

**Our visions and values:**

- Protecting children's right to play learn and have a voice.
- Keeping parents involved in children's development
- Governors and staff leading the way on quality
- Working partnership with health professionals and schools
- Being ethical, respectful and tolerant

## Admissions and transitions policy for 25-26

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|--|---|
| <b>Status</b>                                | Statutory   |
| <b>Statutory review timetable</b>            | Arrangements to be determined annually. Any changes must be consulted on and where no changes are made, consultation is required at least every seven years |
| <b>Responsible governors</b>                 | Full governing body   |
| <b>Last review date</b>                      | Summer 2025   |
| <b>Date of next review</b>                   | Autumn 2025   |
| <b>The policy is available for staff at:</b> | School offices and shared drive   |
| <b>And for parents/carers at:</b>            | School website  |

### Policy audit

| Version | Revision date | Revised by                                 | Section revised   |
|---------|---------------|--|---|
| Vx      | October 2020  | Helen Currie, Alison Emmett                | Addition of COVID guidelines<br>Clarification of offer process  |
| V2      | January 2022  | Helen Currie, Alison Emmett                | Detail added to admissions criteria for children SEND; alignment with Local Authority criteria; addition of KCSiE 2021 guidance on transfer of records                      |
| V3      | January 2023  | Helen Currie, Alison Emmett                | No change   |
| V4      | May 2023      | Helen Currie, Alison Emmett, Pat English   | Detail added to deferral requests<br>Visiting Day corrected and updated<br>Admissions email and settling in visits amended<br>School visits removed from transition process |
| V5      | February 2024 | Helen Currie, Alison Emmett, Hasina Rashid | Added mechanism for new funding for 2-year-olds   |
| V6      | April 2025    | Helen Currie, Alison Emmett, Lindsay Read  | Visiting Day now free, revised offer for 2-year-olds, clarification on deferral, added Early Help referral to Admissions Criteria   |

### Approval for full governing body

| Name | Signature | Role | Date |
|------|-----------|------|------|
|      |           |      |      |

This policy is developed and operates according to our 5 principles:

1. Protecting children's rights to play, learn and have a voice.
2. Keeping parents and carers involved in children's development.
3. Governors & staff leading the way on quality.
4. Working in partnership with health professionals and schools.
5. Being ethical, respectful and tolerant.

This policy applies to applicants for the September 25 and in-year applicants for the academic year 25-26. It will be reviewed in Autumn 2025 for the 26-27 intake. Thereafter it will be monitored and updated annually unless there are further changes to national admissions policies for schools which affect Church Hill & Low Hall's practice.

Young children and their parents or carers often have to manage several transitions between home and various settings (such as playgroup, childminder and Nursery School) before they reach the age of 5 years. At the Forest Alliance of Nursery Schools, we aim to make this process of transition as smooth as possible. Our Admissions and Transitions programme is designed to support the development of the children's confidence and high self-esteem within the school setting. We also recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents, carers and any other professionals who have been supporting their children's development prior to their start at the schools.

With this in mind, the aim of our Admissions and Transitions Policy is to:

- help children to continue to learn, play and develop in ways that suit their unique interests
- enable parents and carers to feel confident that their children are happy, secure and finding a voice within the schools
- build on children's achievements and best practice so that they are reaching their potential.

## **Before Nursery**

Just under 50% of 2-year-olds and approximately 50% of 3-year olds have attended another early years setting prior to starting at Church Hill or Low Hall Nursery Schools. Many of the remainder have never been left without their parent or carer.

We hold our Visiting Day stay and play sessions at both schools. We encourage all families with a child on the waiting list to attend as often as possible, to familiarise themselves with our programme, staff, and environment.

At both schools Visiting Days are co-ordinated by the Marketing and Policy Officer. At Low Hall they are held on most Thursdays in term time and at Church Hill on most Tuesdays in term time. These morning sessions are free from February half term 2025. Entrance is on a 'first come, first served' basis.

## **Timing**

Children's names can be placed on the Waiting List as soon as they have a name.

## **Two-year-olds**

The Local Authority funds some families to get 15 free hours of education per week in term time. These families include: those on some benefits, those whose child receives Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and those who have a Looked After Child.

The government funds eligible working families to get 15 free hours of education per week in term time. From September 2025 this will increase to 30.

Following our October 2024 consultation on the childcare our community needs, for our September 2025 intake and during the academic year 25-26 we will offer 2-year-olds **at each school in school term-time only**. They can access the following patterns:

- 15-hour places for families with Local Authority funding: 5 days a week, either morning places, 9am to 12 noon, or afternoon places which are 1pm to 4pm
- 30-hour places for families with government funding: either Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4pm plus Friday 9am to 12 noon, or Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 3pm
- additional hours to extend the free hours, i.e. daycare from 8am to 6pm for a minimum of 2 days of the week

If it is sustainable, we will offer a holiday playscheme for 2-year-olds from both schools at Low Hall.

