

Acre Schools Federation

Nursery Admissions Policy

Date Reviewed	29 th January 2026	Review Date	Spring 2027
Signature of Chair of Governors	Mr. John Knight and Ms. Hannah Sheehan  		
Signature of Headteacher	Mr. James Broad 		

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NB: Throughout this policy, headteacher refers to the executive headteacher or, in his/her absence, the head of school.

Statement of intent

The Acre Schools Federation aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high-quality and geared towards a smooth transition into Reception class. This policy is written to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their education at the nursery.

This nursery caters for the following age ranges:

- Children aged between three and four

The governing board is the admission authority and is responsible for setting the nursery's Nursery Admissions Policy. This policy is written to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their education at the nursery

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- DfE 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- DfE 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE 'Early years entitlements: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2024 to 2025'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Nursery Fees Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- SEND Policy

2. Equal opportunities

The nursery will implement an effective policy that ensures equality of opportunities for all, provides a welcoming and caring environment that promotes and reflects cultural and social diversity, and is equally accessible to all.

When making decisions about admissions the nursery will ensure that it aims to improve the outcomes of all children and reduce inequalities whilst upholding its duties under the Equality Act to put in place adjustments for children with SEND as required to prevent any disadvantage.

Admissions to the nursery will be open, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

3. Application process

Admissions to nursery provision will not in any way increase children's chances of admission to primary school; primary schools have their own admissions policies.

Parents choosing to send their child to the nursery will have to register their interest by contacting the school's Office Manager by email, telephone or in person. Once they have shared the necessary information required to register their interest, they will be added to the waiting list. The nursery will be in regular contact with those on the waiting list to keep them updated and to formally offer them a place if and when one is available.

Once a place is available, parents will receive a formal written offer which they will need to accept or decline in writing. After accepting the place, they will need to send in their child's birth certificate and proof address.

Parents who secure a place will be offered a date to begin the transition programme to ensure they and their child have time to settle.

Parents who would like a part-time place will be asked to state their attendance pattern preference from one of the following options:

- Part-time: AM – 5 days, Monday to Friday AM only
- Part-time: PM - 5 days, Monday to Friday AM only
- Part-time: Condensed Option 1 – 2 ½ days, all day Monday and Tuesday plus Wednesday morning
- Part-time: Condensed Option 2 – 2 ½ days, Wednesday afternoon plus all day Thursday and Friday
- Full-time: 5 days, all day Monday to Friday

Please note that exact times of the day may differ for each school nursery, please check the website or speak to the office manager of your chosen setting.

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that all parents' requests will be fulfilled because it may be necessary to take account of the balance between morning and afternoon places or the condensed week options.

More information on fees, charges and free childcare entitlements is outlined in the Nursery Fees Policy.

4. Application timetable

Parents may register their interest in a place at the nursery at any time however, a child is only deemed to be of nursery-age from the beginning of the term following their third birthday.

Application forms can be obtained from the main office.

Places offered are available to the child from the date the place is offered, until 31 August following their fourth birthday.

All children aged three and four are entitled to '15 hours' free childcare, this is available from the term following a child's third birthday. Provided that the eligibility criteria are met, children of working parents agreed three- and four-years-old will be entitled to the 30-hour entitlement. The LA will consider securing the additional free hours for parents who are eligible and have applied or re-confirmed by the deadline, but receive their valid 30 hours eligibility code after the beginning of the term, up to the dates set out below:

- Application/re-confirmation by 31 August – code start date between 1 - 14 September
- Application/re-confirmation by 31 December – code start date between 1 - 14 January
- Application/re-confirmation by 31 March – code start date between 1 - 14 April

The LA is not required to secure additional free hours where the parent has applied after 31 August, 31 December or 31 March, or for any codes issued after the dates outlined above.

5. Additional costs

The nursery offers a variety of fee-paying 'top-up hours' options, for families who are eligible for 15 funded hours and would like to extend their child's hours to full time. Details of the fees and the options available are detailed in the Nursery Fees Policy.

In addition, the nursery is able to charge additional costs as part of a free entitlement place – this includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Meals
- Nappies
- School trips

Where charges are made in line with the above, parents are expected to pay for these; however, payments are voluntary. Where parents are not willing to provide costs for the above, they will be permitted to provide their own supplies to the nursery. The nursery may also consider waiving or reducing the costs of meals, particularly for disadvantaged parents.

