

Information and Records

Admissions and Fees

Intention

The Pre-School provides an open, fair, and clearly communicated procedure for admission to the setting, booking attendance and the fee structure.

Scope and Legal Framework

This policy sets out how the Pre-School's procedures for:

- Administering admissions at the beginning of each academic year; and in-year admissions
- Managing settling-in
- Administering the waiting list
- The management of the early years entitlement grant for 2,3, and 4 year olds
- The management of fees
- Notice periods, transition and leaving Pre-School

This policy should be read alongside other Pre-School policies including:

- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
- Safeguarding – Protecting Children from Abuse
- Support for children with Special Educational Needs
- Data Protection
- Parental Involvement and Behaviour
- Parental Complaints
- Community Values and Behaviour
- Managing Health Care Needs

Under the Equalities Act 2010, it is illegal to discriminate on the grounds of protected characteristics¹. The admissions policy and procedures in place enable equal access to Pre-School. If parents² consider they are subject to unlawful discrimination as a result of the operation of the Admissions policy, they may follow the arrangements set out in law.

Places, Session Times and Terms

Handsworth Pre-School is registered with OFSTED. The number of places available per academic year is set in line with business needs and legal requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Until the end of July 2023 (end of the academic year) the Pre-School is open 9.00-12.00 Monday to Friday, 15 hours per week.

¹Disability, race, gender re-assignment, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy or maternity, paternity, marriage and civil partnerships.

² Parents means adults with parental responsibility/legal guardianship

From September 2023, sessions will be 23 hours per week. Pre-School hours are 9.00am-1.45pm Monday – Thursday (4.45 hours) and 9.00am-1.00pm on a Friday (4 hours).

The Pre-School operates for 38 weeks per academic year, spread across three terms (six half terms). Session times and term dates are set by the Pre-School and are published on the website: www.handsworthpreschool.co.uk. The Pre-School may change any published session times and/or term dates should the need arise.

Free Early Education Funded Places

15 Hours

All 3–4-year-olds receive the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) from the term after their 3rd birthday. The FEEE funds children to attend 15 hours at the Pre-School.

Under current schemes, some 2-year-olds are eligible to receive the FEEE for 15 hours. Parents are able to check their eligibility for two year old funding via <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/families-young-people-and-children/childcare-and-early-years/free-early-education-two-year-olds>

Places will be offered on the expectation that 15 hours is allocated to the Pre-School so that sufficient sessions can be held for the child to take up, subject to attendance patterns below.

30 Hours

Under current schemes, some working families of 3–4-year-olds are eligible for 30 hours free childcare. From April 2024, it is expected that the Government will extend eligibility to working families of 2-year-olds. Parents may check their eligibility for the 30 hours funding via the Government portal: [Get 30 hours free childcare: step by step - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-30-hours-free-childcare-step-by-step)

Eligibility codes must be secured, passed to the Pre-School and validated before the end of the month before each term. Codes must also be revalidated every three months (each term).

Codes secured after the published deadlines or not revalidated in time cannot be applied. If your child is attending from the term after their third birthday and relevant paperwork has been completed, they will be eligible for the universal 15 hours entitlement. Fees will be chargeable for sessions booked in addition to the 15 hours. Fees will be chargeable until a valid code is applied generally at the beginning of the following term. (E.g., if a valid code is not supplied in time for the Autumn Term, fees will be chargeable until the Spring Term etc.) Subject to further government advice, parents of 2-year-olds eligible for 30 hours (from April 2024) will be eligible for fees for all sessions booked should codes not be received or validated in time.

Until July 2023, places will be offered on the expectation that 15 hours of the 30-hour entitlement is allocated to the Pre-School so that sufficient sessions can be held for the child. Parents may use the remaining 15 hours at another setting or provider.

For places offered for September 2023 and ongoing, the expectation is that 23 hours is allocated to the Pre-School so that sufficient sessions can be held for the child, subject to attendance patterns set out below. Parents may use their remaining 7 hours at another setting or provider.

This allocation of hours allows the Pre-School to enable children to take up their full entitlement once they are eligible and/or in line with parental preference. The availability of places is dependent on the business needs of the Pre-School. The Pre-School informs parents in advance if places are unavailable once their child is eligible for funding.

