

St Mary's Playschool Admissions Policy

Policy Statement

It is our intention to ensure St Mary's Playschool is accessible to and inclusive of all children and families within the local community and beyond. We aim to ensure our community have access to the setting through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

Key Facts

- In Essex, an academic year is from September to August. Children usually start Primary School Reception Class in the September of the academic year in which they turn 5.
- St Mary's Playschool provides care and education for children aged 2 years to almost 5. (Unless in extreme circumstances a child may receive permission to defer school attendance)
- The Free Early Years Entitlement (FEEE) is provided by the Government via Essex County Council. Every child is eligible for up to 15 hours funded per week for 38 weeks a year from the term after their child's third birthday.
- We take children who are eligible for funded 2-year-old places (FEEE2) and working parent funded places (FEE2W) Families can find out if their 2 year old is eligible for funding from the EYCC website or through Childcare choices.
- Additional hours, above the free entitlement may be accessed and charged at a specific cost per hour.
- We offer 30 hours extended entitlement for eligible working parents

Procedures

- We ensure that the existence of our setting is widely advertised in places accessible to all sections of the community e.g. social media, the library, parish council noticeboards.
- We ensure that information about our setting is accessible
- We are sympathetic to the need for emergency admissions which may be referred via social care or health visitor, we will do our utmost to accommodate requests if spaces are available.
- We describe our setting and its practices in inclusive terms that make it clear that it welcomes fathers and mothers, other relatives and carers, including childminders, regardless of their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, background, religion, ethnicity or competence in spoken English.
- Our waiting list is arranged in birth order within each term and clearly records the desired start date and days/ sessions preferred, which we will do our utmost to honour. If required, spaces will be offered in order of application.
- Children are usually admitted from the age of two years into Ladybird Group when there are vacancies.
- Parents are asked to specify/accept their preferred days and once agreed, they are expected to attend those days for the duration of the term.
- Whilst we recommend a minimum attendance pattern of two sessions per week we do not stipulate this as a requirement to attend, unless, in the best interests of the child, attending one session will be detrimental to their settling in.
- Parents are encouraged to visit us with their child during the half term before the child starts at the playschool and will not be offered a place without first having attended a visit, to ensure playschool is able to assess meeting the needs of the child.
- Children are moved into Butterfly Group by order of date of birth.
- We consult with families about the opening times of the setting to ensure we accommodate a broad range of family needs.

Admissions

Once an early education and childcare place has been offered the relevant paperwork is completed by the setting manager and parents before the child starts and filed in the Office as well as the child's personal file. Forms completed include:

Parental Consent Form - explains what personal data we collect, why we collect it, how we use it as well as giving consent for photographs and record keeping

St Mary's playschool registration form - contains personal information about the child and family that must be completed in full prior to the child commencing.

Entry record for Learning Journals – Parental involvement to help playschool get to know a little about each when starting playschool as well as enabling us to make an initial baseline assessment.

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Send Admissions

- Children with disabilities/additional needs are supported to take full part in all activities within the setting and the setting makes reasonable adjustments to ensure that this will be the case from the time the child is placed on the waiting list.
- The needs and individual circumstances of children joining the setting are monitored, to ensure that no accidental or unintentional discrimination is taking place and that reasonable adjustments are made as required.
- The manager/senco will seek to determine an accurate assessment of a child's needs at registration. If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core budget, then an application for SEN Inclusion funding will be made.
- Children with identified SEND will be offered a place when one becomes available as with any other child. However, the start date for children with more complex SEND will be determined by the preparations needed to ensure the child's safety, well-being and accessibility in the setting. If a child's needs determine that adjustments need to be made, the manager must outline a realistic timeframe for completion, detailing the nature of adjustments e.g. risk assessment, staff training, health care plan and all other adjustments required. The child's safety at all times is paramount.
- At the time of registration, the manager will check to see if a child's family is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, if so, the manager must ask for evidence to enable them to claim the Disability Access Fund directly from the local authority. If the family is eligible but not in receipt of the allowance, the setting manager will support the family in their application.
More information can be found at www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children/how-to-claim.

Safeguarding/child protection

If information is provided by the parents that a child who is starting at the setting is currently, or has had involvement with social care, the designated person responsible for safeguarding will contact the agency to seek further clarification.

Parents are advised on how to access the setting's policies and procedures.

Lunch Club

1. Lunch club will run according to demand and is entirely optional.
2. Children should bring their own healthy packed lunch. We provide guidance regarding what is meant by a 'healthy' lunch. St Mary's does not provide food for lunch.
3. Lunch club follows a morning session and/or precedes an afternoon session and places are limited.
4. Milk or water is available to the children.
5. FEEE may be used to cover the lunchtime period.

This policy has been reviewed and agreed at a meeting of the Playschool Committee.