

Children & Family Services Admissions Policy

Reference: CF02

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CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Children and Family Services at Windmill Hill City Farm aim to be fully inclusive to all families. Our aim is to provide a quality service to the families in our community.

Nursery Allocations – criteria used (for children aged 9 months – 5 years):

- We will give priority to any child/family that has come through a referral system and is in need of the service which has been recognised by another professional from a recognised agency.
(20 points)
- Priority will be given to families that require fuller sessions in the Nursery (8 hours or more per day) for 3 or more days per week. i.e. 8.00am/9.00am– 5.00pm/6.00pm. **Note:** All families must access a minimum of 3 sessions per week; sessions being 3 mornings or 3 afternoons or 1 ½ days (10 points)
- Priority will be given if a child is a registered user currently accessing either Nursery or Farm Adventurers sessions and is also on the waiting list for the other (10 points)
- If a family currently has a sibling in the setting we will endeavour to offer a place to their other child/ren. (5 points)
- We will aim to support all Windmill Hill City Farm staff in accommodating their childcare needs to allow them to continue in their work commitments on the Farm. (5 points)
- It is our aim to support families in the local community who are living or working within our area of benefit (please see map). (5 points)

Once the above criteria have been followed, we will then place the application form on the waiting list according to your requested start date. We then look at the length of time that the application has been on the

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waiting list and the family that has been waiting the longest will be offered a place.

Please note that from time-to-time exceptional circumstances may arise with regards to the organisation's operational needs. On these occasions, priorities may need to be adjusted to support key staff with their childcare needs.

Allocations procedure (internal movements):

- Allocations will be reviewed once a month to allow staff to look at the internal movements from room to room and then fill any vacant gaps.
- If a child's birthday falls two weeks after the allocations date that month they will be included in the move to the next room if the required sessions are available. Please note that if you require a change to your current sessions you must fill in the appropriate paperwork as soon as you can as we otherwise may not be able to support your request.

Allocations procedure (external/new families joining us):

- When a place becomes available, we will contact you using the details that you have provided on the on-line waiting list application. An offer of a place will always be confirmed by an e-mail so that there is a visible trail of all correspondences.
- All attempts to contact you will be noted on your database record. If you have made no contact with us by the time specified following the messages left and/or the e-mails sent, the place will be allocated to the next family on the waiting list.

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Farm Adventurers is an extension of our services and offers outdoor experiences to children. Our aim is to provide to the families in our community a quality outdoor service utilising the City Farm's unique environment.

Farm Adventurers Allocations – criteria used (for children aged 2 – 5 years):

We will give priority to any child/family that has come through a referral system and is in need of the service which has been recognised by another professional from a recognised agency. (20 points)

- Requesting 4 Farm Adventurers sessions or more per week. **Note:** All families must access a minimum of 3 sessions per week (10 points)
- Priority will be given if a child is a registered user and accessing sessions at our Nursery. (10 points)
- If a family already has a sibling that is currently accessing any of the Children and Family Services (we will endeavour to offer a place to their other child or children). (5 points)
- We will aim to support all Windmill Hill City Farm staff in accommodating their childcare needs to allow them to continue in their work commitments on the Farm. (5 points)
- It is our aim to support families in the local community who are living or working within our area of benefit (please see map). (5 points)

Once the above criteria have been followed we will then look at the length of time that the application has been on the waiting list and the family that has been waiting the longest will then be offered a space.

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Information for both Nursery and Farm Adventurers:

- It is compulsory, that on the offer of a place the family becomes a member of the Farm; Farm membership is free. Families offered a place in the Nursery or Farm Adventurers will be sent a link to the membership online application form or can request one, if not received.
- The £10.00 administration fee for the online waiting list application is non-refundable and will not be deducted from the deposit or any fees.
- Any fee paying/part fee paying family accepting a place will need to pay a deposit within two weeks of the written offer being made. The deposit will be the equivalent of four weeks fees of the booked/agreed sessions. When your child is due to leave this amount can be deducted from your final payment or returned to you once the account is clear. Refunds will be made by cheque or a BACS payment. **Please note that deposits cannot be paid via childcare vouchers/tax free childcare** due to the tax relief parents/carers receive resulting in us being unable to refund the deposit amount back to you directly when your child leaves (if there are no fees owing).
- The maximum time that we can hold an offered place for any new family joining us will be **eight weeks** providing a deposit is paid to secure the place within two weeks of the written offer being made. Non-payment of the deposit within the required timescale will result in the offer being withdrawn.
- Once the deposit has been paid, if the family then decides to decline the place the deposit will **not** be refundable as it may have prevented another family accessing that place.
- In the **Nursery** we will offer a maximum of three free settling in sessions per child accumulating to no more than five hours. The times of these will be agreed by the Room Leader and the parent/carers. Please note that you will be charged for any meals that are part of a settling in session.

