liable to pay the fees for the session used. If there is a shortfall in funded hours, then attendance patterns can only be amended with hour weeks notice as per policy.

## **Attendance and Funding Compliance**

Regular attendance is expected for all children with funded or paid places. If a child is frequently absent or attendance is poor without valid reason, their nursery place may be at risk. Unused or persistently underused places may be withdrawn and offered to another child on the waiting list. Parents must inform the nursery of any absences or changes in circumstances affecting attendance or funding eligibility.

## **Difficulty with payments**

The school will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored.

The school understands that parents may face financial difficulties and, understandably, would like to ensure as little disruption to their child's care and education as possible. Parents and carers experiencing such difficulties will contact the headteacher early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

## **Debt collection**

The governing board will have a duty to ensure the school receives all the funds to which it is entitled, including nursery fees.

The governing board will not write off any debt that exceeds £50.

A full record will be kept of debts owed to the school for seven years. This will include all letters requesting money, reminders and invoices.

The school will not initiate legal action to recover debts; however, it will refer uncollected debts to the LA to consider such action.

All debts will be handled in accordance with the Debt Recovery Policy.

## **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 who are due to start school in the September of the next academic year.
5. 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
6. Families requesting full time funded places not part time places
7. Families requesting part time funded places (15 hours)
8. 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. Priority may also be given to families requesting full-time or extended funded places, depending on capacity.

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.

### **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 will 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.

### **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, due to illness for example.

Parents must give a minimum six weeks' notice if they wish to change the level of provision their child receives (a change to pattern of attendance). This requirement applies both before and after provision begins.

Families are charged for the days that children do not attend as the place is held for them.

### **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.

### **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.

## **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

Attendance at our Nursery does not affect the LA admissions criteria for a school place in Reception and you will need to apply for a place in school through the local authority.

## **Transition to School**

The school organised a comprehensive transition plan to support children leaving Nursery and joining Reception. Our Nursery is well integrated into the daily routines of school life and attendance at Nursery supports a positive transition into School and Reception.

## **Uniform**

Wearing a school uniform is not compulsory for children in Nursery although many families choose to do this as it supports the transition into school. The school uniform policy is available to read on the school website.

## **School Lunches**

School lunches are provided by Edsential and cost £2.95. Nursery children are supported to eat their lunch by Nursery staff and the school's Midday Assistants. Nursery children eat at table and chairs in the Reception classroom, but move into the dining hall (if they are ready for this) in the term before they join school. When your child joins the Nursery you will be asked to provide information about any religious preferences, dietary or medical needs that your child may have.

## **Before and After School Club**

The school's wraparound care (before and after school club) is called Winnington Winners and is operated by the school. Winners is open from 7.30am to 8.45am and 3.15pm to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. Booking is made online, 48 hours in advance and free cancellations can be made up to 48 hours in advance.

Prices from September 2025 are £6.50 for a morning session including breakfast and £14.00 for an afternoon session including a light tea.

A 50% reduction in fees is applied to all children in receipt of the Pupil Premium. The 15 and 30 hours free childcare offer cannot be used to pay for wrap around care (before and after school club).

## **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.