6. Oversubscription

Children who have an EHC plan that names the nursery are admitted before the oversubscription criteria is applied. Children with an EHC plan that does not name the nursery will be referred to the nursery's admissions officer to determine an appropriate place, in accordance with the LA's Fair Access Protocol.

The governing board may increase the priority of an application where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child, which can be appropriately met by the nursery.

The oversubscription criteria, set out in priority order, are as follows:

1. LAC or children who were previously looked after but have subsequently been adopted or become subject to a residence or special guardianship order
2. Children with a social or medical need who have been referred by a social worker, health professional, educational psychologist, outreach worker or education welfare officer. Letters from an appropriate professional must support these applications although these will not always be conclusive.
3. Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission. A sibling is defined as a full/half/step brother or sister, living at the same address, a child who is living as part of the family by reason of a court order, or a child who has been placed with foster carers at that address as a result of being looked after by the Local Authority.
4. Children of staff who have:
 - Been employed at the nursery or school for two or more years at time the application for admission is made
 - Been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a skill shortage
5. Children living within the catchment area for the nursery. Priority will be given on the basis of distance, between the child's home and the school, measured by a straight-line.
6. All other children

The governing board may also give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children eligible for the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium, or the service premium. The nursery must be named in the admission arrangements, and its selection will be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.

Where there is a tiebreak scenario within the criteria, priority will be given firstly to a child who lives closest to the nursery based on a straight-line measurement, then by date of birth, with the older child given priority.

Following the allocation of nursery places, the school will retain a waiting list. Waiting lists will be kept in order of oversubscription criteria listed above. Places on lists will not be prioritised according to how long a child's name has been on that list or, by the age of the child or, by whether the sessions are funded or bought. It is possible that a child's name could go up or down on the list.

7. Withdrawing offers

Once a written offer has been made, there are limited circumstances in which an offer can be withdrawn – these are as follows:

- Offers made in error
- Offers made on the basis of fraudulent applications
- Offers made on the basis of intentionally misleading applications
- Parents not responding to an offer within six weeks
- A child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education
- A family registering their child at two maintained settings

8. Delayed starts and withdrawn places

Following receipt of a registration form, the start date can only be delayed once, and only be delayed by one month, before the child's reserved place will be open to others and the child's name added back onto the waiting list.

If parents decide to withdraw their child from the nursery after being offered a place, they must give the nursery at least four weeks' notice. Parents may be charged for this period, or it may come out of their nursery entitlement.

Notice of a delayed start or withdrawal must be in writing.

9. Non-attendance

Parents must inform the nursery as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend for the whole or part of a day when they are due to attend however, parents will be subject to paying the full cost of the care, regardless of whether or not their child attends nursery that day.

Parents must give a minimum of four weeks' notice if they wish to reduce the level of provision their child receives. This requirement applies both before and after provision begins.

10. Refusal of admission

A child will only be refused admission if one of the following criteria are met:

- The nursery has reached its admissions limit
- The child is not of the appropriate age

As nursery education is not compulsory, parents do not have a statutory right to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to award a place to their child.

Parents may appeal to the SEND tribunal against the provision named by the authority in the EHC plan.

11. Admission to Reception

Admissions to the nursery will not in any way increase children's chances of admission to the main school. There is no automatic admission into the Reception at the school for children attending the nursery. Parents will need to apply for a place in Reception before January 15th of the year in which their child reaches statutory school age as detailed in the school Admissions Policy.

12. Force Majeure

The Nursery will not be liable if it is delayed or prevented from performing its obligations under this Policy due to force majeure, provided that:

- The Nursery promptly notifies parents in writing of the Force Majeure and its expected duration; and
- The Nursery uses all reasonable endeavours to minimise the effects of that event.

Force Majeure meaning; An event or sequence of events which the Nursery cannot influence or control and which prevent or delay the Nursery from performing its obligations under this policy. These events can include acts of God, war, riot, civil commotion, terrorist attack, compliance with any law or government order (local and/or national), fire or a pandemic of any disease.

13. Data protection

The nursery will act in compliance with the Data Protection Policy when processing personal data.

When processing and publishing information, the nursery will ensure it meets its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Where personal information is processed, the nursery will ensure it is kept up-to-date and the LA will ensure that the rights of data subjects are reserved at all times.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing board and headteacher.