



NURSERY ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

Introduction

This document outlines the process and policy as it applies to all Unity School's Partnership Trust nursery provision where no individual policy is published. This policy is reviewed and consulted on annually to ensure statutory and local changes, in nursery education legislation and guidance is reflected by our nursery schools and classes.

NB: The current School Admissions Code, published in December 2014, which relates only to statutory education, does not apply to this Policy.

The legal definition of a nursery-aged child contained in the 1944 Education Act is any child who has not yet reached statutory school age i.e. five years old. In Suffolk, a child is deemed to be of nursery age from the beginning of the term following their 3rd birthday until 31st August following their fourth birthday. In line with Early Years Education Funding Term Dates, term dates in Suffolk are determined as follows:

A child born between	Is eligible to claim in the period	Maximum total hours and weeks in each claim period.
1 April to 31 August	1 September to 31 December (Autumn Term)	15 hours x 15 weeks
1 September to 31 December	1 January to 31 March (Spring Term)	15 hours x 12 weeks
1 January to 31 March	1 April to 31 August (Summer Term)	15 hours x 11 weeks

Places offered under this policy will be available to the child from the date the place is offered until 31st August following their fourth birthday. A child is entitled to receive up to 570 hours free early years education in a year or 1140 hours if they take the 30 hour offer. We would recommend that, in the best interest of your child's education, this entitlement is taken at only one setting, but there may be reasons why this is not possible. In such circumstances, it is possible to divide this entitlement across up to two early years' settings.

Once a place has been allocated to a child and the child has started at that setting, any request to transfer to an alternative nursery class, school or early years provider will not be encouraged, unless there are valid, exceptional reasons for the transfer, e.g. house move.



Application Process for a Nursery Place:

Parents may register their interest in a place at our nursery provision at any time, but must formally apply for a place, using the Unity Schools Partnership nursery admission form. Information and application forms are available from each nursery setting, via the school's website, or from the school office.

Application Timetable

Applications will be processed and letters to families, informing them of the outcome of their request for placement for their child/ren, will be issued no later than:

Term Applied for	Letter will be issued no later than:
Autumn Term 2021	End of April 2021
Spring Term 2022	End of November 2021
Summer Term 2022	End of February 2022

Admission Number

Each academy has an admission limit for their nursery provision, determined locally. This provision will be full and thus a pupil will be refused admission if the admissions limit has been reached. Where there are places remaining, later admissions will be possible up to the agreed admission limit. However, places cannot be reserved for children who may move into the area later in the year. Where more applications are received than places are available, places will be allocated in accordance with the over subscription criteria for each academy.

Reserve Lists

Children who are not offered places will have their details added to a reserve list. Children's names are placed on reserve lists in strict order of the over subscription criteria, not according to the date of application. This list will be held until such time as the child is of statutory school age and expected to transfer to a Reception class. If a place becomes available, the academy will contact the parents of the child whose name is first on the reserve list. The academy will always consider high priority requests for any available place, according to the admissions criteria.

Oversubscription Criteria

When an academy's nursery provision is oversubscribed, after the admission of children with an Education, Health and Care plan naming an academy's nursery provision, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:

1. Looked after children, whom the Corporate Parent agrees should attend a named nursery provision, and 'previously looked after' children.

2. Children who are the subject of a recognised child protection plan (under current legislation and drawn up by social care services) where a specific nursery placement is identified.
3. Children wanting to take up their full entitlement within a nursery.
4. Children who live in the designated catchment area. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given in the following descending order:
 - i. Children who live in the designated catchment area who have a sibling already attending the Nursery or the academy to which the Nursery is attached.
 - ii. Children who live in the designated catchment area who do not have a sibling already attending the Nursery or the academy to which the Nursery is attached.
 - iii. Those children who live closest to the academy to which the Nursery is attached.
 - iv. Date of birth, priority will be given from oldest to youngest.