This configuration allows us to maintain staffing and provide a ratio of 3 adults to 12 children.

Funded two-year olds can access their free 15 hours from the 1 January, 1 April or 1 September after their 2nd birthday. We admit them as soon after this as a place becomes available, but not before. Places for 2-year olds become available throughout the year, as families move away and as 2-year olds turn 3. At Church Hill, the term after children turn 3 and when they are developmentally-ready, they move to the 3-year olds' team, thus vacating a 2-year old place.

When a 2-year old place becomes available we follow the Admissions Criteria below. For 15-hour places we prioritise those in receipt of the Local Authority funding. For daycare places, we prioritise those in receipt of the government funding for eligible working families.

### **3-year-olds**

3-year olds can be admitted to the Nursery School from the term after they turn 3. However, as most children leave our schools at the end of the academic year in July, most of our places become vacant in September, so that is when most 3-year-olds start. We offer:

- 15-hour places for 3-year olds, either morning places, 9am to 12 noon, or afternoon places which are 1pm to 4pm
- 30-hour places for families with government funding: either Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4pm plus Friday 9am to 12 noon, or Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 3pm
- additional hours to extend the free hours, i.e. daycare from 8am to 6pm for a minimum of 2 days of the week

We start our admissions process for September just before the Easter holiday.

### **Longer hours**

It is our experience that children who attend every weekday benefit in terms of their broad education, social and emotional development, physical development, and preparation for primary school, so we do not offer the 15-hour places for 2- or 3-year olds as 2.5 whole days.

In strictly limited circumstances, and only after discussion with the Executive Headteacher, we may be flexible in how we provide 15-hour places for parents/carers who have offers of student placements that require longer hours.

Also at the Executive Headteacher's discretion, longer hours may be offered in unusual circumstances, for example issues relating to Child Protection, if the child is looked after by someone other than their parents, such as a Private Fostering agreement, or in the case of a family crisis. Church Hill and Low Hall may provide the funding for this from our Extended Services budget.

### **Deferring a primary school place**

Occasionally a child may defer their Primary School place at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher and with permission from the transferring Primary School Headteacher. This should only be for children who are significantly delayed in comparison to their peers who receive daily specialist support for their Special Educational Needs and Disability, and occasionally if a child is August born and if the SENDco feels they are genuinely not ready for Primary School. Not all children with SEND need to defer.

Requests for deferral must be made in writing by to the Executive Headteacher in January at the latest, and sent to both the primary school, as part of the primary school application process, **and** to the FANS Executive Headteacher. Neither the primary school applied for nor FANS are bound to grant deferral on the basis of parental preference. FANS can only consider keeping a child on role with written confirmation from the primary school in question. Parents/carers are pointed to the [Waltham Forest website](#) for guidance.

We will only accept requests for deferred places for children who currently attend one of our schools. If a child attends another setting the deferral request must be made to that nursery or the nursery of the school that the family has a deferral agreement with.

Parents should be made aware of the long-term impact of deferral, such as reapplying for a deferral at each key stage or at transition to secondary school. Children who have deferred may be required to skip a year at some point in their school journey so that they leave school at 16 with their peers.

### **Admissions Criteria**

When there are not enough spaces to offer a place to every child on the waiting list, we give priority to children in this order:

1. Looked After Children or previously Looked After Children.
2. Families who get the Local Authority funding for 2-year olds.
3. Families who get the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP).
4. Families who get the government funding for eligible working families.
5. Those who have turned three while attending as 2-year-olds.
6. Medical or social reasons, children 'at risk', or those children referred to us by Early Help. Families must meet with the SENDco before we can offer a place for these reasons. If a child needs significant support, we may only offer them a 15-hour place. This is so we can offer them a high standard of support. The school SENDco decides how many hours we can offer.
7. Sisters and brothers of current or former pupils.
8. School staff children, or children who have a parent who works at a state-funded school within half a mile of each school. For Church Hill these means: Walthamstow School for Girls and Emmanuel Community School. For Low Hall this means: Edinburgh Primary School, Mission Grove Primary School (both sites), South Grove Primary School, Barn Croft Primary School, St Saviours C of E Primary School, Coppermill Primary School, Thomas Gamuel Primary School, Stoneydown Park Primary School, Willowfield School and Kelmscott School.
9. Distance: children who live closest to the school
10. Children who are not attending another early years setting

