



**“We Care.”**

# **Nursery Admissions Policy**

**Persons Responsible:** Scott Roche

**Policy review:** February 2024

**Review period:** Annually

**Next Review:** February 2025

**Principal:**

**Date: March 2024**

## **Admissions Policy Statement**

### **Introduction**

This document is a statement of the principles for admission of pre-school pupils to Hamstel Nursery. Hamstel Nursery provides wide ranging opportunities for children to reach their full potential within a welcoming, caring, safe, happy and supportive school community. The Nursery is fully accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures. Hamstel Nursery shares a site and other facilities with Hamstel Infant School.

### **Policy and Numbers to Admit:**

Hamstel Nursery admits children without reference to ability or aptitude.

Children who have turned three years old by August 31<sup>st</sup> will be offered a place to begin Nursery in September. Since September 2018 Hamstel Nursery have offered the new 30 hour funded places and a limited number of 15 hour funded places. Due to this flexibility in meeting demand numbers attending may vary from term to term and within year. The maximum number of children currently able to attend is up to 60 both in the morning and the afternoon.

### **When will my child start at Nursery?**

Hamstel Nursery has a three-term intake policy for Nursery admissions, depending on demand for places in September:

- September 2024 intake for children born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 and August 31<sup>st</sup> 2021
- January 2025 intake for children born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021
- April 2025 intake for children born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

The September 2024 intake will be the priority intake.

### **Our Offer**

- A high-quality learning environment for 3 and 4 year olds
- Rated **GOOD** by Ofsted
- Highly qualified and experienced staff
- Appropriate ratio of qualified adults to children, following Government guidelines
- Purpose built Nursery established on school site in 2004
- Fantastic learning resources and secure outdoor play areas
- Nutritious meals prepared daily by our in-house chef
- Great transition to our infant school, should you decide to stay at Hamstel beyond Nursery

### **The Nursery School Day**

**30 hour children** - Open from 9.00am to 3.00pm - Monday to Friday during term time

**15 hour children (Mornings only)** - Open from 8.30am to 11.30am Monday to Friday during term time

**15 hour children (Afternoons only)** - Open from 12.00pm to 3.00pm Monday to Friday during term time

### **Daily fees from September 2024:**

Core 30 hour Session – all day	9.00am - 3.00pm	£0	No meals included (30 hour funding)
Core 15 hour Session – mornings only	8.30am – 11.30am	£0	No meals included (15 hour funding)
Core 15 hour Session – afternoons only	12.00pm - 3.00pm	£0	No meals included (15 hour funding)

### **Additional Services:**

A polite reminder to parents/carers that funded hours are free provision and do not have any monetary value for parents. The Governments funding is not intended to cover the cost of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services. To access a funded place the following charges for additional services, if required, are:

**Additional Childcare Available In our Extended School Clubs – Monday to Friday during term time (do we allow nursery children to access immediately or is there a settling in period?)**

Short Nursery After School Session	3.00pm - 4.30pm	<b>£7</b>	No meals included. Held in School - booked via online payment system
Full Nursery After School Session	3.00pm – 5.45pm	<b>£11</b>	Tea included. Held in School - booked via online payment system
Breakfast Club Session	7.45am - 9.00am	<b>£3.50</b>	Held in school hall - booked via online payment system

If you experience difficulties meeting the cost of these additional services please call the main school office to make an appointment to speak to the Office Manager.

**Supporting parents with childcare costs**

Please visit <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> for further information to understand your options and which funding opportunities would best suit your family circumstances.

**Evidence of entitlement to 15 hours free childcare**

Parents are not required to provide evidence of 15 hours free childcare eligibility as it is based on the child's age. The birth certificate you provide is sufficient evidence of eligibility.

**Evidence of entitlement to 30 hours free childcare**

Places at Hamstel Nursery are offered to parents who are eligible for the Government's Extended Free Entitlement of 30 hours of free childcare in the first instance.

You will be asked to evidence your eligibility for this funding by providing your unique reference code when you apply for a place at Hamstel Infant School and Nursery.

A child's eligibility will be determined by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) for both the 30 hours free childcare place and Tax Free Childcare in one single application.

