



Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery

Nursery Admissions Policy

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Name/Title of responsible committee/individual:	Resources Committee
Date issued:	January 2025
Review frequency:	Annually
Target audience:	All stakeholders

The Governing Body shall conduct the School with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups. These factors were considered in the formation and review of this policy and will be adhered to in its implementation and application across the whole school community.

The School will promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and will actively challenge pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views.

Version	Date	Notes
V1.0	February 2024	Approved by Resources Committee

ADMISSION POLICY TO THE NURSERY

A child will be eligible for admission to the Nursery class in the term after they turn 3 years old. Admission is subject to an application being made and places being available. All preschool children aged 3 or 4 are entitled to 15 hours of free provision provided over 38 weeks.

At Merry Hill, we have 60 half-day places in the Nursery; 30 in the morning and 30 in the afternoon. We offer three different models for the allocation of these places subject to availability. The models we offer are:

- AM Sessions 5 mornings a week (15 Hours) 8.30 AM – 11.30 AM
- PM Sessions 5 afternoons a week (15 Hours) 12.30 PM – 3.30 PM
- Full Day Place, AM & PM Session (30/35 Hours) 8.30 AM – 2.30/3.30PM (**App 1**)

If you are eligible for the 30 hours free childcare funding, your child would attend our Nursery **from 8.30am until 2.30pm from Monday to Friday**. If you would like your child to stay for the full day (until 3.30pm), you can self-fund the additional 5 hours per week.

Where a family does NOT qualify for 30 hours per week of free childcare funding but expresses an interest in and takes up the offer of additional hours, they will be liable for the cost of any additional hours per week to be charged at the rate determined by the school. Your child would attend **from 8.30am until 3.30pm from Monday to Friday**.

The Local Authority has delegated the admission of Nursery children to the Local Governing Body of the school. Parents wishing to apply for a place must complete the application form and submit it directly to Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery before the application deadline (**App 2**). All children, subject to the availability of places, will normally start school nursery no earlier than the start of term following their third birthday i.e. at the start of term in September, January or after the Easter break during each academic year. However there may be rare incidences where we may need to delay your child's start beyond the relevant term in circumstances where the school have induction procedures to follow to enable your child to be successfully integrated with others and get used to school life (this would be decided in consultation with the Head Teacher), or the school simply does not have any available spaces.

Places requested before the closing date will be allocated in the following order:

1(a) Places will be allocated to children who are 3 years old by September 2025 and require 15 hours.

1 (b) Places will be allocated to children who are 3 years old by September 2025 and require more than 15 hours funded provision (including children eligible for 30 hours funding)

2 (a) Places will be allocated to children who are 3 years old by January 2026 (to start in Spring term) and require 15 hours – subject to availability of places.

2 (b) Places will be allocated to children who are 3 years old by January 2026 (to start in Spring term) and require more than 15 hours funded provision (including children eligible for 30 hours funding) – subject to availability of places.

3 (a) Places will be allocated to children who are 3 years old by April 2026 (to start in Summer term) and require 15 hours – subject to availability of places.

3 (b) Places will be allocated to children who are 3 years old by April 2026 (to start in Summer term) and require more than 15 hours funded provision (including children eligible for 30 hours funding) – subject to availability of places.

Oversubscription Criteria

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with a statement of special educational needs that names their school. Schools must also admit children with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan that names the school. If there are fewer applications than places available at a school all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places available, the criteria outlined below will be used to prioritise applications.

Rule 1: Children Looked After: Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order).

Rule 2: Medical or Social: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school. The evidence must relate specifically to the school applied for under Rule 2 and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs. **(Appendix 3)**

Rule 3: Sibling: Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school or on the roll of the link school (Ashfield Junior School) at the time of application.

Rule 4: Nearest School: Children for whom it is their nearest school

Rule 5: Distance: Children who live nearest to the school. Children not considered under rule 4 will be considered under rule 5. These rules are applied in the order they are printed above. If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, a tie break will be used by applying the next rule to those children.

