Birchwood Nursery School

Admissions Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Full Governing Board annually

This policy was reviewed October 2026

It is due for review in October 2027

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1. Rationale

The Governors of Birchwood Nursery School aim to provide a fair and transparent admissions system and this policy sets out the admissions criteria for entry to Birchwood Nursery School and Preschool for children aged 2-4 years. The Admissions Policy is reviewed annually.

2. Nursery Admissions for 3 and 4 Year Olds

Birchwood Nursery School is a state maintained Nursery School and manages its own admissions procedure.

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours' free early education, from the term after they turn 3. Places are offered at Birchwood Nursery School on the condition that the 15 hours will be accessed solely at Birchwood Nursery School.

Birchwood Nursery School operates a single intake to the Nursery in September, meaning children take up their Nursery place in the September following their third birthday. However, if the Nursery is undersubscribed in the Autumn term, the Headteacher may consider admitting children in January or April in the term after their third birthday.

2.1 Criteria for Admissions to Birchwood Nursery School

. **Rule 1: Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs** which names the school will be allocated a place in accordance with section 324 of the Education Act 1996. Also children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) that names the school.

Rule 2: Children looked after and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order).

Rule 3: A child 'at risk' (or the sibling of a child 'at risk') who is the subject of an interagency child protection plan.

Rule 4: Medical or Social Needs – Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to come to Birchwood Nursery School.

Rule 5: Children currently attending Birchwood Preschool

Rule 6: Siblings of children on roll at Birchwood Nursery School or Birchwood Preschool at the time of admission.

Rule 7: Children of staff who are employed at Birchwood Nursery School or Birchwood Preschool or have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Rule 8: Any other Nursery academic year children in date order of application

Rule 9: Deferred Reception class places for children in current cohort.

Birchwood Preschool, which accepts children from the age of 2 years, does not use the admission rules stated above. Preschool allocations are explained separately in Section 3.

There are 104 funded nursery places at Birchwood Nursery School (52 morning places, and 52 full day, 30 hour places). Where applications exceed the number of places, the Admission Rules are applied in order. If more children qualify for a school place under a particular rule than

there are places available, a tiebreak will be used. That means the next rule will be applied to those children.

2.2 Application Process

All applications must be made directly to Birchwood Nursery School using the school's own online application form, which can be accessed at
www.birchwoodnursery.herts.sch.uk/Admissions-Information/

Parents may contact Birchwood Nursery School office at any time to register their child on the Nursery School's interest list.

Children who turn 3 before 31st August 2027 are eligible to apply for a place at Birchwood Nursery School from September 2027. Any child who turns 3 after 1st September 2027 can apply to Preschool for a 3-year-old funded place from the term after their 3rd birthday (i.e. a child born 18/10/2024 can apply for a funded place at Preschool commencing from 1st January 2028).

2.3 Timeline for Applications

Monday 9th November 2026	Admissions window opens for September 2027
Tuesday 24th November 2026 Monday 11th January 2027 Wednesday 20th January 2027	Nursery open afternoons will be held from 3.30pm - 5.00pm on each of these dates and can be booked by telephoning the Nursery Office on 01707 262648 or through the link on the website
Monday 1st February 2027 12noon	Admissions window closes
Monday 22nd February 2027	Offer letters confirming sessions allocated posted to parents
Friday 5th March 2027	Deadline for acceptance of offer

Late applications received after 1st February 2027 will only be considered if places remain after allocation. Prioritisation of pupils attending Birchwood Preschool under Rule 5 will not be applied to late applications.

2.4 Continuing Interest

In the event of Birchwood Nursery School being oversubscribed, a Continuing Interest (CI) list will be maintained by the nursery. If a place becomes available during the school year, allocation will be made by applying the admissions criteria in Section 2.1 to children on the CI list. Birchwood Nursery School will contact the parent or carer at the top of the list by telephone to establish whether the place is still required. If no response is received from the parent or carer within three days, the next person on the list will be contacted and offered the available place.

2.5 In-year Applications

Applications may be made throughout the school year and, where there is no waiting list, children will be admitted on roll at the earliest convenient date. If there are no spaces available at the time of application, parents will be offered the opportunity to place their child's name on the continuing interest list (see Section 2.4 above).

2.6 15-Hour Morning Place

A funded 15 hour place is offered over five mornings, Monday to Friday, term-time only. Sessions run from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Parents can request additional afternoon sessions, on a fee-paying basis, if required (see Section 2.8). Additional afternoons will be allocated for the entirety of the academic year and parents are asked to commit to this.

