EARLY YEARS

ADMISSIONS POLICY
September 2024

NURSERY SCHOOL/ACADEMYS AND

SCHOOL/ACADEMYS WITH NURSERY CLASSES

Including Purston Infant School Early Years Admission Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy sets out the arrangements to be followed for admissions to a designated nursery school/academy or for school/academys with a nursery class. Wakefield Council recommends that Academies within the Wakefield District also follow this policy to ensure a fair, consistent and transparent process for admissions to early years in their local area.

1.2 All children are entitled to a part-time nursery place the term following their 3rd birthday and a full-time place at the September following their 4th birthday (see part-time and full-time admission dates). Parents are entitled to defer the offer of a full-time place and details are provided under section 8 – deferring a full-time school/academy place.

1.3 All children are eligible for up to 15 free hours, these are classed as 'universal hours.' Some children will be eligible for up to 15 additional hours these will be known as the 'expanded entitlement.' Parent's eligibility for the expanded entitlement will have to be verified prior to child starting at the school/academy/academy. **School/academy/academy's should make clear to parents their position on the expanded entitlement and their hours of operation.**

1.4 For nursery places, each school/academy and their Governing Board are responsible for admissions to non-statutory aged school. However, each school/academy is requested to adhere to the early years admissions policy in order to carry out their duty to admit early years children on a consistent and fair basis with other school/academy's. It is recommended that Academies, Aided and Foundation (trust) school/academy's admit part-time children in line with their full-time Admissions policy if this differs from this policy.

1.5 Admission to full-time school is managed by the Admissions Policy for statutory aged pupils. This policy will either be set by Wakefield Council for community/voluntary controlled school/academy's or the Governing Board for academies, voluntary aided/foundation school/academy's.

1.6 Below is a brief explanation of the context in which nursery school/academy's and nursery classes operate:

- **Designated Nursery School/academy** – offer part-time education only and admit children from the term following their 3rd birthday until they reach full-time school/academy age. This could include universal part-time children and children eligible to the expanded entitlement.

- **School/academies with a Nursery Class** – admit children from the term following their 3rd birthday until they reach full-time school/academy age. A nursery class could include universal part-time children and children eligible to the expanded entitlement. Some school/academy's operate a Foundation Stage Unit where both part-time and full-time reception age children are based together.

1.7 This policy covers the following:

- Entitlement to a universal nursery place

- Part-time and full-time admission dates
- Process for allocating universal and expanded places
- Attendance issues
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Early Years admissions criteria to be applied when there are more applications than places available for universal and expanded hours
- Deferring a full-time school/academy place
- The purpose of a school/academy's designated nursery number
- Funding for Early Years children
- Compliance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- How to request an increase to a school/academy's nursery size

2. ENTITLEMENT TO AN EARLY YEARS NURSERY PLACE

2.1 Wakefield Council guarantees a universal place for all 3 and 4 year olds within the District. This place will not always be within the maintained sector and it may not always be at the local school/academy or a parent's preferred choice. Where a place is not available at the chosen school/academy, parents should be directed to contact the Council's Early Years Team by telephoning 0800 587 8042 or email infomation@wakefield.gov.uk

2.2 The universal entitlement is for up to 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year up to 570 hours over the course of a year. School/academy's traditionally offer 5 morning or 5 afternoon sessions (3 hours each). However the 15 hours can be available flexibly over a minimum of 2 days per week.

2.3 **Where a parent requests less than 15 hours per week this should be granted. Any unfilled hours can be offered to children on the waiting list.**

2.4 The expanded entitlement allows parents to access up to a further 15 hours entitlement per week, should they meet the eligibility criteria. A school/academy who offers this expanded entitlement should assign a number of places that they anticipate in filling throughout the year. It is suggested that this should be in blocks of 8.

2.5 Parents must be made aware that there is no guarantee that a child, who is admitted to a school/academy's nursery class, will be admitted to the school/academy full-time. Parents of children in nursery classes must complete an Online Application in order to request a full-time place in school/academy. The full-time admissions policy has to be applied to determine which school/academy has places.
School/academy's must not put pressure on parents for their child to attend nursery, in order to gain a full-time place at the school/academy.

