



## The Firs Lower School Pre-School Admission Policy

The Governing Body of The Firs Lower School Pre-School applies the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend the setting.

The Saplings Pre-School will accept applications for any child, aged three or older, wishing to attend the Pre-School. In addition, The Saplings Pre-School can offer a maximum of 8 places to children who are 2 if they meet the criteria for free early education and childcare. (Please see <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds> for more information). The Saplings Pre-School operates an equal opportunities policy ensuring that all children have equal access to the provision. In the event of there being more applicants than there are places available, the Pre-School will apply the following criteria in the priority order listed. In the definitions below the catchment area is the same as The Firs Lower School catchment area.

### **Criteria for Admission**

1. All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after' but immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to an adoption, child arrangement or special guardianship order. **(see definitions)**
2. Children living in The Saplings Pre-School catchment area in order of expressed interest **(see definition)**
3. Very exceptional medical grounds. **(See definition)**
4. Siblings of pupils already attending The Saplings Pre-School **(see definition of siblings)**
5. Pupils of members of staff **(see definition)**
6. Any other children

**A waiting list will be put into operation when all the criteria of the admissions policy have been applied. If, and when a place does become available, it will be offered in accordance with the above criteria. Where a waiting list exists, priority will be given to those pupils waiting to fulfil their funded hours entitlement. This will ensure as much excellent and free provision for as many children in our community as possible.**

**Although The Saplings Pre-School is part of The Firs Lower School, attendance at the Pre-School does not guarantee future admission to the Reception Year at The Firs Lower School. To gain admission to the main school parents/carers must apply to the Local Authority through the Starting School Admissions Process.**

### **Admission Dates:**

Half a term in advance of a preferred starting date, parents will be contacted to inform them if a place is able to be offered and to discuss session preferences.

Upon successful application of joining the Pre-School, a settling in date and start date will be confirmed. These are currently at three points in the academic year: September, January and April. Beginning prior to these dates is not guaranteed and will depend on the current Pre-School capacity to take on new admissions earlier than the months outlined above and is the final decision of The Saplings Pre-School.

## Notes

1. If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the pre-school than the number of available places, the tie break will be the distance the pupil lives from the pre-school, measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the pre-school receiving the higher priority. The distance will be measured from the address point of the pupil's home to the front door of the pre-school. In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the School Admissions Team database to allocate the place. Priority will not be given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.
2. Pupils who have a Statement/Education, Health and Care of Special Educational Needs are required to be admitted to the Pre-School which is named on the statement, even if the Pre-School is full. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the Pre-School is full.
3. The Saplings Pre-School will accept government funded Early Education and Childcare vouchers which can fund 15 hours of education. Early Education and Childcare vouchers are available to any child in the term after they turn three. (Please see <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds> for more information)
4. Any extra sessions will require additional payment which will be invoiced by The Firs Lower School to parents/carers. The sessions will be invoiced half a term in advance and are payable seven days from the date of invoice. If an outstanding balance remains and our reminders are not acknowledged or arrangements for the balance to be cleared are not made, then your child will lose their non-funded Pre-School place.
5. Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to express a preference about which sessions they would like to book when they complete an application form, however place allocation will be influenced by the availability of sessions and will be allocated to ensure child adult ratios remain appropriate.
6. We ask that parents enrol their child for a minimum of 2 sessions a week to ensure continuity in education for the child. Less than this can be considered on an individual basis and through discussion with the family.

## Definitions

1. The Children's Act 1989 defines a child who is 'looked after' as a child or young person who accommodated by the local authority (Section 20) or a child or young person who is the subject of a full care order (Section 31) or interim care order (Section 38). An 'adoption order' is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'child arrangement' is an order setting out the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians.)
2. **Catchment area in order of expressed interest** refers to applications for admission being considered in the order received i.e. those in catchment will have applications considered in the order they are received by the Pre-School.
3. **'Very Exceptional' medical needs.** Very exceptional medical grounds refers to cases where there are **exceptional** medical reasons which make it **essential** that a child should attend a particular pre-school and where the preferred pre-school is the **only** pre-school locally that could meet the child's needs. A medical report from the child's doctor or consultant must be submitted with the application form, setting out valid medical reasons why it is essential for the child to be admitted to the pre-school in question and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another pre-school. The Governors reserve the right to seek further information in order to determine whether it is essential for a child to be admitted to the preferred pre-school on medical grounds.

Admissions on medical grounds cannot be considered where the medical condition relates to that of a parent, brother or sister or other relative/childminder.

4. A **sibling** refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must attend The Saplings Pre-School at the time of application and be likely to remain in the pre-school at the proposed date of admission.
5. **Pupils of members of staff** refers to any child of a member of our full time or part time staff who is employed by the school. Temporary staff are not included in this arrangement.

**RATIFIED: 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2018**

**REVIEW: Spring Term 2019**