

ADMISSIONS POLICY	
Reference: CF02	Effective date: 31.08.2012
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Last revision: October 2023	Revision date: October 2024



## ADMISSIONS POLICY

**Windmill Hill City Farm Children and Family Services aim to ensure our services are available to all members of our community and that we have in place a fair process for the allocation of places within our Nursery and Farm Adventurers.**

### Applying for our waiting list

To ensure places are allocated through a fair system, we have a waiting list and point system in place for all families applying for place with us, in either Nursery and/or Farm Adventurers.

- Each service (Nursery and Farm Adventurers) operates their own waiting list and is broken down into child/ren's ages, requested start date, date applied and allocated points.
- A £20.00 administration fee is charged for every waiting list application, this is non-refundable and is used to help cover the administration costs of managing the waiting lists; it should not be seen as a guarantee of, or a deposit on, a place.
- For both Nursery and Farm Adventurers there is a minimum requirement of three sessions (1 session = 1 half day) per week. Please note that the three sessions cannot be mixed between the Nursery and Farm Adventurers.

### Nursery Allocations – point system criteria for children aged 9 months - 5 years.

- We will give priority to any child/family that has come through a referral system, and which has been recognised by another professional from a recognised agency as needing a service. (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. (10 points)
- Priority will be given if a child is a registered user currently accessing Farm Adventurers sessions and is also on the waiting list for nursery (10 points)
- If a family currently has a sibling in the setting, that is currently accessing any of the Children and Family Services 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)

### Farm Adventurers Allocations – point system criteria for children aged 2 - 5 years.

- We will give priority to any child/family that has come through a referral system, and which has been recognised by another professional from a recognised agency as needing a service. (20 points)
- Priority will be given to families that require four or more Farm Adventurers sessions or more per week.
- Priority will be given if a child is a registered user currently accessing Nursery sessions and is also on the waiting list for Farm Adventurers (10 points)
- If a family currently has a sibling in the setting, that is currently accessing any of the Children and Family Services we will endeavour to offer a place to their other child/ren. (5 points)

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- 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)

Please note, on occasions 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 of places

#### Offering of places

When offering a place in Nursery and/or Farm Adventurers, we will follow the process below:

- When allocating places in either Nursery or Farm Adventurers, child/ren's ages, requested start date, date applied and allocated points will be taken into consideration.
- If we can offer you a place, we will contact you, usually by email, using the details that you have provided on the waiting list application, explaining we are able to offer you a place and when from with a cut-off date to respond by telling us that you are interested in place, are declining the place and would like to come off the waiting list or are declining the place and would like to stay on the waiting list.
- If we do not hear from you by the cut-off date, we will make further contact by email and/or phone.
- We will keep a record of all attempts to contact you. 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.
- If we do make contact and you are interested in the place, we will confirm availability of sessions and a provisional start date.
- 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.
- 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.

#### Confirmation of place

Our responsibilities when confirming a place:

We will send you a confirmation of place via email, this will include:

- Agreed sessions and start date.
- Calculation of the deposit amount, payment details and deadline to pay.
- Link to admissions form, with a deadline to complete and return to us.
- Information about Farm membership. Farm membership is free, and it is compulsory, that on the offer of a place, the family becomes a member of the Farm and remains a member for the duration their child attends our setting.

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### Deposits

- 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 to four weeks fees of the booked/agreed sessions, including meal and snack charges where applicable.
- 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 and there are no fees owing. Refunds will be made by 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)
- 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.

### Settling in sessions

- In **Nursery** we will offer a maximum of three free settling in sessions per child accumulating to no more than five hours. We expect the parent to stay with their child for the first half an hour in the first session. The times of these will be agreed by the Room Leader and the parent/carer. Please note that you will be charged for any meals that are part of a settling in sessions.
- In **Farm Adventurers** we will offer four hours of free settling in sessions; these will be split over two sessions. We expect the parent to stay with their child for the first half an hour in the first session. The dates of these will be agreed by the Farm Adventurers Leader and the parent/carer.

### Changes to sessions

- 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.
- If after the three months you require to change your agreed permanent sessions, please request, and 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 weeks' 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, including meal charges (where applicable) 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. Sessions can never be reduced to less than the minimum, 3 sessions, per week for either service.

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- All permanent change requests must be submitted by the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> August will be implemented during September or after depending on the request date made.
- Requests submitted after the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month will not be reviewed until the following month, and implemented the month after, e.g., requests submitted 21<sup>st</sup> 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.
- If a day or session has been requested that is not available, we will make a note of this on our system and advise when this becomes available, giving as much notice as possible. Please note there is no guarantee of a session becoming available.

### Funding for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds

- Some families may be eligible for two-year-old funding the term after your child's second birthday, further information can be found at [Free early education for two year olds \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/free-early-education-for-two-year-olds). If eligible you will receive 12 hours of funding per week.
- At our setting all three- and four-year-olds are entitled, from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 be entitled to extended hours which is 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. The non-funded days will be covered by Bank holidays, service closure days and non-funded days/weeks (these will usually take place in August) (see calendar/timetable for specific dates). Please refer to the 3- & 4-year funding information for further guidance.
- 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 (except for 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 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.
- If we can accommodate you and your child in accessing sessions to support the staggered school intake you **will not** receive the FEEE funding after 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

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- If your child is leaving us to go to Nursery School/Pre-school before they start school, you will need to notify us at 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.

### Windmill Hill City Farm Area of Benefit

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



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

This policy works in partnership with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and the Fee Paying Policy