To **obtain your reference code**, parents must apply online by visiting [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk).

If you are eligible, you will receive an **11 digit code** for each child (multiple births such as twins are issued an individual code) which we will verify with Southend-on-Sea City Council. Once verified, your child's place can be confirmed for the coming funding period. The funding periods are:

Autumn	1 September to 31 December
Spring	1 January to 31 March
Summer	1 April to 31 August

Parents who require assistance to apply or do not have access to the internet can call the HMRC's Childcare Service helpline on telephone: **0300 123 4097**. If you disagree with the eligibility outcome there is a review and appeals process which is managed by HMRC.

**Reconfirming your entitlement to 30 hours free childcare**

**You will be prompted to reconfirm your eligibility details by text and/or email from HMRC every 3 months.**

If you do not reconfirm your eligibility, or your circumstances change, you will only be able to access the extended entitlement hours for a short time known as a 'Grace Period'. This period is determined by HMRC and varies depending on the date of application. If the Grace Period has expired and you have not met the eligibility criteria again, your child's place at Hamstel Nursery will be terminated with immediate effect. We may be able to offer you a 15 hour place should your circumstances change and you are no longer eligible for a 30 hour funded place, so please inform us of any changes in circumstances as soon as possible. Extended entitlement hours will also stop when your child reaches compulsory school age or when your child attends a Reception year place in a maintained school or academy.

**Items not included within funded Nursery Hours**

Extra-curricular activities and specific consumables will be charged for separately but with your consent, currently this is £5.00 per term.

Hot lunches may be purchased for an additional cost of £1.80 per day (available to book on our online payment system and must be paid for in advance).

Breakfast Club and After School Club sessions should be booked and paid for separately in advance, (see pricing list above).

A daily nutritious snack will be provided with supplementary fruit and/or vegetables provided free of charge which we receive through the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

**Please note – if required, nappies, wipes and barrier creams must be provided by you for your child/ren.**

### **Holidays and attendance:**

Hamstel Nursery is open term time only and provides for 38 weeks funded placements. The school term dates cover 39 weeks which includes the 5 training days for staff which are non-pupil days for children. Hamstel Nursery is not open on bank holidays.

If parents/carers take their child out of Hamstel Nursery during funded hours we are not required to provide alternative sessions.

At Hamstel Nursery we actively promote the value of regular attendance. Children who attend regularly learn more effectively and make friends more easily. As a parent or carer, it is your responsibility to ensure your child receives an education and that they attend regularly. Attendance is monitored weekly and we will contact you if your child's attendance is causing concern or if your child is frequently late arriving or being collected from nursery. Children are expected to attend for five sessions per week, one per day. This applies to both 15 hour and 30 hour eligibility funded children.

Attendance levels are required to be monitored, as such we are required to monitor your child's attendance and inform the Local Authority if the attendance falls below 90%. Please inform us of any reason your child is unable to attend, or if any assistance is required to ensure good attendance.

You must ensure your child attends Hamstel Nursery for the number of free hours you have requested and you will inform Hamstel Nursery of the reason for any absences. Hamstel Nursery is entitled to terminate this Agreement if your child does not attend regularly and you do not inform us of the reason for absence.

It is important you are clear that children will not be funded if they move settings during the funding period except for exceptional circumstances which **must** be agreed by SCC Head of Early Years.

If your child is unwell: Please notify the school as early as possible on the first day of absence, giving the reason for the absence and the date on which you expect your child to return. Absence can be reported by: Telephoning 01702 468461 and leaving a message on the answerphone, or by email: [office@his.porticoacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:office@his.porticoacademytrust.co.uk). The Nursery operates a 'first day call' system. If your child is not attending and we do not hear from you before 9.00am we will contact you. This is both costly and time consuming, however if we do not have a message about absence we will try to find out where your child is when they should be at nursery as this may raise a safeguarding issue.

If your child has an appointment: Please let us know in advance and bring the appointment card / letter / text message to the school office as evidence of the absence. We do ask that where possible, appointments are made outside of nursery hours. If you know you will arrive late please telephone the school office by 9.00am that morning to order a lunch for your child if required.