Attendance & Session Times

Until July 2023, places are offered on the following understanding:

- That children eligible for 15 hours early education are registered at the Pre-School to attend all sessions. To support settling-in, parents may build up their child's attendance over the first term the child attends. The Pre-School recommends that children attend no less than 9 hours per week initially.
- That fee-paying children are registered for all sessions but are able to attend and be charged for a minimum of 9 hours per week.
- Once children become eligible for 15 hours and have completed their first term/settled in, we encourage them to attend all sessions. In support of transition, the Pre-School recommends that children who will start Reception at the end of the academic year attend for their full eligible hours.

From September 2023, the Pre-School will be offering 23 hours provision per week. Places will be offered on the following basis:

- All children arrive at 9.00am
- Going home times are:
 - 12.00 noon (3-hour session); or
 - 1.00pm (4-hour session); or
 - 1.45pm (4.45-hour session, Monday-Thursday)
- All sessions are allocated to funded children in line with their eligibilities and are subject to the expected hours of attendance set out above.
- Fee paying children attend for a minimum of nine hours per week, as set out above.
- Parents are able to combine their eligible hours across sessions.
- The minimum bookable session is 3 hours, starting at 9.00am. Parents will be subject to top-up fees if their funded hours do not fully cover the hours of the sessions they have booked.

- Parents are able to book and buy additional hours in advance, subject to arrangements set out below.
- Children attending beyond 12.00 noon bring in a packed lunch from home.

Booking, Fees and Other Funding

The Pre-School generally expects to book the sessions a child will attend, and to confirm the hours for which fees are payable, when places are initially offered. Fees are payable for hours booked for children who are not yet eligible for funding or who will be attending for hours in addition to the limits of their funding (i.e.: 15-hour children who attend for longer). Pre-School fees are set by the Parent Committee and are published on the website. Fees are reviewed annually.

Fees are payable half-termly in advance. Parents must give notice **at least two weeks before the end of each half term** if they wish to change the regular hours for which they pay fees. Changes in attendance are subject agreement from the Pre-School in line with the expectations set out above, availability and ratios.

Some additional fee-paying sessions may be requested on an ad hoc basis, subject to availability and ratios. Ad hoc sessions must be agreed in advance with the Pre-School Leader. Once a booking is made and agreed, fees are chargeable.

Fees paid are refundable in the following circumstances:

- If the Pre-School is required to close either temporarily or permanently by the Local Authority, the Department for Education, OFSTED or by any other legal or statutory body.
- If the Pre-School closes temporarily to maintain the health and safety of the children or staff; and/or
- When a child leaves the Pre-School mid-year, subject to notice periods (see below).

Fees remain payable should your child be absent for any other reason.

Non-Payment and Late Payment of Fees

The Pre-School will take action to secure timely payment of fees. Parents generally have two weeks (14 days) from the invoice date to pay fees. Parents will receive up to two reminders for the payment of fees beyond this date. The first reminder will be issued within 7 days of the late payment. The second and final reminder (warning) will be issued within 14 days of the late payment.

Parents experiencing financial hardship or difficulties should contact the Pre-School promptly so that an appropriate payment plan can be put in place.

If fees remain unpaid 7 days after the date of the final warning, or if the payment plan is not implemented in full, the Pre-School retains the right to:

- take legal advice and steps to secure payment of outstanding fees;

- undertake appropriate legal redress to reclaim outstanding fees and associated costs. Costs will include, and may not be limited to, bank charges, staff time taken to administer the management of the debt and to undertake legal procedures and/or attend hearings. Staff time will be costed at an hourly rate of £15 per hour;
- reduce the hours of attendance for the child to the universal entitlement/funded sessions (15 hours) if applicable, or to remove the child from the register if they do not qualify for a funded place. Children will be able to resume their full hours once outstanding fees are paid, subject to ratios. The Pre-School reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to resume fee-paying hours/places if parents are issued a second final warning; and/or
- take any further action as advised by our lawyers/relevant advisory or statutory agencies

Other Funding

The Pre-School is registered for the **Tax-Free Childcare** scheme. More information on this scheme and eligibilities can be found here: [Tax-Free Childcare - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The Pre-School is also registered with a number of **work-place Nursery Voucher schemes** and will work with parents to access the funding available.

Applying to Pre-School, Allocation of Places and the Waiting List

Parents must complete and submit an application form for a place at Pre-School. Application forms are available on the website or by contacting the Pre-School. Applications can be made at any time and are accepted until a child is eligible to start school (that is, the academic year in which they turn 5). Once the application is submitted, the details will be held on the waiting list. Details remain on the waiting list until the academic year in which a child is eligible to start school, or until a parent requests that the details are removed, whichever is soonest. Parents may contact the Pre-School to withdraw their child's details from the waiting list at any point.

