



Our children leave Mile Oak thinking big with no limit on their potential. The school family works together to inspire and support every child. They learn and achieve through inspirational teaching in a lively, ambitious environment. Every child is nurtured to gain the creativity, responsibility and full breadth of skills required to take an active and fulfilling role in society.

Little Oaks Nursery: Admissions Policy

Date	July 2024
Review Date	July 2025

Introduction

Little Oaks Nursery seeks to provide high quality child centred nursery education to children and families in our local community. We will deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum through a range of balanced and stimulating learning contexts led and facilitated by early year's experts. Our aim is to offer a happy, fun, nurturing and exciting learning environment where each child can achieve to their full potential.

This policy sets out the way in which access and entitlement to the benefits of high-quality child centred nursery education, on a fair and equitable basis, is ensured.

Little Oaks Nursery can hold a maximum of forty 2, 3 and 4 years, however we decide the total capacity based on the cohort of children and the number of supervising adults, in setting, per session. The nursery manager, senior leadership of the school, together with the governing committee of the school have absolute control over the number of places offered for each age range. The number of two-year old places per session, will not normally exceed 10 per session, however the exact number of places is flexible depending on a variety of factors, including the needs to the individual children attending the setting.

We aim to:

- Establish an admissions policy governed by clearly defined criteria that may be articulated to families and other professionals
- Provide families access to information on the governments 'help with childcare costs' initiatives
- Help promote consistency of practice and procedure between nursery classes in Brighton and Hove
- Ensure, as far as possible, that all children who gain a place will fully benefit from nursery education

1. Opening hours and fees

1.1 We are a term time only setting. Our opening dates match Brighton and Hove schools; you can find these here: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/School%20Term%20Dates%202024%20to%202025.pdf>

1.2 In line with Brighton and Hove Schools, we are closed to children on bank holidays and for INSET days. The latter provide essential time for staff training and development. The INSET days can be checked on our school website: <https://www.mileoakschool.co.uk/info-for-parents/term-dates/>

1.3 Early Years Funding Entitlement (funding to settings, for nursery places) only covers 38 weeks of the year. Little Oaks Nursery is open in line with the school calendar, which usually totals just over 39 weeks. This means that 'Non-Funded Days' are built into our year. Brighton and Hove Council suggest 6 of these are included across the year. However, with the additional INSETs that come with being a school-based setting, we have set our 'Non-Funded Days' at 3; these will normally fall at the start of term. We remain open on 'Non-Funded Days' but the sessions are chargeable.

1.4 Little Oaks nursery is open 8am-4pm and funded hours are offered in sessions, between 9am-3pm.

1.5 Nursery children with siblings in the school are offered a soft start, this begins at 8.50am. Children who do not have siblings in the school will not be permitted entry until 9am, unless families have paid for the early start hour (8-9am).

1.6 The current prices for non-funded places are as follows:

- 9-3 (6 hours): £35.88
- 9-12 (3 hours): £17.94
- 12-3 (3 hours): £17.94
- Additional hours (8-9/12-1/3-4): £5.98

1.7 Any necessary increases to our fee structure will be communicated in writing 1 month in advance of the new price taking effect.

2. Funding

2.1 We offer funded places for 2-year-olds and 3/ 4-year-olds, subject to eligibility and availability. Please see the guidance below for further information on government funding options.

2.2 Funding for 3- and 4-years olds

There are two types of funding available your 3- or 4-year-old:

- **Universal free childcare** - For all 3- and 4-year-olds. Children can use up to 570 hours each year, up to a maximum of 15 hours over 38 weeks
- **Extended free childcare (also known as 30 hours' free childcare)** - For eligible working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds. Children can use an additional 570 hours each year, up to a maximum of 30 hours per week over 38 weeks. Parents/carers must apply online through the Childcare Choices website: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>. If eligible, you will receive a 30 hours free childcare code and this must be provided before the place is allocated

2.3 Foster parent families may also be eligible for extended free childcare. You must be employed or self-employed outside of your fostering role and accessing additional hours must be in the best interests of the child. Speak to your foster child's social worker about whether you meet the eligibility criteria and how to apply.