### **Behaviour Expectations**

As a Nursery we adopt a positive approach to behavioural issues. We actively model, teach and encourage positive attitudes at all times, we create a safe (environment) for children to air and share worries and explore issues. We follow the behaviour policy of Hamstel Infant School and Nursery. which can be found on our school website.

### **Home Visits**

It is our usual policy to carry out home visits to all families, which gives us invaluable information with regards to your child and is used to support them whilst at Nursery – being able to make references to favourite toys, pets and family members can create a very supportive link for the children. However, this may be subject to change and is under constant review

### **Transition**

A transition programme enables new entrants and their Parents and Carers to visit Hamstel Nursery prior to starting with us, if this is safe to do. Hamstel Nursery employs a Qualified Teacher and Early Years Key Workers who jointly oversee the Nursery supported by our Nursery Assistants. The children are allocated to 'key workers'; you will be encouraged to get to know your child's key worker. You will meet them following your first meeting on the home visit, or via telephone if home visits are not possible, as well as on a daily basis as you bring your child to Nursery and when collecting them.

## **Moving on**

At the end of their time in Nursery those children who have had a successful Reception Year Admission application through Southend-on-Sea City Council and will be moving on to a Reception class in Hamstel Infant School, will be grouped across the whole Nursery by gender, ability, behaviour / attitude, special need and friendship groups to enable a fair balance to the classes when they make their transition.

## **Admission Procedure**

Parents may ask at any time for their child's name to be put on our waiting list by completing a Nursery Registration Form, available on the school website [www.hamstelinfants.co.uk](http://www.hamstelinfants.co.uk)

- We will contact all parents and carers of children on our waiting in the first weeks of February 2024. Our first intake date is at the beginning of the academic year in September. You will be invited to a tour of Hamstel Nursery, whilst it is open, so that you are able to ascertain whether it is right for your child, ask any questions and pick up an Application Pack. For parents that are unable to attend the tour, application packs are available upon request from the school office.
- To apply for a place in Hamstel Nursery, please complete and return all documents listed within the Application Pack to our main Hamstel Infant School office. Applications will only be accepted with a fully completed application pack along with the child's original birth certificate and a completed funding form.
- Closing Date for applications for a Nursery place starting in September 2024 intake is 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- When we receive more applications than the places available, all applications received by the deadline will be considered using the oversubscription criteria only. The date of the application will not be taken into account when allocating places.
- A 15-hour child will be considered for a morning or an afternoon place, it is not currently possible to offer a mix of morning and afternoons. The decision whether to offer a morning or afternoon place lies with the Principal.
- All information given by the parent/carer will be regarded as confidential but will be made available to those considering the application.
- Following considerations of applications parents will be informed as soon as possible after the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

***Please note: Admission to Hamstel Nursery does not guarantee automatic admission to Hamstel Infant School Reception year and a separate application would need to be made for a Reception class through Southend City Council Local Authority's Single Application Form (SAF).***

## **Oversubscription**

If at the closing date for applications, there are not enough places for all those who have expressed a wish to have their child admitted to Hamstel Nursery, places will be allocated using the following criteria:

1. Children, who at the closing date for admission applications, are cared for by a Local Authority ('Looked After Children' (LAC) will have the highest priority)
2. Children who require 30 hour funded places who live in the catchment area served by the school and who have an older sibling attending either Hamstel Infant or Hamstel Junior Schools. (The address must be the child's primary residence; parents may be asked to provide documentary evidence with regard to residency).
3. Children who require 30 hour funded places who live in the catchment area served by the school.
4. Children who require 30 hour funded places who live outside the catchment area served by the school and who have an older sibling attending either Hamstel Infant or Hamstel Junior Schools.
5. Children who require 30 hour funded places who live outside the catchment area served by the school.
6. Children who require 15 hour funded places who live in the catchment area served by the school and who have an older sibling attending either Hamstel Infant or Hamstel Junior Schools. (The address must be the child's primary residence; parents may be asked to provide documentary evidence with regard to residency).
7. Children who require 15 hour funded places who live in the catchment area served by the school.
8. Children who require 15 hour funded places who live outside the catchment area served by the school and who have an older sibling attending either Hamstel Infant or Hamstel Junior Schools.