Offering Places

Parents on the waiting list will be contacted by the Pre-School when places become available. Places are offered and then confirmed. Once confirmed, parents are asked to complete and return registration, funding (if appropriate) and settling-in forms and to present the relevant confirmations of identity as required. Additional information may be sought where a child or family identifies additional health, social or developmental needs.

The Pre-School provides parents with information about what to expect in the first few sessions; support for settling-in; and what to bring into Pre-School.

Admission Arrangements

The majority of places at Pre-School are offered for commencement in the following September (Autumn Term/new academic year). In-year places are offered as and when they become available.

Places are offered on the following basis:

- Birth-date
- Eligibility for 2,3- and 4-year-old funding
- Exceptional circumstances including (but not limited to):
 - Children with SEN – children with an existing, identified need and/or those who are or have been supported through specialist provision at a local Children’s Centre; the Early Years Home Visiting Service; Good Beginnings or a similar Local Authority run programme for children with additional needs.
 - Children supported by social services – including (but not limited to) a Child In Need Plan, Child Protection Plan; and/or support via Early Help.
 - Children with a sibling attending the setting in the same academic year.
 - Exceptional family circumstances, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In-year places will be offered in line with the criteria and attendance expectations set out above.

Places for Children who have Deferred or Delayed Entry to School Reception

The Pre-School will maintain a place for a child currently attending, who is summer born and/or has SEN, if their parents ask us to do so. Parents must provide confirmation that the Local Authority has agreed admission out of usual year group.

The Pre-School will consider on a case-by-case basis new applications from parents of children who are summer born and/or have SEN, who have deferred their child’s admission to school Reception class. Parents must provide confirmation that the Local Authority has previously agreed the request for admission out of usual year group.

Department for Education guidance defines summer born as children who are born between 1st April and 31st August each year.

Starting Pre-School: Children Starting in September/Beginning of Each Academic Year

Children new to the Pre-School and their parents will be invited to an initial group stay and play session. The purpose of the stay and play is to give parents and children an informal opportunity to:

- Meet each other, see the Pre-School and play.
- Meet the staff and the child’s Key Person.
- Begin to discuss a child’s settling-in needs with the Key Person.
- Complete any remaining paperwork.

- Understand the settling in-procedures and what needs to be brought into Pre-School, including medicines.
- Ask questions and share information.

The Pre-School provides each child with a start date for their first full session following the stay and play. On arrival for the first session, parents are asked to drop their child at the door and go. Staff are experienced in supporting children through the settling in period and in working with children who may be finding the transition difficult.

If staff find that a child needs additional support for transition, they will discuss options with parents. This may include (but not be limited to):

- The child attending a minimum of nine hours per week, building up to full attendance over time;
- The child attending from 9.00am for a minimum of 2 hours per session (going home early), building up to full attendance over time; and/or
- Other strategies that may be useful.

In exceptional cases, parents may be invited to come into the setting to support their child's settling-in. Such exceptions will mostly only be made for children with diagnosed or suspected special educational needs; significant life-long health/medical conditions; and/or other exceptional family circumstances. Cases will be managed on an individual basis and in discussion with parents, the child's key person and the Pre-School Leader.

In-Year Admissions

Parents will be invited to come into a session to stay and play with their child from 9.30-11.00am. The purpose of the stay and play is to allow children to experience the setting; and for parents to meet and discuss their child's needs with their allocated Key Person.

Once the initial stay-and-play has been completed, children are able to attend from 9.00am on their next scheduled session. Parents are asked to drop their child at the door. Staff will support the child's settling in, as above. Exceptions may be made as set out above.

Leaving Pre-School within the Academic Year

Parents must give the Pre-School a minimum of **two weeks** (term time) written notice prior to a child leaving Pre-School within the academic year.

If applicable, fees are payable for the notice period. The Pre-School will refund any fees paid for the half term remaining after the notice period has been served.

Transition documentation is completed for children who leave Pre-School for another setting or to start school. More detail on transitions can be found in the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning policy.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Handsworth Pre-school	name of setting
Held on	28 March 2023	(date)
Date to be reviewed	27 March 2024	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee		
Name of signatory	Jonny Cooper	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chair	