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MIDDLESTOWN PRIMARY ACADEMY

NURSERY ADMISSIONS POLICY

A MEMBER OF Accord MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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Approvals			
Name	**Position**	**Signature**	**Date**
A Lancashire	Chair of Trustees	A Lancashire	14 July 2025
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1.0	01 September 2024	Primary Headteachers	New Policy
2.0	July 2025	Primary Headteachers	No changes

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the arrangements to be followed for admissions to Accord Multi Academy Trust's academies with nursery classes. The policy aims to ensure a fair, consistent and transparent process for admissions to early years in the academy's local area is followed.

All children are entitled to a part-time nursery place the term following their 3rd birthday and a full-time place at the September following their 4th birthday (see admission dates). Parents are entitled to defer the offer of a full-time place and details are provided under section 8 – deferring a full-time academy place.

All children are eligible for up to 15 free hours, these are classed as 'universal hours.' Some children will be eligible for up to 15 additional hours these will be known as the 'expanded entitlement.' Parent's eligibility for the expanded entitlement will have to be verified prior to the child starting at the academy. **Academies within the Trust will make clear to parents their position on the expanded entitlement and their hours of operation.**

For nursery places, each of our academies and their Academy Education Committee (AEC) are responsible for admissions to non-statutory aged school and are required to adhere to the Trust's Nursery Admissions Policy in order to carry out their duty to admit early years children on a consistent and fair basis.

Admission to full-time school is managed by the Academy Admissions Policy for statutory aged pupils.

Below is a brief explanation of the context in which our nursery and nursery classes operate:

School/academies with a Nursery Class – admit children from the term following their 3rd birthday until they reach full-time school/academy age. A nursery class could include universal part-time children and children eligible to the expanded entitlement. Some school/academies operate a Foundation Stage Unit where both part-time and full-time reception age children are based together.

This policy covers the following:

- Entitlement to a universal nursery place
- Admission dates
- Process for allocating universal and expanded places
- Attendance issues
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Early Years admissions criteria to be applied when there are more applications than places available for universal and expanded hours
- Deferring a full-time academy place
- The purpose of an academy's designated nursery number
- Funding for Early Years children
- Compliance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- How to request an increase to an academy's nursery size.

2. Entitlement to an Early Years Nursery Place

Wakefield Council guarantees a universal place for all 3 and 4 year olds within the District. This place will not always be within the maintained sector and it may not always be at the local school/academy or a parent's preferred choice. Where a place is not available at the chosen school/academy, parents will be directed to contact the Council's Early Years Team by telephoning 0800 587 8042 or email infomation@wakefield.gov.uk.

The universal entitlement is for up to 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year up to 570 hours over the course of a year. The Trust traditionally offer 5 morning or 5 afternoon sessions (3 hours each). However, the 15 hours can be available flexibly over a minimum of 2 days per week.

Where a parent requests less than 15 hours per week this will be granted. Any unfilled hours can be offered to children on the waiting list.

The expanded entitlement allows parents to access up to a further 15 hours entitlement per week, should they meet the eligibility criteria. Where an academy offers this expanded entitlement, they should assign a number of places that they anticipate in filling throughout the year.

Parents must be made aware that there is no guarantee that a child, who is admitted to a school/academy's nursery class within Accord Multi Academy Trust, will be admitted to that school/academy full-time. Parents of children in nursery classes must complete an Online Application in order to request a full-time place in school/academy. The full-time Admissions Policy has to be applied to determine which school/academy has places.

The Trust will not put pressure on parents for their child to attend nursery, in order to gain a full-time place at the academy.

It is a parent's choice at which setting they take their universal/expanded funding.

3. Admissions Dates

The earliest a child can be admitted to nursery is the term after their 3rd birthday unless the school/academy is designated to admit 2-year-olds and has undertaken a statutory age range change.

The early years admission dates are as follows:

- **April-born children must be admitted in the following September and not after Easter regardless of when Easter falls.**

For each date of birth range the table below states the term each child becomes eligible for nursery education (term after 3rd birthday) and at what age they are deemed to be for each term until they reach the end of the reception year. See Appendix A for the actual date of birth ranges into reception and nursery for the next 4 academic years.

