

Admissions Policy

It is our intention to make First Steps Pre-school genuinely accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. In order to accomplish this we will:

- Ensure that the existence of First Steps Pre-school is widely known in all local communities.
- Place notices advertising the Pre-school in places where all sections of the community can see them, in more than one language if appropriate.

ADMISSIONS - Children can be placed on our waiting list a term before their second birthday or the term before they wish to start at pre-school. Parents/Carers showing an interest in a place before this time will be placed on our future requirements list. We look at Admissions each term based on the age of the child, when a place request was made and funding status. We may also take into account the following; the vicinity of the home to the setting, siblings already attending, siblings attending the catchment school for Ashill and additional needs.

Funding status – priority order: Funded child in school intake year (30 hour Working Parent Entitlement or 15 hour Universal Entitlement), Two Year Old Funded (families receiving some sort of Government support), funded three year old (30 hour Working Parent Entitlement or 15 hour Universal Entitlement), 2Yr Old Working Parent Entitlement.

Additional needs – children with an EHCP or Looked After Children

Siblings already attending the setting

Living in the catchment area (as for Ashill VCP)

Parents can request a place at First Steps by completing a Place Request Form. The completion of a Place Request Form is not a guarantee of a place, and parents should be aware that requested sessions may not be able to be fulfilled as these are subject to availability. Admissions are confirmed roughly half a term before the start of the next term. Admissions are looked at on a term by term basis. We cannot guarantee an offer of places where the requested start date is during a term eg at half term – any offers will be dependent on availability. In exceptional circumstances we may also take into account children wishing to start later on who are in a high priority category, if these supersede a child with an earlier requested start date.

Once an offer of a place has been made, we are not able to accommodate families wishing to reduce days or changing their minds with regards to their agreed days in the lead up to their admission into pre-school. If you wish to change or reduce your days, you must contact us as soon as possible. We will ask you to complete a new Place Request Form which will detail the new days you require. Although every effort will be made to accommodate the new pattern of days, we cannot always guarantee this. Your original days will, of course, be secure but you may have to go onto the waiting list for the new days you are asking for. This system will also apply once you have started in our Pre-School. If you wish to increase sessions, you will need to contact us and will potentially be put on the waiting list. If you wish to reduce your days, you must also contact us, and the notice period of 4 weeks may be applied.

SETTLING IN SESSIONS - We aim to support parents/carers to help their children settle quickly and easily by giving consideration to the individual needs and circumstances of each child and their families. The settling in period is 1 week and begins on your given start date. These settling in sessions are charged at the usual rates. If you or the supervisor wishes to extend the settling in period, we can look into this for you. If a child is not able to cope with the nursery day, parents are required to collect their child. We recommend parents do not plan on going back to work until their child is settled.

AD HOC - ADDITIONAL DAYS - The Supervisor will look to see if we have your requested dates available. An email will be sent to inform you if we have the availability or not. Please be advised if you book an additional date and then cancel this it will still be charged at the usual rate. We are not able to include funded hours for one off sessions.

Parents agree that a minimum of 4 weeks written notice will be given for permanent withdrawal of their child with the exception of children leaving to begin school in September. This can be done via email. The responsibility is of the parents/carers to ensure that the notice has been received by the Supervisor or Administrator.

- Children who have already started school will not be given priority of age and will be charged funded rates if no funded option is available.
- Keep a place vacant, if this is financially viable, in order to accommodate emergency admissions including funded two or three year olds.
- Available places are based on staffing ratios and risk assessed capacity.
- Describe First Steps Pre-school and its practices in terms which make it clear that it welcomes both fathers and mothers, other relations and other carers, including child minders, and people from all cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups, with and without disabilities and families, children or carers with protected characteristics (Equalities Act 2010). See also Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion policy.
- Monitor the gender and ethnic background of children joining the group to ensure that no accidental discrimination is taking place.
- Make our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion policy widely known. A leaflet is available summarising Equalities at pre-school for all parents/ carers, volunteers and visitors.
- Consult with families about the opening times of the Pre-school to avoid excluding anyone.
- All children have the right of access to a broad and balanced range of activities. We undertake assessments to ensure that we can adequately cater for children with specific needs. We agree any specific plans for children with additional needs with parents/carers.
- As part of the registration process, parents/carers will be required to provide documentation to evidence their child's date of birth. This is to confirm they have reached the eligible age for the free entitlements.
- A copy will not be retained but may be requested again at a later date.
- Early Education is offered within the national parameters –
 - no session to be longer than 10 hours
 - no minimum session length (subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register)
 - not before 6.00am or after 8.00pm
 - a maximum of two sites in a single day
- Admissions information is issued to all families as part of the registration process. It is also available via our webpage or upon request.
- Early Education is offered to families 39 weeks of the year. The funded hours can be claimed (to the maximum available) –

- Mon – 9 am to 3pm
 - Tues – 9 am to 3 pm
 - Wed – 9 am to 3 pm
 - Thur – Not open
 - Fri – 9 am to 12 noon
- We aim to identify all children that may attract any additional funding such as EYPP, DAF, SEND Inclusion Fund and any locally available funding streams with a view to submitting a claim/application to support and improve their outcomes.
 - We will work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the hours/sessions that can be taken as free provision are convenient for parents' working hours.