2.4 Funding for 2-year-olds:

There are two types of funding available for your 2-year-old:

- Some 2-year olds, whose families are receiving **some additional forms of government support**, can get to up to 570 hours of childcare support, spread across the year, up to a maximum of 15 hours over 38 weeks
- 2-year olds, **whose working parents are eligible**, can also get to up to 570 hours of childcare support, spread across the year, up to a maximum of 15 hours over 38 weeks

Please note, if you're eligible for both the working entitlement and the 15 hours for families receiving support, you cannot take up both offers, and should apply for the 15 hours for families receiving support. You can do this by contacting your local authority.

To check eligibility, visit the Childcare Choices website (See above). You will need to provide evidence when you apply and a childcare code must be provided before the place is allocated.

2.6 When does my child become eligible?

All children become eligible for their funded place the term after they become 2 or 3 years of age.

This means a child born on or between:

- 1 April and 31 August - will become eligible for funding from the beginning of the term starting in September
- 1 September and 31 December - will become eligible for funding from the beginning of the term starting in January
- 1 January and 31 March - will become eligible for funding from the beginning of the term starting in April

3. Little Oaks Nursery Attendance Options and Guidelines

3.1 We strongly recommend that families choose attendance options that fit with our patterns and guidance. We know that children accessing nursery education regularly and consecutively settle quickly, develop stronger relationships with their teachers and peers and make the best progress in their learning and development.

3.2 Little Oaks Nursery Attendance Patterns

- **Option 1, Full Time:** Monday-Friday 9-3 (30 hours)
- **Option 2, beginning of the week:** Monday, Tuesday 9-3 and Wednesday 9-12 (15 hours)
- **Option 3, end of the week:** Wednesday 12-3, and Thursday, Friday 9-3 (15 hours)
- **Option 4, mornings:** Monday-Friday 9-12 (15 hours)
- **Option 5, afternoons:** Monday-Friday 12-3 (15 hours)

3.3 Our lunch session runs between 12 and 1pm. For those children attending morning sessions only, the lunch period is not included. It is possible, subject to availability, to extend morning only sessions to include the lunch period. This is at a cost of £5.98

3.4 Little Oaks Nursery reserve the right to adjust the attendance options to meet the needs of the children and the nursery. Families will be given one school terms notice before any changes take effect.

3.4 Little Oaks Nursery Attendance Guidelines

2-year-olds: non-Funded:

- A minimum of 2 sessions must be taken (sessions are 3 hours: 9-12/ 12-3)

2-year-olds: Funded (15 hours for families that meet specific criteria):

- Choose an attendance pattern (options 2-5)
- After settling period completes, a minimum of 2 sessions must be taken, within in the pattern
- Work towards attending full 15-hour pattern

3- and 4-year-olds: Universally Funded (15 hours available for all children of correct age):

- Attendance patterns only
- Full entitlement should be taken, unless exceptional circumstances

3-Year-olds: Extended funding (30 hours for working families that meet specific criteria):

- Attendance patterns only
- Preference given to those taking their full 30-hour entitlement
- A minimum of 15 hours, unless exceptional circumstances

Additional sessions:

- We offer flexible booking for sessions (8-9am/9-12pm/12-1pm/1-3pm/3-4pm) with available space; these can be booked a week in advance and can be a one-off booking. These sessions are strictly, subject to availability

4. Making an application

4.1 The majority of places become available at the beginning of the academic year, but we have two further intake points available– January and April. Subject to availability, and in special circumstances, we will consider allocating spaces outside of these intake points.

4.2 Families considering sending their children to our Nursery, are encouraged to visit by appointment. Once you've visited and decided that Little Oaks Nursery is the right place for your child and your family, it's time to complete a registration form.