2.7 It is a parent's choice at which setting they take their universal/expanded funding.

3. ADMISSION DATES

3.1 The earliest a child can be admitted to nursery is the term after their 3rd birthday unless the school/academy is designated to admit 2 year olds and has undertaken a statutory age range change.

3.2 The early years admission dates are as follows:

- **April-born children must be admitted in the following September and not after Easter regardless of when Easter falls.**

3.3 For each date of birth range the table below states the term each child becomes eligible for nursery education (term after 3rd birthday) and at what age they are deemed to be for each term until they reach the end of the reception year. See Appendix A for the actual date of birth ranges into reception and nursery for the next 4 academic years.

P/T = part-time F/T = full-time STAT = statutory school/academy age

Term	Date of Birth Range		
	1 Sept to 31 Dec	1 Jan to 31 March	1 April to 31 Aug
Autumn			
Spring	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)		
Summer	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)	
Autumn	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)
Spring	Age 4 – P/T (nursery)	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)
Summer	Age 4 – P/T (nursery)	Age 4 – P/T (nursery)	Age 3 – P/T (nursery)
Autumn	Age 4 – F/T (reception)	Age 4 - F/T (reception)	Age 4 – F/T (reception)
Spring	Age 5 – STAT (reception)	Age 4 – F/T (reception)	Age 4 – F/T (reception)
Summer	Age 5 – STAT (reception)	Age 5 – STAT (reception)	Age 4 – F/T (reception)
Autumn	Age 5 – Year 1	Age 5 – Year 1	Age 5 – Year 1

- Children born between 1 September and 31 December receive 5 terms part-time and 1 term full-time prior to reaching statutory school/academy age.

- Children born between 1 January and 31 March receive 4 terms part-time and 2 terms full-time prior to reaching statutory school/academy age.

- Children born between 1 April and 31 August receive 3 terms part-time and 3 terms full-time prior to reaching statutory school/academy age.

Three Year Olds Born Between	Month of Part-time Admission	Term of Part-time Admission
1 April - 31 August	September	Autumn
1 Sept - 31 Dec	January	Spring
1 Jan - 31 March	after Easter	Summer

4. ALLOCATING EARLY YEARS PLACES – UNIVERSAL

4.1 School/academy who admit children into the early years are responsible for administering the early years admissions policy. Parents must contact school/academy directly when applying for a part-time nursery place. Each school/academy should then allocate places in accordance with the early years admission criteria.

4.2 Each school/academy should have their own application form for early years admissions, which all parents applying for a place at the school/academy must complete and sign.

4.3 School/academy must identify a date, each term, when part-time admissions for the following term will be allocated. It is recommended that this is around half-term.

4.4 Parents should be notified in writing when a universal place will be available. Parents should be requested to confirm that they accept the offer of a part-time place within 2 weeks of the place being offered. If a parent does not respond to the offer letter the school/academy must make reasonable efforts to contact the parent before the place is offered to the first child on the waiting list.

4.5 Following notification that a place is available; a child should be expected to take up the place within the first of the expected start date. If the child has not taken up the place and a satisfactory explanation has not been provided to the Headteacher then the offer of a part-time place can be removed.

4.6 If a nursery class is full, the only circumstance where a late application for a part-time place can be considered and be successful is an application:

- from a child with SEN who is undergoing an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment or who has an Education, Health and Care Plan. In such an event the application must be supported by the relevant professionals involved with the child; or

- from a child who is in care of the local authority (looked after child), or a child who was previously looked after or fostered under an arrangement made by a local authority.

You should contact the Early Years Team to discuss the implications of the statutory guidance before a decision is made on whether to offer the place to another child or to go above the school/academy's designated nursery size.

4.7 Where a school/academy has more places than applications then all applications will be accepted including late applications.