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- In **Farm Adventurers** we will offer three hours of free settling in sessions; these will be split over two sessions and the parent will be expected to stay with their child for the first half an hour in the first session. The date of these will be agreed by the Farm Adventurers Co-ordinator and the parent/carer.
- As we allocate places based on a points system determined by how many sessions you have requested, sessions cannot be reduced for the first three months. Sessions can never be reduced to less than the minimum, 3 sessions per week.
- If at any point your circumstances change, and this affects the points that were originally allocated to you, the changes will have to be taken into consideration and the points adjusted accordingly. This may affect the offer of a place if sessions have been reduced.

Allocations of sessions:

- A minimum of three sessions must be taken up by each family per child in either service. This allows the child to build positive relationships with their key person and peers and also enables them to feel secure in the Nursery environment. Please note that the three sessions cannot be mixed between the Nursery and Farm Adventurers.
- If after the three months you require to change your agreed permanent sessions, please fill in the appropriate form. One month's notice is required for any permanent changes; changes may not be granted without this notice. If the change is a decrease to sessions and four week's notice is not received, the balance of the notice period will remain chargeable.
- For any agreed permanent increase in sessions an additional deposit for the extra sessions will be required. The deposit will be the equivalent of four weeks fees of the requested additional session. This will need to be paid within two weeks of the requested increase or before the new sessions commence, whichever comes earliest.

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- All permanent change requests have to be submitted by the 10th of every month to start at the beginning or within the following month (or after this if the request is made further in advance), e.g. requests submitted by 10th August will be implemented during September or after depending on the request date made.
- Requests submitted after the 10th of the month will not be reviewed until the following month, and implemented the month after, e.g. requests submitted 11th of August or after will be reviewed in September and implemented in October or after depending on the request date made.
- You will not be able to bridge gaps with temporary additional sessions while waiting for a permanent change to be implemented.
- At our setting all three and four year olds are entitled, from the term following their 3rd birthday, to 12 'free' hours per week (otherwise known as universal hours) for 47.5 weeks per year. Some families (who have applied through the HMRC website) will also be entitled to extended hours which amount to an additional 12 hours per week for 47.5 weeks of the year. We expect all parents/carers who will be accessing more than one setting to pro rata both the universal and extended hours fairly across the settings that they use. This will allow the settings to receive an equal share of funding to cover your childcare costs. Please see 3 & 4 year funding information for further guidance.
- Funding is available for 47.5 weeks per year, leaving 4.5 weeks where funding does not apply. Most of the non-funded days will be covered by Bank holidays and service closure days (see calendar/timetable for specific dates) however the remaining non-funded days will normally be allocated to a period of 6-7 days in August each year. These dates will be advised as soon as they are available.
- If your child is leaving us to move onto school they can continue to use their Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) funding until the end of August (with the exception of any non-funded days/periods). After this time our priority will be to accommodate the new intake of children starting with us. If you require sessions for your child after the

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end of August (for example, due to a staggered intake or late start into school) you should make a written request one month ahead of the sessions you are requesting. Where possible we will accommodate your request. Where we are unable to accommodate your child, we will let you know as soon as we can to support you in making alternative childcare arrangements.

Please Note:

- If we are able to accommodate you and your child in accessing sessions to support the staggered school intake you **will not** receive the FEEE funding after 31st August as this will be allocated to the school that your child will be attending, therefore you will be required to pay the current session rates in full.
- If your child is leaving us to go to Nursery School/Pre-school before they start school, you will need to notify us of which setting you will be using the funding. If you wish to split the funding, you will need to inform us so that you can be advised accordingly of how this works and what paperwork needs to be filled in so we can ensure the correct amount of funding is claimed. **Please note that changes to funding can only be made at the start of each term.**
- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):** GDPR puts in place safeguards regarding the use of personal data by organisations. The Act gives rights to those about whom data is held. This includes the right to know the types of data being held, why it is being held, and to whom it may be communicated. Please refer to our Data Protection and Information Management Policy for further detail.

Where possible we will aim to be as flexible as possible taking into consideration all individual child/family needs. Please remember that we can only meet your childcare needs if there are sessions available. This policy works in partnership with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and the Fee Paying Policy

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This policy is reviewed annually or as when necessary and therefore can change at any time.

Windmill Hill City Farm Area of Benefit

This map can also be viewed online: <http://tinyurl.com/nyownur>

