

Sharrow School

Nursery & Children's Centre Admissions Policy

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Statement of Intent

Sharrow School aims to provide a pre-school experience for children that is affordable, high-quality and geared towards a smooth transition into Reception class.

The Governing Body is the admission authority and is responsible for setting the Nursery & Children's Centre Admissions Policy. This policy is written to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their nursery education at Sharrow School.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- DfE (2014) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- DfE (2018) 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE (2018) 'Early years entitlements: operational guide'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. Application Process

Sharrow School is a Foundation school, whose Reception to Year 6 admissions are co-ordinated by the Local Authority. The Nursery admissions are co-ordinated by the Governing Body.

Admissions to Sharrow Nursery or Children's Centre will not in any way increase children's chances of admission to Sharrow School.

Parents choosing to send their child to Sharrow Nursery or Children's Centre will have to register their interest by completing the online registration form or by calling in to the school to complete a paper registration form. Once they have completed the registration form, they will be added to the waiting list. The Nursery / Children's Centre team or school office team will be in regular contact with those on the waiting list to keep them updated and to formally offer them a place if and when one is available.

Once a place is available, parents will receive a formal written offer which they will need to accept or decline in writing. After accepting the place, parents will be invited in for a meeting to complete the Admission Form and bring in their child's birth certificate and proof address, along with their own National Insurance Number information.

Parents who secure a place will be offered a date to begin the transition programme to ensure they and their child have time to settle.

More information on fees and charges is outlined in the Charging and Remissions Policy and on the school website.

3. Equal Opportunities

The Sharrow Nursery & Children's Centres will implement an effective policy to ensure 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 Sharrow Nursery & Children's centre will be open, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

4. Free Childcare Arrangements

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

The sessions offered to nursery children are as follows:

- For children eligible for 30 hours free childcare: Six hours daily (plus lunch at an additional cost) (see [section 10](#)), between the hours of 8.45 and 3.15pm.
- For children eligible for 15 hours free childcare: Three hours free childcare daily (AM session from 8.45am to 11.45am or PM session from 1.15pm to 3.15pm). In some instances, more flexible hours can be accommodated to tie in with parental needs / work commitments between the hours of 8.45am and 3.15pm.

5. Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare

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 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.

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 hours place, they should not take up their 30 hours 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.

Other information related to the 30 hours free childcare scheme can be found in the Charging & Remissions Policy.

6. Eligibility for two-year-olds

A child is entitled to the free hours from the term after both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- The child has reached the age of two; and
- The parent meets the eligibility criteria outlined in [section 5](#) of this policy.

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 second birthday
- Born between 1 April-31 August: eligible from the start of term beginning on, or following 1 September after the child's second birthday
- Born between 1 September-31 December: eligible from the start of term beginning on or following 1 January after the child's second birthday

At Sharrow, we may offer the two year old provision in either the Children's Centre or Nursery, depending on availability in both settings as well as the developmental stage of the child.

The LA will ensure that two-year-olds who have met the eligibility criteria continue to receive a place once it has been secured, up until the child becomes eligible for the universal entitlement, as outlined in [section 5](#).

7. 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 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

To apply for the additional hours, foster parents must apply directly to the LA.

8. Oversubscription

Children who have an EHC plan that names Sharrow Nursery or Children's Centre are admitted before the oversubscription criteria is applied. Children with an EHC plan that does not name the nursery will be referred to the Headteacher / Nursery Admission Manager to determine an appropriate place, in accordance with the LA's Fair Access Protocol.

The Governing Body 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. Children with Special Educational Needs with an EHCPlan that names Sharrow School.
2. Looked After Children / Children in Care / Previously In Care (Pupils who are, or have previously been, in care but ceased to be so because they were adopted, became subject to a child arrangement order or a special Guardianship Order immediately following being in care).
3. 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

4. Catchment area (Sharrow School) with sibling
5. Catchment (Sharrow School)
6. Date of birth priority with oldest children admitted first.
7. Catchment area (Lowfield School) with sibling
8. Children of staff who are employed at the school
9. All other children – if all other factors are equal distance will be used with those living closest to school given priority.

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.

9. Reserve List

In circumstances where more applications are received than places are available, and where the oversubscription priority criteria has been applied, children who are not offered places will be added to a reserve list in order of the criteria and not by date of application.

If a place becomes available, the Nursery / Children's Centre staff will contact the parents of the child at the top of the list. The reserve list is not a waiting list – if a request is made by a parent whose child has higher priority according to the admissions criteria, other children are moved down the list.

Placing a child's name on the reserve list does not guarantee that a place will become available.

10. 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 3 weeks
- A child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education
- A family registering their child at two maintained settings (where this is in excess of their free entitlement hours)

11. 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 / Children's Centre after being offered a place, they must give the nursery at least four weeks' notice. Parents may be charged for this period, or it may come out of their funded entitlement.

Notice of a delayed start or withdrawal must be in writing.

12. Non-Attendance

Parents must inform the Nursery / Children's Centre 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.

Parents must give a minimum of four weeks' notice if they wish to reduce the level of provision their child receives. This requirement applies both before and after provision begins.

13. 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 pre-school 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.

14. Admission to Reception

Parents have the choice of how and when their child starts Reception class until they reach the compulsory age, although the majority of children all start together at the start of the academic year in the September.

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

If parents wish for their child to remain in a nursery or early years setting until they reach compulsory school age, and access 15 hours of free early learning rather than taking up a place in Reception, they must:

- Discuss their choice with the school.
- Complete the LA Reception application form by 15 January, to ensure their child has an offer of a place in Reception from the following September in case their request is not accepted by the LA.
- Send their request in writing to the LA Principal Admissions Officer, Moorfoot Building, Floor 5, Sheffield, S1 4PL

Parents of summer born children (whose date of birth falls between 1 April and 31 August) currently have the right to request that their child's admission into full time education is delayed until the term after their 5th birthday: the following September which is the beginning of the next academic year. Parents wishing to consider this option will then need to decide whether

they wish their child to enter full time education in Y1 (child's chronological year group) or Reception (education out of year group).

15. Transition Arrangements

Further information relating to the transition between Nursery and Reception can be found in the school's Primary Transition Policy.

16. Data Protection

The Nursery and Children's Centre will act in compliance with the Data Protection Policy when processing personal data.

When processing and publishing information, the Nursery & Children's Centre will ensure they meets their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Where personal information is processed, the Nursery & Children's Centre will ensure it is kept up-to-date and the LA will ensure that the rights of data subjects are reserved at all times.

17. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body and Headteacher.

The scheduled review date for this policy is March 2025.