



Admissions & Settling-in Policy

Statement of Intent

It is our intention to make our pre-school accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We are committed to being as inclusive as possible about admissions for our pre-school. We also strive to be a provider of funded childcare without this impacting the quality of our provision. This policy outlines our approach to pre-school admissions, our admissions criteria and our approach to offering funded childcare in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Legal Framework

This policy relates to sections 3.28 and 3.57 of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Aim

To ensure that St Philip's Pre-School is accessible to all sections of the community through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures. To promote smooth and stress-free transitions to the setting, ensuring both children and parents/carers are happy.

We care for children between the ages of three and four years, from the term after their third birthday until they start school in the September after their fourth birthday. The numbers and ages of children admitted to the pre-school comply with the legal space requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). When considering admissions, we are mindful of staff:child ratios and the facilities available at the pre-school. We can provide up to 24 places at any one time.

Deferrals

Parents wishing to defer their child's entry into Reception should request this through the appropriate channels with the Local Authority. If this is approved and you wish your child to remain in pre-school for an additional academic year, any such request can be considered in discussion with the Pre-School Team and the Headteacher. We will consider requests on an individual basis to meet a child's needs and to support a holistic approach.

Accessibility

St Philip's Pre-School aims to ensure its services are accessible to all sections of the community as per the Equal Opportunities Policy. The setting will attempt to communicate its services in locations throughout the community and in more than one language as appropriate.

The pre-school exists to provide resources, facilities and expertise locally to meet the needs of people in the surrounding area.

The pre-school advertises through the Cambridgeshire Online Directory, the local school and places accessible to the community.

We describe our pre-school and its practices in terms of how it treats individuals, regardless of their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, background, religion, ethnicity or competence in spoken English.

Our Pre-School Leader, with the Pre-School Administrator, takes responsibility for communicating and meeting with new families, ensuring they have the correct literature regarding the pre-school and collating information, including a waiting list.

Offering Places

Where services are over-subscribed, the following priority for admissions has been agreed:

- Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) / Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school will be admitted.
- Children in Care (CIC) and children who were previously in care but ceased to be so by reason of adoption, a residence order (now known as a child arrangement order) or special guardianship order.
- Children normally living in the catchment area who have siblings attending St Philip's School or Pre-School at the time of admission.
- Children normally living in the catchment area.
- Children not living in the catchment area who have a sibling at the school at the time of admission.
- Children not living in the catchment area in birth order.
- Children not living in the catchment area in order of date joined waiting list.

Where there is a need to prioritise within a category, children living nearest to the school, by the shortest straight-line distance, will be given priority.

Places will always be confirmed in writing through an offer letter.

Funded Early Education and Childcare

Government funding for early education can be used for eligible funded hours within the pre-school's available sessions. Any additional hours attended outside a child's funded entitlement are chargeable at the published rate.

Funded sessions are offered subject to eligibility, availability of sessions and staffing arrangements. Parents/carers can choose how much of their available funded entitlement they wish to use with St Philip's Pre-School, and the agreed attendance pattern will be recorded on the relevant funding declaration.

The pre-school provides a flexible session structure. The core Pre-school Day is 8:45am to 2:45pm, comprising a morning session of 8:45am to 11:45am and an afternoon session of 11:45am to 2:45pm. There is no artificial break in the funded day at lunchtime.

Funded hours can be used across the pre-school's normal morning and afternoon sessions in accordance with the child's funded entitlement and agreed attendance pattern.

There is an optional additional session from 2:45pm to 3:15pm. This is a chargeable additional session, and funded hours cannot be used for this additional half-hour.

The pre-school does not charge top-up fees for funded-only sessions. Where parents/carers choose additional hours outside the funded entitlement, those additional hours are charged at the published rate.

If a child is in receipt of, or eligible for, Early Years Pupil Premium Funding, this may be used in accordance with the relevant funding arrangements. Please see the Fees & Payment Policy for more information.

Applying for a Place and Funding

Prior to a child attending pre-school, parents must complete and sign the relevant application and funding forms and agree the sessions they wish their child to attend. These forms provide the pre-school with information including the child's name, date of birth, address, emergency contact details, parental responsibilities, dietary requirements, collection arrangements, fees and sessions, parent contact details, doctor's contact details, allergies and parental consent.

