Admissions Policy and settling in policy

Principles

This policy sets out how the admissions system works for Little Elms Preschool.
Little Elms is committed to providing a fair and open admissions system where each applicant is considered fairly and objectively.
We aim to deliver flexible care and education in a way which supports all parents, assists those who work and those seeking to work. We offer places in line with guidelines set out by SCC regarding lengths of sessions.
We are committed to all families having equality of opportunity and including children of all needs. Please see our Equality Policy
If you require any further help or explanation about anything contained here, please contact our office on 01359 240491 or info@littleelms.co.uk

Eligibility

Any child can attend little Elm's preschool; there is no catchment area.
Parents should ensure an application to join form is completed so their child is included on our admissions list.

Places are offered on availability.

We are able to offer places to children taking up government funded hours and in addition to this, children can access more hours, but these will be fee paying places.

Priority will be given to:

- Looked after children (Children in Care) and previously looked after children (children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after).
- children who are the subject of a recognised child protection plan (under current legislation and drawn up by social care services) where a specific school nursery placement is identified.

A child who is a looked after child will always be admitted regardless of numbers in pre-school.

Number of Places

We have 45 places daily (ladybird 19) and (Bumble bee 26) for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, offering 30 government funded hours per week in our 2 playrooms. Each playroom can offer additional paid sessions. Please ask at the office for further information about additional paid sessions.

• The number of children that can be admitted to our preschool will depend on a number of things including how many children already attend our nursery, their ages, the amount of floor space we have and the staffing ratios we must have.
• Wherever possible, we will try to give your child a place at nursery. Sometimes we may be able to offer you a place but the exact sessions you have requested may not be available. If this is the case, we will let you know, and we can have a discussion about what we offer.
• If there are no places available we will add your child's name to our waiting list. We would also advise you to contact the Family Information Service on 0345 60 800 33 who will be able to support you to find a place for your child.

Sessions and Charges

- **Our sessions run from 8.45-11.45 and 12.15-3.15pm in term time.**
- **All parents are able to use their 15- and 30-hours funding between 8.45am and 3.15pm, in 3 hour blocks.**
- **Parents are also able to purchase an additional hour of care in breakfast club from 7.45am until 8.45 daily. We also offer Afterschool club which runs from 3.15-6pm.**

- If your child attends a funded session, they will be given a light, healthy snack at a cost of 0.75p. (This is a voluntary cost)

Points of admission

2 year olds – Ladybird room

1. A place will be offered to them the term after their second birthday, subject to availability, if we have received your child's eligibility ticket (Golden Ticket). You can find the full 2 year old eligibility criteria on the Suffolk County Council Website.

2. Any 3 year olds unable to take a place in the nursery classes will be offered places next.

3. Fee paying children, aged two, three or four will next be offered places when available and will be eligible as soon as they turn two.

All 3 and 4 year olds become eligible for Early Education Funding from the start of the term following their third birthday, the current offer is for 15 hours funded entitlement.
Children on our admissions list are offered in order of waiting list.

30 hours entitlement

In addition some children aged 2, 3 and 4 are eligible for an additional 15 hours funded entitlement; this is known as the 30 hours provision. These are offered to children on a first come first served basis when parents bring the eligibility code to the office and where there is suitable availability.

- • Your child will be aged 2, 3 or 4
- • Both parents must be working, or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family

- • Each parent earns on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage
- • Each parent must have an annual income of less than £100,000
- • You live in England.

Stretched Offer

Free Early Education Entitlement is government funding available for 15 hours (or an additional 15 hours if extended) over 38 weeks of the year for eligible children. This potentially leaves 14 weeks where parents / carers will not receive any funding if their child attends a childcare provider for more than 38 weeks of the year. The Government's guidance allows childcare providers to offer stretched hours, although this is not mandatory and is a private business decision for the provider. Parents / carers can receive funding all year round including holidays if they want, by spreading their hours plus extended hours if applicable over the number of weeks their child attends in that term.

