Admissions and Settling in policy

Admissions Policy

Policy Statement

The Orchard Nursery is committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming and accessible environment for all children and families. We aim to offer high-quality early education and care to families within our local community, ensuring admissions are fair, transparent and in line with our Equality of Opportunity Policy.

Our Commitment

We aim to make the nursery accessible to all families within the local community. We welcome children and their parents/carers from all cultural, ethnic, religious and social backgrounds and are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion throughout our admissions process.

Registration Process

Parents wishing to register their child should contact the nursery to discuss availability and arrange an introductory visit.

As part of the registration process, parents will receive:

- Our Terms and Conditions
- Fees and Funding Guide
- Registration information

Our comprehensive Terms and Conditions provide detailed information regarding fees, attendance, funding, notice periods and nursery procedures. These are emailed to parents as part of the registration process and must be read and signed before a child's place can be confirmed.

Once the completed online registration form, applicable deposit and settling-in package fee have been received, and all required documentation has been completed, the child's place will be confirmed.

Nursery Opening Times

The Orchard Nursery is open:

- 51 weeks of the year
- Monday to Friday
- 8.00am to 6.00pm

The nursery is closed on:

- Bank Holidays
- One week between Christmas and New Year
- From 1.00pm on Christmas Eve
- Any additional days where closure is necessary due to adverse weather or exceptional circumstances.

Availability of Places

Admissions and Settling in policy

Nursery places are allocated subject to:

- Availability of sessions
- Staffing levels
- The nursery's ability to meet each child's individual needs safely
- Where possible, priority for available nursery places will be given to siblings of children who are already attending The Orchard Nursery.

When considering admissions, we take into account the facilities, resources, staffing arrangements and any specialist training required to ensure the child's health, safety and wellbeing.

Medical Needs

The Orchard Nursery welcomes children with medical needs wherever possible.

Where a child requires specialist medical procedures or medication, such as insulin or adrenaline administration, the nursery may delay the child's start date until staff have received the appropriate training and it is safe to meet the child's needs.

Deposits and Registration Fees

To secure a nursery place, parents are required to pay:

- A refundable deposit of £100 (subject to the Terms and Conditions)
- A £25 settling-in package fee

The deposit will be deducted from the child's final month's fees, provided the terms of the contract have been met.

If parents choose to cancel their child's place before the agreed start date, the deposit becomes non-refundable, regardless of the reason for cancellation, as it is retained to compensate for the loss of the reserved place.

For eligible two-year-old children accessing additional government funding, where a place is reserved more than two months in advance, a £25 holding fee is required. This fee will be refunded once the child starts attending nursery.

Deferring a Child's Start Date

Parents may request to defer (postpone) their child's agreed start date. Requests must be made in writing and a minimum of **one month's notice** is required.

A child's start date may only be deferred **once**, and for a maximum period of **one month** from the original agreed start date.

Requests to defer a start date beyond one month will not be accepted. If the child does not start within this period, the nursery reserves the right to withdraw the offered place, and any future application will be subject to availability and the nursery's Admissions Policy.

Nursery Contracts

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The Orchard Nursery offers two contract options:

- **Above and Beyond Contract** – Includes our full range of nursery services for an agreed fee.
- **Funded Only Contract** – Provides services covered solely by the child's Early Education Funding entitlement.

Further information regarding each contract is available within our Fees and Funding Guide.

Early Education Funding

The Orchard Nursery offers funded places in accordance with the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council Early Education Funding Code of Practice and any local conditions in force at the time.

Information regarding funding eligibility will be provided to parents when their child becomes eligible.

Parents will be invoiced for:

- Any hours attended over their funded entitlement
- Any additional services not included within their chosen contract

Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) or eligible two-year-old government-funded places attend free of charge and have full access to nursery services.

Term-Time Holidays

Children accessing Early Education Funding (from 9 months to 4 years) may take a maximum of two weeks' holiday during term time.