4.3 We can accept applications, for children, from the start of the term that they turn 2 years old and children can start at the nursery any time after their 2nd birthday, on the understanding that fees will be payable where children have not yet become eligible for funding.

4.3 Our Little Oaks Registration Form is available on our website or you can request one by emailing, calling the school, or by popping in to see our friendly admin team - office@mileoak.brighton-hove.sch.uk / Tel: 01273 077114

4.4. Please be note that **completion of the form itself doesn't guarantee a nursery space.**

4.5 On receipt of the above, the nursery team will make telephone contact to discuss availability of preferred sessions, whether being added to wait list is necessary (for example if the preferred session is full and there are no suitable alternatives or your child is yet to turn 2) and advise as to when further contact will be made -this is usually at the end of the half term before children are due to start at Nursery.

4.6. You will then receive confirmation of your child's place in writing at the following times:

- Autumn places will be confirmed in the previous May
- Spring places will be confirmed in the previous October
- Summer places will be confirmed in the previous February

4.7 It may be possible for places to be confirmed more quickly, depending on when the application is made and the availability at the time of receipt.

4.8 Allocated spaces are offered subject to the necessary funding code and information being provided by families in the correct timeframe.

4.9 We encourage families wanting specific sessions to take alternatives, should they be suitable. If this is not possible, we look forward, to future terms, and inform families when their preferred session is likely to come available; registering interest in spaces up to a year in advance and in accordance with the priorities list below. Families on the waiting list will also be contacted the half term before the child is due to take up their space – they will confirm the details on their registration form and ensure the space is still required. Steps 4.7-4.9 will then be followed.

4.10 When the nursery is oversubscribed or full for specific sessions, new places are offered in accordance with our priority criteria (see below).

5. Allocation of places

5.1 Priority criteria

If there are insufficient places available to meet demand, all places will be allocated to children in accordance with the following list of priorities:

PRIORITY 1: Children transitioning from the under 3s (existing 2-year olds in the nursery).

PRIORITY 2: Children transitioning to reception (new 3- and 4-year olds in their final nursery year).

PRIORITY 3: Children with a special medical need, educational or social need including those with a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan, Early Help Plan or social worker.

PRIORITY 4: Children who have had a sibling at the school or in the nursery.

PRIORITY 5: Children on the nursery waiting list.

We also consider:

- A balance of age ranges catered for by the nursery class, including terms of birth; **it is important to note that on occasions, allocation of places will be down to term of birth specifically, due the number of spaces needed to accommodate existing 2-year olds transitioning into the over 3's during the course of the year.**
- Whether a child is accessing their full 15 or 30-hours funding entitlement, within one of our attendance patterns and following our attendance guidance above
- The Individual needs of children and their families

5.2 Decisions will be made by the Nursery Manager and Senior Leadership team. Decisions to offer a place will be based on the criteria and procedures laid out in this admission policy. Decisions will be final and there is no right of appeal.

5.3 The offer of a nursery place DOES NOT in any way mean automatic entitlement to the main school. The admissions process for the main school remains under the control of Brighton and Hove Local Authority.

5.4 Accepted places will be carried forward indefinitely until we hear otherwise from families. Any requests to reduce hours, require written notice 4 weeks in advance, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

5.5 Any requests to increase hours, for example when a child becomes eligible for funding/further funding, will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with the admissions policy and are subject to availability. Current attendance at Little Oaks does not guarantee an increase request will be granted.

5.6 Should work patterns change, meaning a child will no longer be entitled to 30 hours, they will automatically be entitled to the 15 hours if they follow one of our attendance patterns.

6. Starting at Little Oaks

6.1 Once your place has been confirmed, you will be contacted again with settling information and guidance about joining our whole school systems. This includes creating various parent accounts,

required consents, along with key policies to read and/or sign. The Little Oaks Brochure, available on the school website (link above), will provide you with further information about our nursery curriculum, staffing, vision and values and essential tips about what to bring.