- Children born between 1 September and 31 December receive 5 terms part-time and 1 term full-time prior to reaching statutory school/academy age.

Three Year Olds Born Between	Month of Admission	Term of Admission
1 April - 31 August	September	Autumn
1 Sept - 31 Dec	January	Spring
1 Jan - 31 March	after Easter	Summer

- Children born between 1 January and 31 March receive 4 terms part-time and 2 terms full-time prior to reaching statutory school/academy age.

- Children born between 1 April and 31 August receive 3 terms part-time and 3 terms full-time prior to reaching statutory school/academy age.

4. Allocating Early Years Places

1. Term	Date of Birth Range		
	1 Sept to 31 Dec	1 Jan to 31 March	1 April to 31 Aug
2. Autumn			
Spring	Age 3 (nursery)		
Summer	Age 3 – (nursery)	Age 3 – (nursery)	
Autumn	Age 3 – (nursery)	Age 3 – (nursery)	Age 3 – (nursery)
Spring	Age 4 – (nursery)	Age 3 – (nursery)	Age 3 – (nursery)
Summer	Age 4 – (nursery)	Age 4 – (nursery)	Age 3 – (nursery)
Autumn	Age 4 – F/T (reception)	Age 4 - F/T (reception)	Age 4 – F/T (reception)
Spring	Age 5 – STAT (reception)	Age 4 – F/T (reception)	Age 4 – F/T (reception)
Summer	Age 5 – STAT (reception)	Age 5 – STAT (reception)	Age 4 – F/T (reception)
Autumn	Age 5 – Year 1	Age 5 – Year 1	Age 5 – Year 1

The Trust are responsible for administering the Nursery Admissions Policy to those parents who admit their child/ren into the early years provision. Parents must contact the academy directly when applying for a nursery place. Each academy will then allocate places in accordance with the Early Years Admission criteria.

Each academy has their own application form for early years admissions, which all parents applying for a place at the academy must complete and sign.

Academies will identify a date, each term, when admissions for the following term will be allocated. This will usually be around half-term.

Parents will be notified in writing when a place becomes available. Parents will be requested to confirm that they accept the offer of a place within 2 weeks of the place being offered. If a parent does not respond to the offer letter, the academy will make reasonable efforts to contact the parent before the place is offered to the first child on the waiting list.

Following notification that a place is available; a child should be expected to take up the place within the first 10 days of the expected start date. If the child has not taken up the place and a satisfactory explanation has not been provided to the Headteacher then the offer of a place will be removed.

If a nursery class is full, the only circumstance where a late application for a place can be considered and be successful is an application:

- from a child with SEN who is undergoing an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment or who has an Education, Health and Care Plan. In such an event the application must be supported by the relevant professionals involved with the child; or
- from a child who is in care of the local authority (looked after child), or a child who was previously looked after or fostered under an arrangement made by a local authority.

The academy will contact the Local Authority Early Years Team to discuss the implications of the statutory guidance before a decision is made on whether to offer the place to another child or to go above the academy's designated nursery size.

Where we have more places than applications, then all applications will be accepted including late applications.

In the event where we receive more applications than places, if we receive a late application, this will only be considered after all other applications have been dealt with. Children of late applicants will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which they appear following the admissions criteria.

The parents of children who have not been allocated a place will be contacted in writing informing them of the decision. We are happy to state where they are on the waiting list. Parents will also be asked to confirm if they wish to remain on the waiting list and/or if they wish for their application to be considered afresh the following term. When writing to parents we will include the details of the Local Authority Early Years Team who can provide free information and advice on alternative nursery places. Telephone 0800 587 8042 or email information@wakefield.gov.uk.

We will record to confirm we have seen evidence to verify a child's date of birth and identity. Examples are a birth certificate, or passport. Parents will also be asked to provide valid proof that the address given for the child is the address at which they are ordinarily resident.

If a child is refused a nursery place, then the parent/carer may appeal to an AEC. Governors should adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and they cannot admit children over their designated nursery number. Therefore, the only grounds for upholding an appeal should be where a parent demonstrates that an error has been made by the academy, when processing the application, that may have resulted in a place being offered to another child.