We will use the parent or legal guardian's address or the address of a relevant adult who has parental responsibility, as defined under the 1989 Children's Act, for the child. We will require proof of address to be submitted with the application form.

Tie Breaker

When there is a need for a tie break where two different addresses are the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer

Continuing Interest

After places have been offered, Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list. A child's position on this CI list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and a child's place on the list can change as other children join or leave it. The school will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. Continuing interest lists will be maintained until the end of the summer term.

Allocation and Appeals

The final decision will be taken by the Headteacher in discussion with the nominated allocations Nursery governor. All identified factors will be taken into account and the basis of the decision will be confidential.

To ensure fairness all appeals relating to your allocation must be made in writing to the Headteacher giving the circumstances to be taken into account. All appeals will be considered however a change of decision will only be considered dependant on spaces being available and the number of appeals received.

The school will endeavour to communicate the decision on allocation of places to parents, 2 months before the placement is due to begin (i.e. end of June for September entry).

False Information

Sessions allocated can be changed after offers have been made if it is found that the offer was made on the basis of false information.

Data Protection

All personal data will be processed by Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This data will be used for administrative purposes only, so that the school is able to manage its admissions effectively.

Further Information

Please visit the school website, <http://www.merryhill.org.uk/>, or contact the school by telephone on 020 8950 2166 or by email: admin@merryhill.herts.sch.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1

Parents/ Carers who are using the 30 hours funding at Merry Hill and want their child to attend for the full Nursery day (8.30am – 3.30pm), which is 35 hours per week, will need to pay for the additional hour provided at Merry Hill each day, which is not covered by this funding. See terms and conditions for more information.

Appendix 2

If you would like to request a place in our Nursery for your child, please download the Nursery Application Form from the website and return the completed form to the school. The application process opens on Friday 1st November 2024 and closes on Wednesday 15th January 2025. If you require a place for your child sooner than September 2025 please contact the school; we may have places available or can advise you when places will become available.

Once your application is received it will remain on file until places are allocated in February 2025. We will confirm that we are able to offer a place for your child at the beginning of March 2025 and you will need to confirm this place by the end of March 2025. Once you have accepted the place, we will invite you to a 'Welcome to Nursery Meeting' in the summer term prior to your child starting at Merry Hill. After that we will contact you again during the term before your child is due to start to arrange for their admission into Nursery.

Appendix 3

We will consider exceptional individual applications, particularly in cases involving medical or social needs. If you wish to apply on medical or social grounds you must provide written evidence from relevant registered health professionals i.e. a doctor or social worker. The evidence must demonstrate why the chosen school is more appropriate and what difficulties would be caused if they were to travel to and attend alternative schools. We will not consider such applications if the relevant professional evidence is not provided. This evidence will be assessed by the Headteacher, SENCo and nominated Governor to determine if the Nursery can meet the needs of the child. No assumption should be made that submission of the relevant evidence will, in itself, be sufficient to allocate a place.

NURSERY TERMS & CONDITIONS

April 2025

30 Hours free childcare, Self-funded Additional Hours, Lunch Club & Dinners

All children are offered 15 hours (per week) free childcare places from the term after they turn 3 years old. Some families are eligible for 30 hours (per week) free childcare places. **Please be advised that the free 30 hours funding attendance at Merry Hill is from 8.30am to 2.30pm and parents are liable for the cost of a school dinner, where applicable.**

Lunch Club

Lunch club fee (per day): £7.50 (from 1 September 2024)

School dinner fee (per day): £2.58 (from 1 April 2025)

