



# Lanterns Nursery School Admissions Policy

Date ratified: June 2026

Period: June 2026 – June 27

Headteacher Signature: *Lynsay Falkingham*

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Chair of Governors Signature: *Briony Alder*

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Annual Review: June 2026

## Introduction and Accountability

Hampshire County Council (the Local Authority) is responsible for admissions to community and voluntary controlled nursery schools. This policy determines how places are allocated at Lanterns Nursery School. Please note that parents do not have a statutory right to appeal to an independent panel regarding nursery admissions. Because of this, our Headteacher ensures all admission decisions are entirely fair, transparent, and justified using the criteria outlined below, while taking our school's specific circumstances into account.

## Government Funded Childcare Entitlement

We offer a variety of government-funded hours depending on your child's age and your family's circumstances. Funded places become active from the start of the term *following* your child's relevant milestone date. These key qualifying dates are 1 January, 1 April, and 1 September.

We deliver these entitlements on a flexible basis. Our specific patterns of attendance, sessions, and delivery models are fully outlined in our current Terms and Conditions.

### Universal Funding (All Families)

- 3 and 4-Year-Olds: All children aged 3 and 4 are automatically entitled to 15 hours of universal free childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year (term-time). If available, parents can choose to stretch fewer hours over more weeks of the year.

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### Funding for Families Receiving Support / Disadvantaged Criteria

- 2-Year-Olds: Children who meet the eligibility criteria for disadvantaged 2-year-old funding are entitled to up to 15 hours of free early learning and care per week for 38 weeks a year. Parents must provide their official eligibility code to the school. *(Full eligibility criteria can be found on the Hampshire County Council website).*

### Funding for Eligible Working Parents

Working parents who secure an eligibility code from HMRC within the required timeframe can access the following expanded entitlements:

- 9 Months to 4 Years Old (Up to 30 Hours): Eligible working parents of children aged from 9 months up to 4 years old can claim up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week (for 38 weeks of the year)

## **Admissions Procedures for Lanterns Nursery School**

### **Our Capacity and Opening Hours**

Lanterns Nursery School can accommodate a maximum of 79 children at any one time during the Autumn term, depending on local demand and staff recruitment.

Our standard opening hours during term-time are:

- Under 2s: 7:30am to 5:30pm
- Ages 2 and above: 7:30am to 6:00pm (5pm on a Friday)

### **How to Apply**

You are welcome to apply for a place at any time. Application forms are available upon request directly from the school office or can be downloaded from our website. To help us plan our nursery places effectively, we prefer that you complete and submit your application as soon as possible.

Please Note: Local authorities and nursery schools frequently adapt to updated Department for Education (DfE) operational guidance regarding funding expansions. If our application forms are undergoing updates to reflect the newest entitlements, our administration team will guide you through the current availability.

### **Allocation of Places and Timelines**

Where we receive more applications than we have places available, our oversubscription admission criteria will be used to prioritise places.

We will notify you of the outcome of your application by letter, aiming to do so at least half a term before your requested start date. Typically, outcomes are sent out by the end of October, February, and May.

- Accepting a Place: If your child is offered a place, you must confirm your acceptance in writing to the school within two weeks. If we do not receive your confirmation, we may have to release the place to another child on our waiting list.

The final decision regarding when a child is admitted, the total number of hours they can attend, and their specific pattern of weekly sessions rests with the Headteacher.

### **Admission criteria**

All applications will be considered in accordance with the following criteria, set out in priority order. Length of time on *any* waiting list will not be taken into account.

Categories B & C contain examples of both special educational and social need.

- A** Looked after children or children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption order, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order. [A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 or section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976. Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).] Previously looked after children also includes those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result

of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

- B** Children for whom there is a recommendation for nursery education by a health professional, social worker, educational psychologist, area Inco, outreach worker or education welfare officer based on the child's special educational needs.

Examples of special educational needs, in no order of priority, might include:

- emotional and behavioural problems
- hearing difficulties
- lack of personal interaction and stimulation
- physical disabilities
- speech and language problems
- visual difficulties

Placement of children within this category will take into account the suitability of the placement for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child

And whether the attendance of the child will be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources

This decision will be made by the governing body taking advice from the Headteacher, SENDCo and Senior Early Years Practitioners

- C** Children with social needs, based on information gained by the headteacher, as part of the application procedure.

Examples of social needs, in no order of priority, might include:

- children who were multiple births (twins, triplets)
- a child with a confined play space
- a child from a one parent family
- a child in a large family (four or more children)
- a child with parents under 20 years of age
- a child in sole care of grandparents
- a child who has two or more siblings under 4 years of age
- a child on the child protection register
- a child of parents with disabilities
- a child with English as an additional language
- a child who is eligible for the 2 yr old early education funding
- a child who is eligible for the 15 or 30 hours free childcare for working families, subject to confirmation of the eligibility from the DfE. (Families who meet the 30 hours criteria and have moved from government unemployment benefits to employment or low income will be given higher priority than those currently in employment).

- D** Children with a brother or sister (including children living as siblings in the same family unit) with disabilities (as in A) that require a significant amount of additional support.

- E** Children who have a brother or sister (including children living as siblings in the same family unit) on the school roll who will still be attending Lanterns Nursery School, or a linked junior school, the following academic year.

- F** Children of staff who have, (1) been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, or (2) have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

## G Other children.

### Tie-breaker

If the nursery is oversubscribed **within** any of the above categories (A –F), children due to start school in the next academic year will be given priority. Then preference will be given to children who live closest to the school measured by straight line from school to the entrance of the property. Hampshire County Council's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will be used to confirm the order of applicants.

### Other information

#### 1. Applying for a place in Year R (FS2)

2. Admission to a reception class will be in accordance with the County Council's Admissions Policy for community and controlled infant and primary schools. **Admission to a nursery unit/school does not constitute any right of entry to the nearest local school, and places will be allocated according to that school's admissions policy.** Parents have the right not to send their children to school until the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. Only in exceptional circumstances can children remain in the nursery beyond the normal admission date for reception classes (i.e. the September of the school year concerned). For those parents who have chosen for their child to decelerate their child's admission to school for a whole year or defer their child's start at school until later in the academic year, there is no guarantee that there will still be a place available in the nursery school for them. Please discuss such plans with us as soon as possible. **Schools and those with parental responsibility for a child:** (Guidance from the Department for Education)

The definition of a *parent* in the Education Acts includes:

- all natural parents whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has *parental responsibility* for a child or young person; and
- any person who, although not a natural parent, *has care* of a child or young person.

Having *parental responsibility* means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. It is defined by the Children Act 1989. It gives parents the legal right to make decisions and choices, such as where the child will live or go to school etc. If the parents were married to each other at the time of a child's birth, or if they have been married to each other at any time since the child's conception, they each have parental responsibility.

Having *care* of a child or young person means that a person who the child lives with, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.