

Admissions and Attendance

Policy for Little

Squirrels@Shiplake Primary

September 2025



This policy was adopted - September 2025

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually

Admissions Policy

It is our intention to make our setting accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We aim to ensure that all sections of our community have access to the setting through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

Procedures

- We ensure that the existence of our setting is widely advertised in places accessible to all sections of the community.
- We ensure that information about our setting is accessible, using simple plain English, in written and spoken form and provided in different community languages and in other formats on request.
- Our setting and its practices are welcoming and make it clear that fathers, mothers, other relations and carers are all welcome.
- Our setting and its practices operate in a way that encourages positive regard for and understanding of difference and ability – whether gender, family structure, class, background, religion, ethnicity or competence in spoken English.
- We will endeavour to put the appropriate support in place for children and/or parents with disabilities to take part in activities within our setting.
- We monitor the needs and background of children joining our setting on the Registration Form, to ensure that no accidental or unintentional discrimination is taking place.
- We share and promote our Single Equalities Policy (Equalities Scheme)
- We consult with families about the opening times of our setting and, as far as is practical and in the interest of the children, we are flexible about attendance patterns in order to accommodate the needs of individual families, for example in the number and combination of hours they attend each week.
- Nursery Education Funding (NEF) is provided from Government via Oxfordshire County Council. Every child is eligible for up to 15 hours 'universal' funding per week for 38 weeks a year from the term after they turn 3 years old. The setting will provide the necessary documents in order to claim for this funding.

- Additional funding is provided from the Government as part of the 'Free Childcare for Working Parents' scheme. Not every child is eligible and parents must apply online and provide the setting with an eligibility code.
- The setting reserves the right to limit the amount of 30-hour claimants.
- By Government policy, you can share your NEF hours between two settings. However, we request a minimum of 6 hours per week attendance in our setting to claim the minimum of 3 hours per week NEF funding.
- The Nursery charges a fee for children attending the setting who do not qualify for Government funding, or if they attend more than the funded hours. (These fees are outlined separately.) However, our priority is to provide NEF funded places.
- The Nursery requests consideration of a voluntary contribution from all parents in receipt of 3-year old funding.
- We try to accommodate parents' admission requirements with fair and clear procedure however any disputes in relation to this will be dealt with at the discretion of the Governing Board.

Eligibility

- We accept children from 2 years old up to school age subject to available spaces.
- We accept new children at the start of term following the time they become eligible to attend the setting.
- Once a completed application form has been received and the refundable registration fee paid, we arrange our waiting list on a date of registration basis.
- In addition our policy may take into account the following:
 - Start date requested
 - Particular circumstances affecting the family
 - Referrals from outside agencies
 - Siblings previously or currently attending the pre-school
 - The balance of the group as a whole
- Available sessions will be offered to children already attending the setting before being offered to children from the waiting list
- We offer funded places in accordance with the Code of Practice for Oxfordshire County Council and any local conditions in place at the time.

- We keep a place vacant, if this is financially viable, to accommodate an emergency admission.
- A minimum notice of half a term is required, in writing to the registrar, if a child is to be withdrawn from the setting. Failure to do so may incur a full half term's fees.
- If a parent/carer wishes to change their child's session, this request should be put in writing to our Nursery Manager who will accommodate where possible.
- Our Nursery Manager or Registrar will respond to any queries within a reasonable time scale.
- Any offer requires a response from the family, either by accepting or declining the place, by a deadline. Offers will be made by email where possible. Reasonable attempts will be made to contact the family by phone or in person, if no email response is received by the deadline. If no written response is received within 48 hours of the deadline, regardless of whether the Registrar has managed to contact the family, the child's place on the waiting list may be forfeited.
- We will not discuss another family's registration with other families.
- Our admissions policy is separate to that of Shiplake CofE School and children attending Little Squirrels@Shiplake Primary will still need to apply for a school place via OCC and meet the chosen schools admissions criteria.

Un-scheduled sessions (“Drop-in’s”)

We offer additional sessions and lunch club for children who are registered and regularly attend the setting. We have a set procedure for booking in these sessions. These procedures are in line with our policies on health, safety, security, welfare and equality.