1. **Lunch club for children with 30 hours free childcare** – The cost of lunch club does not apply to children with 30 hours free childcare funding. The only cost applicable will be for the school dinners (if your child has them). The school dinners will be invoiced half-termly in advance.
2. **Lunch club for children with self-funded additional hours** – in addition to the cost of the additional morning or afternoon sessions, parents will need to pay for the lunch club session and school dinners (if your child has them). Lunch Club is defined as the supervised session from 11.30am to 12.30pm. It is a supervisory charge and does not include lunch itself. The sessions will be invoiced half-termly in advance.
3. **Lunch club add-on place** – if your child attends for mornings or afternoons only, it is possible for them to attend the lunch club either after or before their nursery sessions, subject to availability. Lunch club can accommodate a maximum of 20 children. Priority for lunch club sessions is given to children staying at the nursery for 30/35 additional hours sessions. In the event that a place is needed to accommodate a new booking for a 30 hours free childcare/self-funded additional hours child, the school reserves the right to give two weeks' notice of termination of provision of a Lunch Club Only place. In this event, notice would be given on the basis of 'Last in, first out' and a full refund will be made for future sessions.
4. Lunch Club is defined as the supervised session from 11.30am to 12.30pm. The lunch club fee is a supervisory charge and does not include lunch itself. Refunds and credits will not be given for non-attendance, unless approved by the Headteacher. Lunch should be provided from home or, alternatively, children may choose to have a school lunch at a cost of £2.58 per meal. This must be arranged in advance with the school office and payment made via Scopay.
5. Invoices for school meals will be sent out in the first week of each half term. Where meals are missed due to sickness or other absence, credit will be given against the next invoice. The school meals are freshly prepared every day on site by our cook (Herts Catering Ltd).
6. Ad hoc lunch club sessions can be booked if we have spaces available. These must be booked in advance with the school office.

Self-funded Additional hours

If you are eligible for the 30 hours free childcare (8.30am – 2.30pm every day) but you would like your child to be at Nursery for the full day (until 3.30pm), self-funding of an additional 5 hours per week is offered subject to availability. A charge of £7.50 per day is made for the additional one hour session each day (from 2.30-3.30pm).

If you are not eligible for the 30 hours free childcare but you would like your child to be at Nursery for 35 hours per week, self-funded additional hours are offered subject to availability. A charge of £25.00 per day is made for each self-funded additional session (8.30 – 11.30am or 12.30 – 3.30pm), and a further £7.50 for each Lunch Club session. These charges will be reviewed annually.

1. All additional sessions must be arranged and agreed in advance with the school. The school office can advise of availability.
2. Notice in writing must be given a minimum of four weeks before the end of the half term if the additional sessions are not required in the following half term.
3. Refunds and credits will not be given for non-attendance, unless approved by the Headteacher.

Payment of nursery fees

1. Payment of nursery additional hours, lunch club fees and dinners may be made by:
 - a. Scopay online payment system – you will be issued with login details at the beginning of the school year.
 - b. Childcare Vouchers
 - c. Tax-Free Childcare scheme
2. Additional sessions, lunch club sessions and dinners will be invoiced half termly in advance. For *ad hoc* sessions, payment in full will be required at the time of booking.
3. If payment is not received by the due date, a reminder letter will be sent out. If payment is still not received when requested, parents will be advised that their child will not be allowed to continue additional sessions or lunch club sessions until the payment is made.

If you pay using childcare vouchers or the tax-free childcare scheme, we do not always receive notification from the providers. Please send an email to the school office after payment has been made so we can check our bank statements and update your accounts accordingly.

30 hrs free childcare funding incl. how to register and check for eligibility

For details on how to register and check for eligibility for the 30 hours funding visit: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>.

At Merry Hill we will be offering 30 hours places on a strictly first come, first served basis for those who commit to using the full 30 hours at Merry Hill Infant and Nursery School. Once you have been formally offered a 30 hours place by the school, you will be sent a parent declaration form on which you will be asked for your verification code for 30 hours, parents' NI numbers and consent, etc.

The full 30 hour places hours at Merry Hill will be:

8.30am to 2.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

This does not include the final hour (2.30-3.30pm) which will be an additional cost as per terms and conditions.