



NURSERY ADMISSIONS AND FEES POLICY

The Downs Primary School and Nursery
Part of the Passmores Co-operative Learning Community
July 2026-27

The Downs Primary School and Nursery – Nursery Admissions and Fees Policy

AIM OF THIS POLICY

This policy sits alongside the parental agreement/contract that parents are required to complete and sign when they start school. The content of the policy should explain what is on offer and how we offer it. To ensure the admission criteria for the Nursery at The Downs Primary School and Nursery are clear and that there is flexibility within the system to accommodate children and families in exceptional circumstances. The Downs Primary School and Nursery Local Governing Board is responsible for this policy.

OVERVIEW

The Nursery provision within our school is committed to providing excellent quality, integrated education and care to children, 3 to 4 years old, within the local community. Your child will learn through play, in structured sessions planned by skilled Early Year's teachers and professionals. They will provide play activities suited to your child's interests and provide a teaching and learning environment that is stimulating and challenging. The school is registered with Ofsted to provide places for children aged 3-4. The number of places is determined by Ofsted, staff to pupil ratios and the staff available at the school.

Our Nursery Provision

- Morning session - Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 11.30am, term time only
- Afternoon session - Monday to Friday, 12.30pm to 3.30pm, term time only
- Full day - Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 3.30pm, term time only

- A total of 52 part time FEEE funded Nursery places (15 hours per week) for children aged 3 to 4.
- These can be combined to provide full-time (30 hours per week) places through the 30 hours Childcare Initiative for those families eligible for the additional 15 hours free funding.

All provisions are term time only.

We offer the universal 15-hour FEEE funded places for three and four year olds as well as offering the extended Free Entitlement for up to 30 hours per week. We offer both 15- and 30-hours places only. We do not offer any other form of these hours e.g. 20 hours.

For those claiming the extended free hours (30 hours childcare) we will need to be provided with an eligibility code which parents are given by HMRC on successful application for the funding. We will only accept your child for 30-hour free childcare places when a valid code is provided. You will be reminded by HMRC when your code needs updating (every three months). We advise parents to follow HMRC guidance immediately. Should your child's code expire before renewal they will be unable to continue attending 30 hours or parents will be expected to pay for the hours in addition to the child's FEEE entitlement at a cost of £5.00 per session and £3.00 per lunchtime session (see lunchtime arrangements below). We will endeavour to assist parents in reminding them when they need to renew their eligibility, but it is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child's entitlement does not expire.

Children are funded from the start of the term after their third birthday. Please note that once hours/sessions have been agreed with the Nursery teacher and the child has started nursery they may not be able to be changed. It is expected that they will remain in that session until such time as they leave the Nursery or start full time school (except in very exceptional circumstances e.g. Social Services involvement).

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Lunchtime arrangements for nursery children.

If a child stays for the full day (8.30am until 3.30pm) the parents must provide the child with a healthy packed lunch. The nursery will not provide lunches for the children.

There is also an additional cost of £3.00 per full day session to help cover the costs of lunchtime supervision. This is due to the fact that the lunchtime hour is an addition to the 30 hour sessions. Parents are expected to pay for these lunchtime sessions in advance as we cannot allow arrears and this provision will be withdrawn if parents fail to pay. All payments must be paid using the School Gateway online payment system.

Application Process

Prospective parents and carers are always encouraged to visit our school. This provides families with the opportunity to discuss any questions they might have. If a child has an identified special educational need, the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-Ordinator (SENDCo)/Inclusion Manager will meet with the family to discuss the child's needs. The school admits any pupil in accordance with our admissions policy, regardless of disability, and we aim to ensure equal access to the curriculum for all pupils.

A Nursery admission application form can be obtained from the school office and is available on the school's website. Application forms should be completed by the child's parents and returned to the school. The application is recorded, and the child's name is added to the waiting list, which is drawn up in chronological order by date of birth. It is usually the case that the eldest children on the waiting list will be admitted first except for very exceptional circumstances, e.g. Social Services involvement.

Children are admitted to our nursery after their third birthday and once places become available. Every child must be over three years old at their time of admission. Places are subject to availability and entry onto our waiting list does not guarantee an offer of a place at our nursery.

An offer of a place is usually on the basis that the child will attend for a minimum of two terms unless it is known that the child will go on from our nursery to attend The Downs School, in which case attendance for one term is acceptable. If this is not the case, the offer of place may be withdrawn.

Once a place becomes available, and the child is past their third birthday parents are contacted by telephone to confirm the place is still required and to discuss session availability and requirements with the parents. Then a letter to confirm this and to provide further details is posted to the parents' home address. Every effort is made to accommodate parent choice of sessions, but this is subject to availability. Once the hours/sessions have been agreed with the parents the correct paperwork needs to be completed (staff can support this). Admission arrangements are confirmed once a home visit or parent meeting has been undertaken by the nursery staff and all paperwork is handed in.

A parent does have the right to refuse any place offered and keep their child's name on the waiting list for future offers up until the child is due to start full-time school. In the event of a non-reply from the parents, if the child's start date passes and no contact has been made to confirm acceptance the child's name should be removed from the waiting list. On the receipt of any refusals or non-replies, further places may become available.

Admission to Nursery

We have a flexible approach to admissions to our nursery which can be adapted to the needs of the child to try and ensure they settle quickly and happily in their new nursery environment.

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Children joining our nursery have a gradual start, usually attending for just one hour with a parent on the first day and then for an hour on their own for their next session. The Nursery teacher and parents will then discuss the next step in transition to ensure children are settled and confident in their new surroundings.

The Downs Primary – School Admission

School places must be applied for separately and applications for school places are made to Essex County Council. For more information regarding school applications please go to- <https://www.essex.gov.uk/apply-for-a-primary-school-place>

Please note: a place in our nursery will not automatically guarantee a place in one of our Reception classes. However, children who attend our nursery are given priority for places under criteria 3 of our over subscription criteria detailed in our Admission Policy. Our Admission Policy is available in full on our school website.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

The policy was consulted on by The Downs LGB and approved by the Trust Board in July 2026. It will be reviewed annually.