9. Children who require 15 hour funded places who live outside the catchment area served by the school.

### **Notes**

1. In the event of over-subscription in any one category the older child will be given preference. If there is no difference in age then "straight line" distance will be used to measure the distance between the child's home and the main entrance to the school. Those living nearest will be accorded the highest priority.

2. A sibling is a brother or sister, half-brother or half-sister, step-brother or step-sister, adopted brother or sister, living at the same address who attends the school at the time of application with a reasonable expectation that he or she will still be attending at the time of the proposed admission. In the exceptional situation where one twin or one or two triplets are refused a place, parents will be asked which child should be offered the place.

### **Appeals**

The Hamstel Infant School and Nursery Complaints Policy sets out how parents can make a complaint if they are unhappy with the admissions process or the failure to offer a place. Details can be provided to parents/carers so that any complaint can be dealt with under the terms of the schools agreed Complaints Policy. The admission of Nursery aged children is not subject to the Schools Admissions Code, but natural justice must prevail.

### **Rules**

All rules and regulations for the Nursery are in line with Hamstel Infant School and Nursery's policies and procedures. All policies are available by request from the school office to view or can be found on the schools website at: [www.hamstelinfants.co.uk](http://www.hamstelinfants.co.uk).

### **Emergency Closure of Nursery**

In the event of extreme weather or any other event which necessitates an emergency closure of Hamstel Nursery we will contact you as soon as possible by email to the Priority 1 contact listed on your Registration Form (closure notices will also be posted on our website and may also be broadcast on local radio stations).

### **Training days**

During each academic year there will be five planned training days that will require closure of the Nursery. Parents/Carers will be given at least a half terms' notice of any planned training day. These dates can also be found on the school website.

### **Cancellation / Termination of the Contract:**

If you wish to withdraw your child from Hamstel Nursery we require one calendar months' notice in writing. Hamstel Nursery reserves the right to terminate a child's place with immediate effect if a serious breach of these Terms and Conditions occurs or if the termination of a place is considered by Hamstel Nursery, at its absolute discretion, to be in the best interests of Hamstel Nursery and/or the continuing welfare of the other children or staff at Hamstel Nursery.

## Appendices

### □ **3 & 4 year old age criteria**

If your child's birthday falls between:-

1st April – 31 August funding starts in the Autumn period from September.

1st September – 31 December funding starts in the Spring period from January 1st January – 31

March funding starts in the Summer period from April.

### □ **Extended free childcare (an additional 15 hours up to 30 hours)**

For eligibility criteria please access <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>. The age criteria is the same as for the universal entitlement.

**A strict time limit applies to be able to register for this service. If you do not apply for extended hours by the deadlines below we will not be able to offer extended free hours until the next funding period.**

The cut off dates are:

<u>Autumn period</u>	<u>31 August</u>
<u>Spring period</u>	<u>31 December</u>
<u>Summer period</u>	<u>31 March</u>

The process for parents to access the extended funding *includes the 11 digit eligibility code for the child, seeing the child's birth certificate and parent's National Insurance number.*

We seek to remind parents that this process needs to be reconfirmed every three months from the date that they registered and **it is the parents' responsibility to reconfirm eligibility.**

### **What is the deadline for 30 hours free childcare? When to apply?**

<b>When your child turns 3</b>	<b>When they can get 30 hours from</b>	<b>Recommended time to apply</b>
1 September to <b>31 December</b>	1 January	15 October to 30 November
1 January to 31 March	1 April	15 January to 28 February
1 April to 31 August	1 September	15 June to 31 July

### **What if I miss the reconfirmation deadline?**

Your eligibility for Tax-Free Childcare and/or 30 hours funded childcare will end if you miss the reconfirmation deadline. You'll get a message to confirm that:

- if your child receives 30 hours funded childcare, you'll be able to keep your childcare place for a grace period. Your childcare provider can tell you how long this will last. A grace period will always end at the end of a term. The grace period only applies if your child is already in a 30 hours place when you fall out of eligibility

If you don't reconfirm on time, you'll need to log in to your childcare account to reconfirm your eligibility within the next entitlement period.