Parents/carers must provide the information required to establish their child's eligibility for funded childcare. Where 30 hours funding is being claimed, the relevant 11-digit eligibility code must be provided to the Pre-School Administrator within the required timeframe so that eligibility can be checked and the funding claimed.

Settling In

Once a place has been offered, each child is assigned an Early Years Practitioner as a key person. The Pre-School Leader will take responsibility for contacting families and arranging appropriate settling-in sessions (stay & play). The first two of these sessions allow parents to stay with their child to provide an informal introduction to the pre-school and give parents and key persons time to communicate about specific needs and personalities. An 'All About Me Book' is also completed in advance of attending pre-school to ensure that staff are aware of issues pertaining to the child.

Subsequent settling-in sessions will be organised to meet the needs of the specific child. This process usually takes up to two weeks, but it is important that the child, parent and pre-school are happy before a child attends their full sessions. Key workers keep records of children's progress during this period.

The settling process is viewed as an essential part of ensuring children have a positive time at pre-school. We will be flexible in extending this period and offering families additional support.

During any reduced-hour settling-in period, Government funded hours can only be claimed for the hours the child attends the pre-school. Funded hours cannot be claimed for hours during which the child is not attending. Once the child is attending their agreed sessions, funding will be claimed in line with the agreed attendance pattern and funded entitlement.

Early Years Education Funding (EYEF)

St Philip's Pre-School is in receipt of Early Years Education Funding for eligible children. The universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds is available from the term following the child's third birthday, subject to the relevant eligibility and funding arrangements.

To access funded childcare, parents/carers must complete the relevant Parent/Carer Declaration Form and provide the information required to verify the child's identity, address and date of birth.

Parents/carers must keep their funding information up to date and notify the pre-school of any changes to their circumstances, entitlement, attendance pattern or the number of hours they wish to use.

30 Hour Funded Offer

The pre-school operates during school term time and can offer eligible children funded hours within its available sessions. The maximum funded entitlement is subject to the relevant Government funding arrangements and the child's eligibility.

The funded hours available at St Philip's Pre-School are delivered within the normal Pre-school Day of 8:45am to 2:45pm. The morning session is 8:45am to 11:45am and the afternoon session is 11:45am to 2:45pm.

Parents/carers wishing to claim 30 funded hours must provide the pre-school with the relevant 11-digit eligibility code within the required timeframe. Parents/carers are responsible for applying for and re-confirming eligibility, although the Pre-School Administrator can assist with the process as needed.

Any additional provision outside the child's funded entitlement, including the optional 2:45pm to 3:15pm session, is chargeable at the published rate.

Wraparound Care

Before and after-school and holiday wraparound care is provided separately by an external wraparound provider. Details of the current provider, availability and arrangements are published on the school website. Wraparound care is separate from the pre-school's funded early education sessions.

Changing or Ending a Place

Four weeks' notice is required if parents or carers wish to change their child's regular sessions. Such requests cannot be guaranteed and are subject to availability and staffing arrangements.

Four weeks' notice is required if parents or carers wish to withdraw their child entirely from the pre-school. This applies to both Government funded and parent-funded places.

Where four weeks' notice is not provided, fees may remain payable for the notice period, where applicable.

Uniform

Uniform is not compulsory for children attending pre-school. Families may choose to use school colours or other suitable clothing. Please see the pre-school website for practical guidance on suitable clothing and footwear.

Related Information

Parents/carers should also refer to the Fees & Payment Policy and the Pre-School website for current session timings, fees, funding information and downloadable forms.

Parents and carers can access the Cambridgeshire County Council Parent/Carer Early Years Funding Information here: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/childcare-and-early-learning/information-for-parents-and-carers/early-years-funding>

Further information and advice about early education and childcare is available through Best Start in Life: <https://beststartinlife.gov.uk/>

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as required to ensure that the admissions, settling-in and funded childcare arrangements published by the pre-school remain accurate and reflect the provision currently offered.