Any additional holiday taken during term time may not be funded by the Local Authority, and parents/carers may therefore be charged for those additional weeks in accordance with the nursery's Terms and Conditions.

Equality of Access

Admissions are offered fairly and without discrimination. All applications are considered in accordance with the nursery's Equality of Opportunity Policy.

The Orchard Nursery will make every reasonable adjustment to support children with additional needs and disabilities and will work closely with parents, carers and relevant professionals to ensure children receive appropriate support wherever possible.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or nursery procedures.

Settling-in Policy

Policy Statement

Admissions and Settling in policy

At The Orchard Nursery, we recognise that starting nursery is a significant milestone for both children and their families. We are committed to providing a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment where every child feels safe, secure and valued. We understand that children settle at different rates and work closely with parents and carers to ensure each child has a positive transition into nursery.

Children need to feel emotionally secure before they are able to explore, play and learn successfully. Developing trusting relationships with their key person and confidence that their parent or carer will return are essential to this process.

Our Settling-in Procedure

To support children in settling into nursery, we will:

- Email a **Settling-in Booklet** to parents before their child starts. This includes photographs of the nursery environment and key areas to help children become familiar with their new surroundings.
- Invite parents and carers to visit the nursery with their child before their start date, allowing them to meet staff, explore the environment and ask any questions.
- Stagger new admissions wherever possible to ensure staff can provide each child with the time, attention and support they need during the settling-in period.
- Recognise that parents and carers know their child best and work in partnership with them to develop an individual settling-in plan where appropriate.

Settling Sessions

Our standard settling-in programme consists of two sessions:

First settling session (approximately 1 hour)

- Parents or carers remain with their child throughout the session.
- The child has the opportunity to explore the nursery environment alongside their parent or carer.
- The child's Key Person will begin building a relationship with the family and discuss the child's routines, interests, comforters, SEND, speech and language, medical needs and any other relevant information.

Second settling session (approximately 2½ hours)

- Parents are encouraged to leave their child for the session to begin building independence and confidence.
- Parents will be asked to leave a mobile telephone number with the nursery office and remain contactable throughout the session.
- If required, parents may be contacted to return earlier if their child is unable to settle despite reassurance and support.

Where appropriate, additional settling sessions may be arranged to meet the individual needs of the child and family.

Supporting Children

During the settling-in process we will:

- Encourage parents to separate from their child for short periods initially, gradually increasing these as the child becomes more confident.
- Ensure every child receives consistent reassurance and support from their Key Person or another familiar member of staff.
- Recognise that some children may become upset when separated from their parent or carer. If a child remains distressed despite comfort and reassurance, parents will be contacted and asked to return.
- Welcome parents to telephone the nursery during the session to check how their child has settled.
- Encourage children to bring a comfort item, such as a dummy, blanket or favourite soft toy, to help them feel secure. As children become more settled, these items will be stored safely in their individual tray or cubby and remain accessible whenever needed.
- Give every child the time they need to settle, recognising that each child develops confidence at their own pace.

Supporting Parents and Carers

We recognise that starting nursery can be an emotional experience for parents and carers as well as children.

To support families we will:

- Listen carefully to any concerns or worries and respond sensitively.
- Keep parents informed about their child's wellbeing, activities and progress during the settling-in period.
- Reassure parents that it is normal for children to settle at different rates and that there is no expectation for every child to settle within the same timescale.
- Recommend that parents collect new children slightly earlier during their first few full sessions to avoid unnecessary distress at the end of the day, particularly for babies and younger children who may not yet understand the concept of time.

Individual Needs

We recognise that every child is unique. The length and structure of the settling-in process may be adapted to meet individual needs, including children with SEND, medical needs or those who may benefit from a more gradual transition into nursery.

The wellbeing and emotional security of each child will always remain our priority.

Signed on behalf of the nursery.....Emma Middleton.....Date:... August 2026