Where a parent demonstrates that an error has been made by the academy when administering early years admissions, the academy can only admit over our agreed nursery numbers if it has both written approval from the Local Authority and that the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Requirements continue to be met. Particularly those relating to space requirements and staffing ratios.

Therefore, if our nursery cannot go over its nursery size, then the AEC must make the decision to withdraw the offer of a place to another child or to place the complainant at the top of the waiting list.

5. Attendance

It the academies responsibility to ensure that children are attending regularly and for the number of hours per week that are being claimed and detailed on the Parent Agreement Form. Occasional holidays and sickness absences are acceptable.

As part of safeguarding arrangements, all academies must contact the parent/carer when a child does not attend. If no information relating to the reason for the absence has been received the academy will contact the parent on the first day of the child's absence; reasons for absence must then be recorded on the child's file along with the expected return date.

If the child does not return on the expected date, then the academy will make a follow-up call to the parent/carer to establish reasons and whether the child is going to continue with their free place.

If any child has what is deemed to be irregular attendance, then it is the academy's responsibility to remind parents that the free place is a funded place and continued irregular attendance could lead to a reduction of hours or the place being withdrawn and offered to another child.

Where there is a persistent absence of more than two weeks in any term without a justifiable reason then the academy will notify parents/carers that the place will be offered to another child. The academy would specify to the parent the date that the place will be removed. The hours of non-attendance can be offered to another child.

6. Admissions Criteria

If the number of applications received for a nursery place does not exceed the number of places available, then all children will be admitted on a part-time basis.

Where the academy receives more applications than places available then children should be admitted in the following order:

1. Children undergoing an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment or with an Education, Health and Care Plan (which names the school/academy);
2. Children in public care (looked after children), or a child who was previously looked after or fostered under an arrangement made by the Local Authority (see definition under explanatory notes);
3. Children who live in the academy's catchment area or parish area, who have brothers or sisters attending the academy at the time of admission;
4. Other children who live in the academy's catchment area;
5. Children who live outside the academy's catchment area but have brothers or sisters in attendance at the academy;
6. Other children by age order (admitting eldest first) or date order based on date of application.

Explanatory Notes

- Where any criterion category is over-subscribed then children within that category should be admitted in an age order basis (eldest first). Where 2 children have the same date of birth then priority should be given to Wakefield District children. If both children live in the Wakefield District, then priority would be given to the child that lives nearest the academy. Or if the academy prefers to use date order of applications this is acceptable but must be clearly stated in the policy and agreed by the AEC.
- Brothers and sisters are defined as children with brothers or sisters (including stepbrothers or sisters) living at the same address, in attendance at the same academy or an academy on the same site, on the date of admission.
- For admissions purposes only one address can be used as a child's permanent address. Where a child resides with more than one/parent carer, at different addresses, the academy will use the preference expressed by the parent/carer at the address where the child lives the majority of the time during the academy week as the main place of residence.
- Children in Public Care – this refers to children who are:
    - Subject to a care order made by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – for the courts to grant a care order they have to be satisfied that a child is suffering or would suffer 'significant harm' without one;
    - Children who are accommodated by the local authority on a voluntary basis under section 20 of the Children Act 1989; and
    - Children who have been adopted from Local Authority care, children with a residency order and those with special guardianship immediately following being Looked After will all be included within the higher priority for looked-after children.
- Where the admission of siblings from a multiple birth (e.g. twins, triplets) would cause the academy to rise above its agreed Nursery Number, you must contact the Local Authority Early Years Team to agree a resolution.
- If a child has a change to their circumstances (change of address) once an application for a place has been submitted it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the academy of the change. However, if a parent applying for a place already has a sibling in the academy and they have a material change then the academy should check all addresses when considering places to ensure that they have the correct information for all children to ensure that all places are allocated correctly.
- Children from families living outside the Wakefield District boundary will be considered alongside those who live within the Wakefield District.
- An academy providing wrap-around-care must not include this in the admissions criteria.

- A parent must not be expected to purchase additional services in order to gain a place at the academy.
- Where required the Local Authority will provide support to an academy in applying the admissions criteria.

