Ashmead Primary School

Nursery Admissions Policy

Approved by C&A committee May 2026

Due for review in May 2028

1. Aims

Our aims are:

1.1 To ensure access and entitlement to the benefits of high quality child centred nursery education on a fair and equitable basis

1.2 To establish an admissions policy governed by clearly defined criteria that may be articulated to parents and other professionals

1.3 To provide high quality child centred nursery education for children and families in our community

2. Understanding Ashmead Primary School

2.1 All children who intend to take up a place at our nursery will be offered a home visit from two of the nursery staff. These visits will take place soon before the child is due to start. This visit is a chance for parents to find out information and ask any questions regarding this important phase of their child's life.

2.2 To make the transition easier for the children, they will be staggered into the nursery in small groups. This is usually allocated by the child's age and those with siblings at the school will often start earlier. Therefore at each intake point (i.e. September or January) there will be a window of 'settling in' time allocated to ensure all new starters (and their parents/carers) are supported in this new and sometimes challenging transition.

2.3 For families that are entitled to the universal offer of 15 hours free childcare, we offer parents the option to opt for extra 'top up' sessions to increase their child's hours to full time, after the initial settling in period, (**see below point 6**)

3. Nursery Session – timings and options

3.1 Current Nursery Options:

15 hours funding (AM): 9:00am – 12:00pm
15 hours funding (PM): 12:30pm – 3:30pm
30 hours funding: 9.30am – 3.30pm
32.5 hours - full time/paid top up: 9:00am – 3:30pm
A full time (32.5 hour) place can be taken if parents choose to 'top up' a funded 15-hour or 30-hour place.

4. Criteria for admission to the nursery

4.1 The nursery at Ashmead currently offers 26 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) places based on 2 sessions per day: up to 26 children in the morning and up to 26 children in the afternoon. However, this number can increase if we have demand and the staffing capacity to offer more places, whilst still staying within the legal EYFS ratios. Due to staffing ratios over the lunch period full time/30-hour places are capped at 24 children. The government funds all children for 15 hours a week from the term after their third birthday. Working parents might be entitled to a 30-hour funded nursery place – see the website Best Start in Life to check eligibility: https://beststartinlife.gov.uk/

4.2 A period of three terms is regarded as the minimum time that children should spend in nursery, and the maximum is five terms.

4.3 Where space is available, pupils will be admitted to the Nursery the term after they become 3. Pupils born on or before 31st August in the relevant year will be admitted in the Autumn Term. If spaces in nursery become available then the school will offer a January intake for pupils born on or before 31st December.

4.4 The school will consider the intake of an Easter cohort of children if 3 or more spaces in the nursery are available at this time. We strongly believe that children need time and space to settle effectively but cannot do this successfully if there is not a sufficiently sized peer group for them to

settle with. If we believe that the drawbacks of starting fewer than 3 children at this point in the academic year outweigh the benefits, we would recommend that the parent apply for a September place to allow their child to start with a larger cohort of children who are at the same stage. This allows the nursery to tailor the settling in period more effectively to the child's individual needs.

4.5 Ashmead will offer children a place in the nursery according to the criteria in the following order of priority (as outlined by LA):

- *Children in the care of a Local Authority (Looked after children)*
- *Children with a particular compelling educational and/or social or medial need as referred by a professional (e.g. social worker, speech therapist, health visitor, doctor etc.)*
- *Children who have an older sibling attending Ashmead Primary School in the September of the year of their admission.*
- *Children who live closest to the school.*

Within the above criteria, each application is always considered very carefully on its individual needs.

5. Allocation of preferred sessions

5.1 For part time (15-hour) places, parents will be asked to indicate whether a morning or afternoon nursery session is preferred. Account will be taken of any preferences for session options expressed by parents, but places will be allocated subject to availability, with consideration taken of the needs of the children, and a particular session is not guaranteed. It is at the school's discretion to allocate places in order to best provide a balance of need and ages within the two sessions to ensure quality provision is maintained.

5.2 At Ashmead we strongly believe in the importance of creating routines that support children to develop to their full potential. It is therefore our policy that once a morning or afternoon place has been offered and accepted, your child will remain part of this session (AM or PM) for the entirety of their time at Ashmead Nursery (unless they transition to a full-time place). Not only does this help build children's confidence in the daily routine but it also allows them to develop strong bonds with the adults and children in their session.

6. 'Topped Up' Nursery Hours

6.1 There are up to 24 full time/30-hour places available.

6.2 For a child entitled to 15 hours free provision per week/3 hours per day, the top-up costs will include provision for 3 ½ extra hours per day.

6.3 For a child entitled to 30 hours free provision per week/6 hours per day, the top up fees will cover the period at the beginning of the school day 9.00 – 9.30am (30 minutes per day).

6.4 Information about top up fee amounts is available from the school office.

6.5 Each term parents are financially responsible for paying the top up fees whether the child attends or not, including any term time holidays taken. If a child leaves mid term, top up fees are due until the end of that term.

6.6 The amount charged for the top up fee is based on/matches the hourly funding rate we get from Lewisham.

7. Transfer from Nursery into Ashmead School

7.1 If a child is given a place at Ashmead Nursery it does not mean that they will automatically be allocated a place to a Reception class. The LA manages this and all applications need to be made through Lewisham.

7.2 Nursery staff will liaise closely with colleagues in Reception classes, under the guidance of the Lower School Lead, to plan for a smooth transition to their allocated school. Nursery staff will send on reports and other agreed records to the school admitting the pupil as appropriate.