Tie-break:

Distance tie-breaker

Under each of the oversubscription criteria above if there are more children applying than places available, places will be allocated in order according to the distance between the Academy and the child's permanent residence, with those living nearest being admitted first. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight-line distances are calculated electronically using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the co-ordinates of each property and provides the address-point between which the straight-line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. When there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.

In the unlikely event that two applicants competing for a single place at the Nursery live the same distance from the Academy, random allocation will be used. The random allocation process will be independently supervised.

Two Year Olds

For Trust schools offering provision for 2 year olds, the same over subscription criteria applies and the application procedure, above, must be followed.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Siblings



Siblings are defined as, children, usually brothers or sisters, who live together in the same family unit.

Permanent Home Address

A child's home address is defined as the address where he or she resides with an adult with parental responsibility for the majority of their "school" nights. In cases where a child spends equal time living at two different homes over the course of a year, the address that is most favourable to the application will be considered as the home address.

Catchment Area

The catchment area for nursery provision located at a Unity School Partnership Trust, will be the same as the published catchment area for admission to the academy.

For the purpose of determining admissions, distance within Suffolk is calculated by measuring a straight line from the reference point of the home, as determined by the OS AddressBase Premium™, to the reference point of the academy.

Evidence

Parents are required to provide proof of the child's date of birth and home address. Evidence may be submitted in the form of the child's short form birth certificate or passport and the child benefit letter or a utility bill (showing the parent's name). Where a family is expecting to move house, confirmation of the new address will be required before the application can be considered. Confirmation should be by way of a copy of the signed lease agreement or a letter confirming contracts have been exchanged.

Absences:

Short absences

Where a child is registered to attend an Academy nursery provision but is unexpectedly absent for a single session or short period, no action is necessary.

Extended absences

Where extended absence occurs for medical reasons, the Academy nursery provision will work to support the family in the most appropriate way for the individual child. It may be that keeping a place open may smooth the way for a phased return and the best approach for the needs of the child concerned.

Extended absences for other reasons must be discussed in advance with the Academy. Parents are encouraged to take family holidays/ vacations during the school holidays, but if this is not possible, the request must be made in writing to the Academy including details of the dates of the proposed absence and the reasons for the request. A written response to the request will be made by the Academy. Parents are advised that any request/ absence for more than 6 weeks may result in their child's place at the Academy's nursery provision being withdrawn and offered to another family.



Withdrawing Offers of Nursery Places:

Change in Circumstances

Parents are obliged to inform the academy of any change of address following an application, as this may affect the allocation of a place. Failure to do this could result in an offered place being withdrawn.

Once a place has been offered in writing there are limited circumstances in which the academy can consider withdrawing the offer. If a place is offered on the basis of a fraudulent, or intentionally misleading application, or a parent has not responded to an offer within a reasonable time, the academy may withdraw the place. These serious situations can only be considered with the full involvement and agreement of the local governing body.

LA monitoring of the government nursery education scheme requires the LA to ensure that no child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education.

For further information regarding Nursery Education Funding Scheme see <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

Charging for Places

With effect from September 2012 new regulations came into force, which allow Nursery provision to charge for spare places. Details of where this is available to parents and a copy of the relevant Charging Policy will be available from the academy.

Starting School

There is no guarantee that your child will be offered a place in the academy because they attended the nursery provision.

Your child is eligible to start school the September following their 4th birthday, but legally they must start the term following their 5th birthday. On receipt of your child's school offer we recommend you take up this place from September. In special circumstances we offer the option to defer your child's admission until the beginning of the term after their 5th birthday but not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made. This means, if your child is summer born they will need to start school in April to keep the place at the school offered. If your child does not start school in April you will need to apply in June for a Year 1 place with no guarantee of a place at the academy. If parents feel there are reasons to consider a delayed admission following receipt of their child's offer letter, we recommend they discuss this with the Headteacher of the academy.