6.2 Settling

- Joining a nursery is a big step for the child and the family alike. Each settling period will be tailored to suit individual children but this usually consists of 3-hour long sessions, over the course of a week, with their familiar adult reducing the time they spend in setting, each time.
- During our busiest intake months, we will offer 'stay and play' sessions for all new starters.

6.3 Lunches

- Hot meals provided by Caterlink can be ordered daily for £2.60. It is essential that you let the nursery know on drop off the meal chosen for your child. Alternatively, you may send your child with a **cold** packed lunch.
- Little Oaks reserves the right to increase the charge, to families, for lunches at short notice and without a full fee review, in the event that Caterlink increase their costs.
- Families are asked to ensure their 'Parent Pay' accounts are kept in credit and meals are not ordered without the appropriate available funds.
- Should an account fall into arrears, a ping reminder will be sent, asking the debt to be cleared.
- If the account remains in arrears, a verbal reminder will be given by the nursery leadership team.
- If after these measures, no payment has been received and no effort has been made toward reducing this debt. A debt letter will be issued and a payment plan is offered.
- Until the debt is cleared or the plan arranged, families will be asked to send a packed lunch, for their child and hot meal orders will not be permitted – unless under exceptional circumstances.
- If we still do not hear from families regarding their outstanding balance, families will be invited to a meeting to explore options to help you pay the required amount.

7. Paying fees

7.1 In an effort to ensure all our nursery invoices are paid promptly and to reduce the need for chasing outstanding balances, we will follow the steps below:

- All invoices for the month ahead will be sent out by the 10th of each month
- Any unpaid invoices will be chased, via ping, on the 24th of each month
- If an invoice remains unpaid by the last working day of the month, families will be verbally reminded by the nursery manager

- If the invoice remains outstanding by the 7th of the following month, a formal letter will be sent to families asking for payment or for a payment plan to be arranged
- Until the debt is cleared or the plan arranged, families will only be permitted to access funded hours for their child. The situation of families that do not access any funded sessions, will be addressed on a case by case basis, but **could** result in reduction of hours or loss of place
- If we still do not hear from families regarding their outstanding balance, families will be invited to a meeting to explore options to help you pay the required amount.

7.2 Where absence or organised holidays fall on normal paid sessions, full payment is required; there is no option to exchange.

7.3 There is not a charge for training days and bank holidays.

7.4 When closed for conditions beyond the nursery's control, there will be a charge for the first three consecutive full days, if the nursery remains closed for a longer period, any further decisions will be taken by the nursery management team and governing committee.

7.5 Payment can be made through 'tax free childcare' accounts. Please ensure you set up the transaction from your childcare account in a timely fashion so that no late payment charges are incurred.

8. Leaving the nursery

8.1 If a child is withdrawn from nursery, families must give notice in writing, 4 weeks before they wish to leave. This can be discretionary, for special circumstances – which should be discussed as soon as possible with the nursery management.

8.2 The place of a child who has been withdrawn cannot be held open for a trial period and will be automatically made available.

8.3 If families later wish their child to return to the nursery, the fact that a child has previously been in the nursery class will in no way influence the decision on being offered a place.

9. Attendance, Safeguarding and loss of nursery place

9.1 There is an expectation that any absence will be reported, by calling or emailing the nursery, before the child's session is due to begin.

9.2 If a child is absent without notification, we will call home or use emergency contact numbers if necessary.

9.4 Where we are unable to make contact with families of absent children, we will work together with our safeguarding team to ensure the safety of the absent child is confirmed.

9.5 If attendance and punctuality is poor or erratic the nursery manager will talk to families and remind them that, for the child to benefit fully from nursery education, attendance needs to be regular and punctual. This conversation should be recorded on school systems.

9.6 If after a period of two weeks attendance and punctuality remain poor, a letter will be sent to the families inviting them to meet with the headteacher or an alternative member of the senior leadership team.

9.7 If, following the meeting, there is no sustained improvement in attendance within an agreed period, then the child **may** lose their place. Families will be notified of the loss of place in writing.