4.8 In the event where there are more applications than places, if a school/academy receives a late application for a universal place this must only be considered after all other applications have been dealt with. Children of late applicants should be placed on the waiting list in the order in which they appear following the part-time admissions criteria.

4.9 The parents of children who have not been allocated a place should be contacted in writing informing them of the decision. It is good practice to state where they are on the waiting list. Parents should also be asked to confirm if they wish to remain on the waiting list and/or if they wish for their application to be considered afresh the following term. When writing to parents you should also include the details of the Early Years Team who can provide free information and advice on alternative nursery places. Telephone 0800 587 8042 or email information@wakefield.gov.uk

4.10 The school/academy should record they have seen evidence to verify a child's date of birth and identity. Examples are a birth certificate, or passport. Parents should also be asked to provide valid proof that the address given for the child is the address at which they are ordinarily resident. Parents should be asked to sign a Parent Agreement Form stating that all of the information provided is correct.

4.11 If a child is refused a part-time nursery place then the parent/carer may appeal to a committee of governors. Governors should adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and they cannot admit children over their designated nursery number. Therefore, the only grounds for upholding an appeal should be where a parent demonstrates that an error has been made by the school/academy, when processing the application that may have resulted in a place being offered to another child.

4.12 Where a parent demonstrates that an error has been made by the school/academy when administering early years admissions a school/academy can only admit over its agreed nursery number if it has both written approval from the Council and that the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Requirements continue to be met. Particularly those relating to space requirements and staffing ratios. Therefore, if a nursery cannot go over its nursery size then the Governing Board must make the decision to withdraw the offer of a place to another child or to place the complainant at the top of the waiting list.

5. ALLOCATING EARLY YEARS PLACES EXPANDED ENTITLEMENT PLACES

5.1 In allocating expanded entitlement places schools/academies should apply points 4.1 to 4.12 above and note the information below.

5.2 The Parent Agreement Form will enable parents to insert their expanded entitlement eligibility code (11 digit). It is a parent's responsibility to provide this number along with their national insurance number and child's date of birth to enable an eligibility check to be carried out. A school/academy should collect this information as near to start date as possible.

5.3 Parents should be notified in writing when an expanded place will be available. Parents should be made aware that there will be a start and end date to the expanded entitlement and that a place can only be guaranteed until this date.

5.4 A child should be expected to take up the expanded entitlement at the beginning of term (or after giving notice of at least two weeks if moving from another setting).

6. ATTENDANCE – UNIVERSAL AND EXPANDED

6.1 It is a school/academy's responsibility to ensure that children are attending regularly and for the number of hours per week that are being claimed and detailed on the Parent Agreement Form. Occasional holidays and sickness absences are acceptable.

6.2 As part of safeguarding arrangements all school/academies must contact the parent/carer when a child does not attend. If no information relating to the reason for the absence has been received the school/academy must contact the parent on the first day of the child's absence; reasons for absence must then be recorded on the child's file along with the expected return date.

6.3 If the child does not return on the expected date then the school/academy must make a follow-up call to the parent/carer to establish reasons and whether the child is going to continue with their free place.

6.4 If any child has what is deemed to be irregular attendance then it is the school/academy's responsibility to remind the parents that the free place is a funded place and continued irregular attendance could lead to a reduction of hours or the place being withdrawn and offered to another child.

6.5 Where there is a persistent absence of more than two weeks in any term without a justifiable reason then the school/academy should notify parents/carers that the place will be offered to another child. The school/academy must specify to the parent the date that the place will be removed. The hours of non-attendance can be offered to another child.

7. PART-TIME ADMISSIONS CRITERIA – UNIVERSAL

7.1 If the number of applications received for a universal nursery place does not exceed the number of places available then all children will be admitted on a part-time basis.