Stretched hours are usually utilised by parents / carers when your child attends a setting all year round, allowing you to use less of your funded hours over more weeks. Stretching your hours allows for your Free Early Education Entitlement hours as well as any additional costs that may incur to be spread in equal payments over the number of weeks their child attends, meaning parents / carers aren't hit with large bills in holidays.

Another option is to use some funded hours in the term time and what hours you have left you can use for Holidays. We would need to know your predicted hours for the holidays as we can only submit the claim at the start of the term.

Any hours the child then attends outside of or over their funded hours is then charged for.

We offer the stretch funding on a termly basis and your total funded hours need to be used in that current term, they cannot be carried over.

Purchased Hours

Parents can purchase additional sessions if there is availability.
We provide breakfast time sessions 7.45am –8.45am at a cost of £5.50 this includes a breakfast of fruit, cereal and toast.
After school sessions (3pm – 6pm) can be purchased at a cost of £6. This can be booked at the pre-school office.
Additional sessions of childcare can be purchased at £21 per 3-hour session for 2-year olds, 3- and 4-year olds and should be booked through the office. Lunch Club is chargeable if not used in funded hours at a rate of £3.25.
Snack charge is £0.75p but is voluntary, please let the office know if you wish to opt out.
Please see our Fees policy for further details and non-payment of fees schedule.

Days off for illness, holiday or other reasons cannot be refunded, unless exceptional circumstances are agreed with the manager. Pre-School closure due to exceptional circumstances such as severe weather will not be refundable.

We reserve the right to reallocate a place following a period of 4 weeks non-attendance or non-payment of costs.
We accept payment by childcare vouchers and tax-free childcare – please ask for the scheme details.

Occasional bookings for additional sessions should be made through the main office and are subject to availability. Payment for these will be added on to your monthly invoice.

We recognise that the cost of registered childcare and education may seem expensive to a parent/carer. However, providing a high quality, safe and stimulating service is costly and to ensure the continued high standards and sustainability of the service, we must ask parents and carers respect our policy in respect of fees.

When a parent/carer contacts the setting enquiring about a place for their child, the administration process will be explained. They will be informed whether there is currently a place available for their child and/or when a place may become available.

If a place is available, the parent/carer and the child will be invited to visit the setting. This is an ideal opportunity for parent/carers to ask questions about the setting. If the parent/carer agrees to abide by all the terms and conditions of administration, including the level of fees and arrangements for payment, they will be asked to arrange a pre-sessional visit and a start date for the child will be agreed.
Inductions visits are arranged to enable the child to settle in at little Elms preschool and offered free of charge.
If there is no availability at the time of inquiry a child can be added to our waiting lists if the parent is happy to do so.

Registration Process:

- Completion of a detailed registration form by parents, capturing child's essential details, emergency contacts, medical information, dietary requirements, allergies, and individual needs or circumstances.
- Collection of necessary documentation including child's birth certificate, immunisation records, and parental permissions in line with EYFS 2025 requirements.

Settling-in Period:

- Emphasis on an individualized and gradual settling-in process that respects each child's emotional and developmental needs.

- Settling-in periods are collaboratively planned and tailored to the child and family's preferences, allowing incremental adjustments to our setting.

Supporting the Settling-in Process:

- Appointment of a designated key person who supports the child's emotional well-being, development, and fosters strong parent partnerships in compliance with EYFS guidelines.
- The key person engages proactively with families, obtaining detailed information about routines, preferences, and comfort strategies specific to the child.
- Provision of familiar items or comfort objects from home to ease transition and enhance the child's sense of security and belonging.

Communication with Parents:

- Maintain consistent, transparent, and proactive communication throughout the settling-in period, respecting parents' preferences on methods (face-to-face, phone, digital updates).
- Regularly update parents on their child's adjustment, emotional state, participation, and development milestones in line with EYFS standards.

Transition Support:

- Offer resources and structured activities to facilitate smooth transitions, providing continuity between home and the preschool.
- Ensure availability of designated calm and quiet spaces where children can retreat if feeling overwhelmed, aligning with EYFS 2025 emphasis on emotional well-being.

Reviewed by Samantha Willers

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