## **The Admissions Process**

1. In the Spring term an email is sent to all families on the waiting list whose children are eligible for the following September intake, asking if they are still interested. We ask families who are interested which of our options they prefer and why. We ask families who are eligible for free 15 or 30-hour funding to confirm their eligibility code by a deadline.
2. When we have received all the replies, the admissions criteria are applied to the list of requests, places are allocated and offer emails are sent out. Parents'/carers' requests for a preferred session are granted wherever possible.
3. When families have accepted our offers, they are directed to become familiar with our website, which contains information about our practices and procedures. We ask them to fill out two forms:
  - a. our online Family Information Form. This asks for the admin information we will need to take care of their child
  - b. our All About Me form. This form helps us get to know the child and their family.
4. Parents/Carers must book to attend three settling in visits. Two of these three visits normally happen in the summer term before the child starts at the Nursery School. The third usually happens at the start of the Autumn term. For children starting Daycare, all 3 visits happen before the summer holiday so that they can start as soon as possible in September.
  - At this point parents/carers will receive an email with links to Getting Along Together, Listening to Learn, our Curricular Goals, term dates, and our settling in, safeguarding and e-safety guidance
  - During one of the visits, families complete paperwork, including providing the child's identity documents. They are also introduced to their child's key person, with whom they discuss the All About Me form, talk about how the Nursery Schools work, raise any concerns, answer any questions, and begin to build a positive relationship.
  - During the third visit, families are given their start date.

Although it is the Key Person who will be working closely with particular children, all staff members work with all children and develop positive relationships with them.

These visits and all the paperwork must be completed before the child can start Nursery School.

The Nursery Schools aim to exchange information with any Early Years settings that a child has attended prior to joining our schools. If we know that a child has particular needs we will arrange transitional visits to their playgroup or private Nursery.

## **Start dates**

We confirm start dates at the third Settling In visit. The earliest start dates are given to children of working parents and children with disabilities or other additional needs.

At the beginning of the Autumn Term when the majority of children are starting, there is phased admission with several new children admitted each day.

If children find separation from their parent/carer challenging, additional strategies are developed with the Key Person to ease the transition from home to school. This may include additional visit days or shorter hours.

## **Transition to Primary School**

There are a number of schools that children move on to from Church Hill and Low Hall Nursery Schools.

The most common primary schools for children from Church Hill Nursery School to transfer to are: Edinburgh Primary School, Emmanuel Community School, Greenleaf Primary School, Henry Maynard

Primary School, Mission Grove Primary School, Our Lady and St George's Catholic Primary School, St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Woodside Primary Academy, Barclay Primary School and Hillyfields Primary Academy.

The most common primary schools for children from Low Hall Nursery School to transfer to are: Barn Croft Primary School, Coppermill Primary School, Edinburgh Primary School, Mission Grove Primary School, South Grove Primary School, St Saviour's Church of England Primary School, Sybourn Primary School, Stoneydown Park Primary School.

These are our main feeder schools; however, children may attend other schools, usually in the Borough of Waltham Forest.

Schools have a variety of arrangements for visiting prior to children commencing and we check that children are attending these pre-admission visits. Most of the feeder schools extend their transitional work by visiting children at the Nursery School.

These arrangements can include:

- Being visited by a teacher from the child's new school who talks with the children and shows them pictures of what will happen in Reception Class.
- Meeting with or phoning staff members from the schools to which the children will transfer to discuss relevant information which should be sent on to them, as well as the types of experiences that the children will have in Reception Class.
- For children who have Education and Health Care plans a review of the plan will be organised by the SENDco in the summer term before the child goes to school and the school where the child is moving to will be invited to attend.

## **Early Years Transition Records**

We receive records from some of the settings attended by children prior to them commencing at Church Hill and Low Hall. We also receive information from a variety of professionals when the child has known additional needs.

Towards the end of the child's final term at nursery Key People meet with the parents of each child to discuss their Transition Report and any issues regarding transition. When children leave nursery to begin Primary School, we pass the following information on to their Reception Teacher:

- 'Foundation Stage Transition Report' (a summative account of the child's achievements and overview of the child's progress during their time at Church Hill/Low Hall). This will include comments from the parents/carers and the child.
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children in Care, sent school under confidential cover.
- Education, Health and Care Plans and case notes if children have identified special needs and disabilities
- If a child is on the Child Protection register records will be transferred securely via My Concern and the Designated Safeguard Leads (DSL) will discuss information confidentially with the DSL at the next setting. These meetings will be recorded in the confidential records of the school.
- If Child Protection incidents (low level or higher concerns) have been recorded while the child attended Church Hill or Low Hall, copies will be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Person at the child's new school under confidential cover. In line with KCSIE 2021 any concerns about a child's safeguarding will be transferred to the Primary school within 5 days of their attendance via My Concern either as a direct transfer or a PDF.

We will contact the child's teacher if any additional issues need to be discussed. As a general rule we speak to EYFS leads from our feeder schools in the summer term to share information relevant to helping the children to settle into their new schools and also which friendship pairings will support with transition.

If a child leaves to join a nursery class in another school the child's records will be transferred to their new school.

On leaving, children's Learning Journey portfolios are sent home with a copy of their 'Foundation Stage Transition Report, generated from our Curricular Goals'. We encourage families to share this special book with their new class teacher, as it reflects each child's strengths, interests and progress.

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