7.2 Where a school/academy receives more applications than places available then children should be admitted in the following order:

1 Children undergoing an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment or with an Education, Health and Care Plan (which names the school/academy);

2 Children in public care (looked after children), or a child who was previously looked after or fostered under an arrangement made by the Local Authority (see definition under explanatory notes);

3 Children who live in the school/academy's catchment area or parish area, who have brothers or sisters attending the school/academy at the time of admission;

4 Other children who live in the school/academy's catchment area;

5 Children who live outside the school/academy's catchment area but have brothers or sisters in attendance at the school/academy;

6 Other children by age order (admitting eldest first) or date order based on date of application.

8.3 Explanatory Notes

- Where any criterion category is over-subscribed then children within that category should be admitted in an age order basis (eldest first). Where 2 children have the same date of birth then priority should be given to Wakefield District children. If both children live in the Wakefield District, then priority would be given to the child that lives nearest the school/academy. Or if the school/academy prefers to use date order of applications this is acceptable but must be clearly stated in the policy and agreed by the governing Board

- Brothers and sisters are defined as children with brothers or sisters (including step-brothers or sisters) living at the same address, in attendance at the same school/academy or a school/academy on the same site, on the date of admission.

- For admissions purposes only one address can be used as a child's permanent address. Where a child resides with more than one/parent carer, at different addresses, the school/academy will use the preference expressed by the parent/carer at the address where the child lives the majority of the time during the school/academy week as the main place of residence.

- Children in Public Care – this refers to children who are:

  - Subject to a care order made by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – for the courts to grant a care order they have to be satisfied that a child is suffering or would suffer 'significant harm' without one;

  - Children who are accommodated by the local authority on a voluntary basis under section 20 of the Children Act 1989; and

  - Children who have been adopted from Local Authority care, children with a residency order and those with special guardianship immediately following being Looked After will all be included within the higher priority for looked-after children.

- Where the admission of siblings from a multiple birth (eg twins, triplets) would cause the school/academy to rise above its agreed Nursery Number, you must contact the Early Years Team to agree a resolution.

- If a child has a change to their circumstances (change of address) once an application for a part-time place has been submitted it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school/academy of the change. However, if a parent applying for a part-time place already has a sibling in school/academy and they have a material change then the school/academy should check all addresses when considering part-time places to ensure that they have the correct

information for all children to ensure that all part-time places are allocated correctly.

- Children from families living outside the Wakefield District boundary will be considered alongside those who live within the Wakefield District.

- All voluntary aided and foundation (trust) schools and academies should admit part-time children following their own full-time admissions criteria as in the published Primary Guide for Parents or if different as agreed by their governing Board.

- A school/academy providing wrap-around-care must not include this in the admissions criteria. A parent must not be expected to purchase additional services in order to gain a part-time place at the school/academy.

- Where required the Council will provide support to a school/academy in applying the part-time admissions criteria.

8. PART-TIME ADMISSIONS CRITERIA – EXPANDED ENTITLEMENT (SCHOOL/ACADEMY OFFERING A FLEXIBLE MODEL)

8.1 Where a school/academy receives more applications for an expanded entitlement place than those available then children should be admitted in the following order:

1. The child accessing the universal offer in the school/academy.
2. Children undergoing an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment or with an Education, Health and Care Plan (which names the school/academy);
3. Children in public care (looked after children), or a child who was previously looked after or fostered under an arrangement made by the Local Authority (see definition under explanatory notes);
4. Children who live in the school/academy's catchment area or parish area, who have brothers or sisters attending the school/academy at the time of admission;
5. Other children who live in the school/academy's catchment area;
6. Children who live outside the school/academy's catchment area but have brothers or sisters in attendance at the school/academy;
7. Other children by age order (eldest first) or in date order based on date of application.

9. DEFERRING A FULL-TIME SCHOOL/ACADEMY PLACE

9.1 The statutory School Admissions Code of Practice allows parents to defer their child's offer of a full-time place until they reach statutory school/academy age. For advice on this please refer to the full-time Admissions Policy or contact the School Admissions Team on 01924 305616.

9.2 If a parent wishes to defer their offer of a full-time place at their allocated school/academy and they wish their child to continue attending nursery provision on a universal basis or expanded where they are eligible then the below must be followed:

1. Parents must formally put in writing to the local authority's School Admissions Team and the school/academy that they wish to defer the offer of a full-time place.