Procedures

- Parents may wish to book an un-scheduled session for their child who regularly attends the Nursery. We can only accept an un-scheduled booking when:
 - The child is already well settled and secure
 - The required adult/staff ratios are met
 - The Manager (or person in charge) has assessed ALL the health, safety and welfare risks and passed a judgement to accept the booking

- There is a suitable place for the child in the session
- The Manager (or person in charge) makes the final decision on the un-scheduled session.
- Every attempt will be made by the Manager to accept the booking. If the booking cannot be accepted the Manager must make reasonable attempts to explain the reasons why. There may be some circumstances when an explanation is not possible because there is a conflict of interest.
- Our policy “Single Equality Policy (Equalities Scheme)” is followed at all times.
- All sessions are booked on a ‘first-come-first-served’ basis.
- Each case will be looked at individually. (Factors such as the child’s age will be considered because we have to adhere to EYFS parent:child ratios.)
- Prices for un-scheduled sessions will be displayed on the noticeboard and website.

To book a full session (8.45am-12 or 12am-3.15pm) parents/carers may:

- Phone the Nursery land-line and speak to a staff member
 - Speak to a staff member in person
- Email communication is allowed to arrange an un-scheduled sessions in advance but should not be used on the day.
- Unscheduled sessions requested through the Registrar are subject to the Registrar checking with the Nursery Staff before confirmation can be given.
- The staff member approached about an un-scheduled session will take down the details and discuss with the Manager. They will get back to the parent/carer within a reasonable amount of time.
- No booking has been accepted until a staff member has informed the parent in person.
- Sessions can be booked:
 - In advance
 - On the day

To book lunch club (12-1pm) parents may:

- Lunch Club sessions must be booked in person at 8.45am when arriving for the morning session. If we cannot accommodate an extra child for lunch due to ratios we will inform you on request.

- We do not accept phone calls or any other form of communication to accept lunch club bookings. This is because it interrupts the crucial time the staff have in the mornings for setting up the daily activities.
- If parents are unable to collect their child at 12noon they must not assume that the child can stay for Lunch club as ratios might not be met.
- Bookings cannot be arranged in advance because we give priority to the un-scheduled booking of full sessions.
- Exceptions will be made when occupancy is low.

Opening times and Uncollected Child

Dropping Off

The Nursery door is opened at 8.45am to 9.00am for drop offs. If a parents drops off out of these times they will have to ring the doorbell at the School Office (Memorial Avenue side) and wait for a member of staff to become available.

Collection

The Nursery door will open for collection at 3.15pm.

We will only release a child from our care to adults who have permission to collect them. We ask parents to provide us with a list of people authorised to collect and include a description or a photograph for us to keep on file.

In the event of an emergency, we operate a password system.

If a parent is delayed we will normally be able to accommodate the additional care for a short period. We will reassure the child and if necessary organise additional activities. We reserve the right to make an additional charge for late collection.

If we are unable to suitable care for the child out of hours, we request that parents arrange for an authorised adult to collect their child. If we are unable to reach a parent we will contact other adults from the authorised list and arrange for them to collect the child.

If we are unable to make contact with anyone at the close of our business we will inform Social Services and follow their advice, at all times we will minimise any distress to the child.

Payment of Fees

We aim to offer the best quality childcare at the lowest cost to parents as possible.

We offer the universal hours funding to all children in our setting from the term after they turn 3 years. We aim to offer as many extended hours funded places as possible within our budget. We also offer hours under the Government 'Free Childcare for Working Parents' scheme.

There is no difference in care, facilities or resources for children who are taking funded places to those paying fees.

We invoice in advance of each term. Invoices are usually sent out within the first 2 weeks of each term. Payment is requested within 14 days after which interest may be charged.

Invoices for drop in sessions are invoiced at the end of each term.

All parents wishing to take up the universal entitlement funding must complete and sign a parental declaration within the deadline provided. If a Parental declaration is not received sessions will be charged at full rate.

Parents wishing to claim NEF funding must complete a Parental Declaration form within the deadline provided and are responsible for rechecking their eligibility with HMRC. Until Little Squirrels@Shiplake Primary has received the 30 hour code, National insurance number and seen a valid form of ID a check on the 30 hour code cannot be completed. Any funding is not guaranteed until we have verified the code.

The Nursery requests consideration of a voluntary contribution from all parents in receipt of 3-year old funding (£3 per funded hour).

Little Squirrels@Shiplake Primary will give at least a terms notice of any increase in nursery fees.

As per the admissions policy, if a child leaves nursery without giving a terms notice in writing, fees may be incurred.