All places are offered for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

2.7 Free 30-Hour Childcare (for eligible working families)

Some 3 and 4 year olds can get an extra 15 hours free childcare if their parents qualify: this is known as 30 hours childcare for eligible **working families** in England.

Birchwood Nursery School is a participating provider and is able to offer a number of places to children of families eligible for 30 hours free childcare. However, it should be noted that **eligibility does not guarantee the offer of a 30 hours' place**.

Funded 30 hour places are offered from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. which includes the lunchtime period. Parents will be expected to pay for a school lunch.

Birchwood Nursery School will endeavour to accommodate 30 hours requests, which should be indicated on the application form at the time of applying. Parents are encouraged to apply for and supply their 30 hour code in advance of completing the application form.

The criteria for eligibility can be viewed at **beststartinlife.gov.uk** and parents must provide their eligibility code to the Nursery in order to be considered for a 30 hours' place. Birchwood Nursery School will confirm eligibility through the Early Years Portal and offer a place if available. Parents/ carers are required to complete a parent declaration form and provide the school with their child's birth certificate or passport before accessing funded hours. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to reconfirm their eligibility for childcare support for working families every three months. Eligibility is reviewed termly and if a child falls out of eligibility, once the grace period has expired the child will not be able to continue to attend the additional sessions. It may be possible to transfer from funded to fee-paying sessions.

There is no right of appeal once places have been allocated.

2.8 Additional hours (fee paying)

A further 15 hours per week in addition to the 15 hours' free early years education are available on a fee paying basis for families who are not eligible for the 30-hours free childcare. This care is provided in the Nursery School setting. It is expected that children will attend from 9.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m. on the additional days chosen.

2.9 Meals, consumables and wraparound care

It should be noted that the cost of consumables (nappies, creams, etc.) is not included in either funded or fee-paying provision. Parents are expected to provide these items where necessary.

Meals are provided by an external catering contractor for those children attending 30 hour provision and parents/carers are expected to keep their account balance in credit at all times in accordance with our Charging and Remissions Policy. Milk and healthy snacks are provided at each session for all children, for which a voluntary contribution of £1 a week is requested.

Extended care (Breakfast Club 8:00am – 9:00am and Tea Club 3:00pm – 4:00pm) is also available. Details of session fees are on our website.

3. Allocation of Preschool Places

Birchwood Preschool can take children from 2 years of age and is able to offer free 2-year-old funded places, free working families places if families meet the criteria, and free 3-year-old funded places.

Information regarding 2-year-old funding can be found at **https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/childcare-and-advice-for-parents/free-early-education-and-childcare/childcare-and-free-early-education.aspx**

Parents can also pay to send their children to Preschool for a minimum of two paid sessions per week if they do not qualify for a funded place. Parents may also choose to pay for additional sessions, over and above their funded sessions.

Preschool allocations, whether funded or fee paying, are subject to availability of places. If there are no available spaces at the time of enquiring, the child's name can be added to a waiting list.

Criteria for Admissions to Birchwood Preschool:

. **Rule 1: Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs** which names the school will be allocated a place in accordance with section 324 of the Education Act 1996. Also children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) that names the school.

Rule 2: Children looked after and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order).

Rule 3: A child 'at risk' (or the sibling of a child 'at risk') who is the subject of an interagency child protection plan.

Rule 4: Medical or Social Needs – Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to come to Birchwood Nursery School.

Rule 5: Siblings of children on roll at Birchwood Nursery School or Birchwood Preschool at the time of admission.

Rule 6: No of sessions requested – Priority will be given to maximise occupancy (i.e. if 5 sessions are available, priority will be given to a child requiring 5 sessions over a child requiring 3.

Following the initial allocation round, places will be allocated as spaces become available in order of date of application, subject to the required number of sessions being available.

Allocation of Preschool places are made by the Headteacher and the School Administrator. When a place becomes available parents/carers will be contacted by phone or email to discuss availability and parent's needs. Formal confirmation of the place is sent via email.

Parents/carers are required to provide their National Insurance details and their child's birth certificate and NHS number before their child's start date.

Parents/carers will be asked to complete a fees agreement which states terms and conditions for payment of fees etc. Once a place is agreed parents are required to give one month's notice to leave and will be expected to pay in full for that notice period.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are expected to follow this policy when advising prospective parents and admitting children to Birchwood Nursery School.

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- Children are admitted in accordance with this policy
- The school application forms are compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- There is good communication between the Nursery School and Preschool settings in relation to Admissions.