2. The School Admissions Team will contact the school/academy where a full-time place has been offered.

3. The School Admissions Team will write to the parent to confirm the deferral of a place explaining that they will have to make alternative arrangement with either their existing or an alternative nursery provider.

4. The Early Years Team can provide support and advice in securing a part-time nursery place.

If a parent contacts a school/academy direct then the school/academy should inform the School/academy Admissions Team as outlined above.

9.3 Not all parents are being offered a full-time Reception place at the school/academy of their preferred choice. Where this occurs some parents are requesting to stay within their current nursery in the anticipation that a full-time place will become available at that school/academy. This is highly unlikely to occur unless the child is towards the top of the waiting list and there are no guarantees that a place will then become available.

9.4 When such a request to stay in the nursery is made then it is up to each school/academy and their Governing Board to make the final decision as any parental complaint / appeal would be made through the School/Academy's Governing Board.

9.5 Wakefield Council advises that if there are spare places available in the nursery class then the school/academy should allow the child to continue in the nursery until such time that the place is required for another child. If the school/academy nursery is full or the school/academy is stating that they have decided that the child cannot continue in the nursery then the parents should be advised to contact the Early Years Team on 0800 587 8042 they will provide advice and support in obtaining an alternative nursery or reception place.

9.6 The legal position remains that parents who wish to defer taking their full-time place are still entitled to an early year's place of either 15 or 30 hours, where they meet the eligibility criteria, with another early year's provider from September. The Council must ensure provision is available if the child cannot remain in their current placement.

9.7 A school/academy would receive part-time funding if a full-time eligible child remained part-time (ie up to 15 hours) in a school/academy's nursery class. If the child was eligible to the expanded entitlement, then they could access up to 30 hours.

10. NURSERY NUMBER

10.1 Each school/academy has a designated nursery number, which must be agreed by the Council and must meet standards as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. The nursery number is based on available space and facilities. Requests for a change to a school/academy's designated nursery number will be considered by the Council's School Place Planning Group which will take into account issues relating to the Local Authority's duty to manage the sufficiency and sustainability of the childcare market. See 15.1

10.2 Most school/academys' nursery numbers are based on multiples of 1:13 in line with the staffing ratios. Therefore, if a school/academy has a nursery number of 26 fte (full-time equivalent) then a school/academy can admit a maximum of 52 children and this would be 26 in the morning and 26 in the afternoon session.

10.3 Once a designated nursery number has been reached, only a child that has an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school/academy or is under an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment can be admitted - thus exceeding the school/academy's nursery size. Where this occurs, the school/academy must contact the Early Years Team immediately to discuss ways to resolve issues relating to Ofsted regulations and compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

11. FUNDING FOR PART-TIME ADMISSIONS

11.1 All nursery providers in the Wakefield District are funded in accordance with the criteria for the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF). The EYNFF is a fair and transparent way in which funding is allocated to providers who deliver the Early Years Free Entitlement.

12. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

12.1 Each school/academy and their Governing Board must adhere to the The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

15. REQUEST TO INCREASE NURSERY SIZE

15.1 If a school/academy is interested in exploring the possibility of increasing their nursery capacity then they must complete and submit a Business Request Form which will be considered by at the Council's School Place Planning Group. In the first instance you can contact Early Years Team for an informal discussion.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Early Years Team
Tel: 0800 587 8042
Email: information@wakefield.gov.uk

Portage / Pre-5 SEN Service (Area SENCO's)
Tel: 01924 307403

School Admissions
admissions@wakefield.gov.uk

Purston Infant School

Model Early Years Admissions Policy – Universal and Expanded Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

The Governing Body is responsible for admissions to the school's Early Years Foundation Stage and applies the admissions criteria set out below to admitting children.

The school has a 78 place nursery. Therefore a maximum of 78 universal places will be offered.

The school/academy will offer maximum 8 of these places for the expanded offer. This number may change at the discretion of the headteacher but only after all children have been allocated a place for the expanded entitlement.