7. Deferring a Full-Time School/Academy Place

The statutory School Admissions Code of Practice allows parents to defer their child's offer of a full-time place until they reach statutory school/academy age. For advice on this please refer to the full-time Academy Admissions Policy or contact the Local Authority School Admissions Team on 01924 305616.

If a parent wishes to defer their offer of a full-time place at their allocated academy and they wish their child to continue attending nursery provision on a universal basis or expanded where they are eligible then the below must be followed:

1. Parents must formally put in writing to the Local Authority's School Admissions Team and the academy that they wish to defer the offer of a full-time place.
2. The School Admissions Team will contact the academy where a full-time place has been offered.
3. The School Admissions Team will write to the parent to confirm the deferral of a place explaining that they will have to make alternative arrangement with either their existing or an alternative nursery provider.
4. The Early Years Team can provide support and advice in securing a nursery place.

If a parent contacts an academy direct, then the academy should inform the Local Authority Admissions Team as outlined above.

Not all parents will be offered a full-time Reception place at the academy of their preferred choice. Where this occurs, some parents are requesting to stay within their current nursery in the anticipation that a full-time place will become available at that academy. This is highly unlikely to occur unless the child is towards the top of the waiting list and there are no guarantees that a place will then become available.

When such a request to stay in the nursery is made then it is up to each academy and their AEC to make the final decision as any parental complaint / appeal would be made through the AEC.

If there are spare places available in the nursery class, then the academy will allow the child to continue in the nursery until such time that the place is required for another child. If the academy nursery is full or the academy is stating that they have decided that the child cannot continue in the nursery then the parents will be advised to contact the Early Years Team on 0800 587 8042 they will provide advice and support in obtaining an alternative nursery or reception place.

The legal position remains that parents who wish to defer taking their full-time place are still entitled to an early year's place of either 15 or 30 hours, where they meet the eligibility criteria, with another early year's provider from September. The Council must ensure provision is available if the child cannot remain in their current placement.

An academy would receive part-time funding if a full-time eligible child remained part-time (i.e. up to 15 hours) in an academy's nursery class. If the child was eligible to the expanded entitlement, then they could access up to 30 hours.

8. Nursery Numbers

Each academy has a designated nursery number, which must be agreed by the Council and must meet standards as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. The nursery number is based on available space and facilities. Requests for a change to an academy's designated nursery number will be considered by the Council's School Place Planning Group which will take into account issues relating to the Local Authority's duty to manage the sufficiency and sustainability of the childcare market.

Most academy nursery numbers are based on multiples of 1:13 in line with the staffing ratios.

Middlestown Primary Academy has a 39-place nursery and admits children eligible for universal and expanded entitlement.

In the first instance, 75% of nursery places will be allocated to children eligible for the expanded entitlement and 25% of nursery places will be reserved for children eligible for the universal entitlement only. The academy, however, aims to fill its nursery at the earliest opportunity and will, therefore, offer more expanded places based on demand at each admissions round once initial allocations have been made. This may mean that more expanded places are offered, reducing the number of universal places in future admission rounds.

Once a designated nursery number has been reached, only a child that has an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the academy or is under an Education, Health and Care Plan needs assessment can be admitted - thus exceeding the academy's nursery size. Where this occurs, the academy must contact the Local Authority Early Years Team immediately to discuss ways to resolve issues relating to Ofsted regulations and compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

9. Funding for Part-Time Admissions

All nursery providers in the Wakefield District are funded in accordance with the criteria for the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF). The EYNFF is a fair and transparent way in which funding is allocated to providers who deliver the Early Years Free Entitlement.

10. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Each academy and their AEC must adhere to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

11. Request to Increase Nursery Size

If an academy is interested in exploring the possibility of increasing their nursery capacity, then they must complete and submit a Business Request Form which will be considered by at the Council's School Place Planning Group. In the first instance you can contact Early Years Team for an informal discussion.

Useful Contacts

Early Years Team
Tel: 0800 587 8042
Email: information@wakefield.gov.uk

Portage / Pre-5 SEN Service (Area SENCO's)
Tel: 01924 307403

School Admissions
admissions@wakefield.gov.uk