PART-TIME ADMISSION DATES

A child can be admitted to early year's provision the term after their 3rd birthday.

The part-time admission dates are:

Three Year Olds

Born Between	Month of Part-time Admission	Term of Part-time Admission
1 April - 31 August	September	Autumn
1 Sept - 31 Dec	January	Spring
1 Jan - 31 March	after Easter	Summer

April born children will be admitted part-time in the following September and not after Easter regardless of when Easter falls.

PART-TIME ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

1. Children undergoing an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment or with an Education, Health and Care Plan (which names the school/academy);

2. Children in public care (looked after children), or a child who was previously looked after or fostered under an arrangement made by the Local Authority (see definition under explanatory notes);

3. Children who live in the school/academy's catchment area or parish area, who have brothers or sisters attending the school/academy at the time of admission;

4. Other children who live in the school/academy's catchment area;

5. Children who live outside the school/academy's catchment area but have brothers or sisters in attendance at the school/academy;

6. Other children by age order (admitting eldest first) or date order based on date of application.

ALLOCATING PLACES both Universal and Expanded

Parents/carers must contact the school directly when applying for a part-time nursery place. The child's name will be added to the school nursery waiting list and the parent/carer will be requested to complete an application form, which includes collecting information regarding attendance patterns.

Parents who require less than 5 sessions / 15 hours per week will be considered alongside all other applications. The expanded entitlement allows up to 15 additional hours (a parents must not be required to take all additional 15 hours).

Places will be allocated in accordance with the above admissions criteria.

A parent taking both the universal and expanded entitlement at two settings decides who will provide the universal and who will provide the expanded.

The school will allocate universal places on the following dates for the academic year:

Term child will take up Early Years Provision	Week commencing date places will be allocated
Autumn	7th July 2025
Spring	1st December 2025
Summer	2nd March 2026

The school will allocate expanded entitlement places on the following dates for the academic year:

Term child will take up Early Years Provision	Week commencing date places will be allocated
Autumn	Not applicable
Spring	1st December 2025
Summer	2nd March 2026

Allocation of expanded entitlement places will be on the assumption that the parent is eligible for the expanded entitlement should this not be the case the school will remove the place and charges may apply (see charging policy). If all expanded entitlement places have been allocated then the school may, at the discretion of the headteacher, agree to offer any spare places and charge the parent. All charges are set out in the school's charging policy.

Any applications received after the specified dates will only be considered once all other applications have been dealt with.

Following the allocation of places, all parents will be notified of the decision to grant a place, or not.

Following notification that a place is available; a child will be expected to take up the place the first week of their expected start date. If the child has not taken up the place and satisfactory explanation has not been provided to the Headteacher, then the offer of a part-time place can be removed.

The school will record evidence to verify a child's date of birth, identity as well as the parent identity and their eligibility for expanded hours as appropriate.

Parents are also asked to provide valid proof that the address given for the child is the address at which they are ordinarily resident. Parents are asked to sign the application form stating that all of the information provided is correct. If a parent/carer refuses to provide this then it could affect a parent's/carer's application for a part-time place. If a parent/carer provides inaccurate information, which results in an application not being successful, then the school reserves the right to remove the nursery place.

For admissions purposes only one address can be used as a child's permanent address. Where a child resides with more than one/parent carer, at different addresses, the school will use the preference expressed by the parent/carer at the address where the child lives the majority of the time during the school week as the main place of residence.

If a child is refused a part-time early years place then the parent/carer may appeal to a committee of governors. Governors will adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and will not admit children over their designated nursery number or earlier than the specified admission dates. Therefore, the only grounds for upholding an appeal will be where a parent can demonstrate that an error has been made by the school/academy when processing the application.

Parents will be notified that there is no guarantee that a child who is admitted to a school's nursery class will be admitted to the school full-time. Parents of children in nursery classes must complete the Local Authority's Admissions Preference Form in order to request a full-time place in school/academy. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to apply the admissions criteria afresh to determine which school/academy has places.