



## Seedlings Preschool Admissions Policy

### Introduction

Seedlings Preschool is part of Forest & Sandridge CE Primary School. Children who attend the Preschool will be fully involved in our school for their Preschool year/s. They will be introduced to our school Christian Values and will learn about expectations regarding demonstrating these values to one another and expectations of behaviour. Each child will be valued and cared for as a unique individual. We aim to make Seedlings Preschool accessible to and inclusive of children and families from all sections of the local community through open and fair procedures.

Seedlings is a Preschool for 3 and 4 year olds only. It runs during school hours (9.00am – 3.00pm) and in term time only. We can signpost you to other childcare providers for before and after preschool childcare and for holiday childcare.

### School Admissions

Attendance at Seedlings Preschool DOES NOT in any way guarantee you a school place at Forest & Sandridge School nor does it give you priority over other children who do not attend Seedlings. An admission application for a school place must be completed in the normal way and submitted to Wiltshire Council by the deadline date. Seedlings staff will remind parents to complete this form and will be happy to help you with it if you wish. Further details can be seen in our school Admission Policy on our website.

### Key Facts

- In Wiltshire, an academic year is from 1st September to 31st August. Children usually start primary school in a reception class in the September of the academic year in which they turn 5.
- Seedlings Preschool provides care for children aged 3 years to almost 5.
- Free Early Education (free entitlement) funding is provided from the Government via the Council. Every child is eligible for up to 15 hours funded per week for 38 weeks a year from the term after their child turns 3.
- At Seedlings preschool a parent may apply for as many hours as they choose (up to 30) for their child. At the deadline date all applications will be considered and up to 15 hours will be allocated to as many children as possible in the first instance. If there are spaces available these will be allocated after this. Hours attended over the Funded 15 will be paid for by the parents.
- By government policy, you can share your free entitlement hours between two settings (which can mean Seedlings and another preschool, day nursery, maintained nursery school or class, or registered childminder).

### Procedures

In order to achieve our aim to make our Preschool accessible and inclusive to all families from our local community, we operate the following admissions policy:

1. We advertise the Preschool on our school website, through banners in the local area and through Wiltshire Local Authority. Leaflets are distributed to all local Children's Centres.
2. We are sympathetic to the need for emergency admissions (referred via social care or health visitor where appropriate) if we have space available.
3. Our whole school building, including Seedlings, is designed to make it accessible to children and families with disabilities.
4. We monitor the gender and ethnic background of children joining the group to ensure that no accidental discrimination is taking place.

5. Our key school policies, including equality of opportunity and racial equality, are available on our school website. All these key policies related to Seedlings as well as the rest of the school.
6. As far as possible we are flexible about attendance patterns in order to accommodate the needs of individual families, for example in the number and combination of hours they attend each week.

### **Preschool Admissions**

1. Entry to Seedlings occurs three times a year in September, January and April (sometimes March depending on Easter dates). Children are eligible for a place from the 'old' term (September, January, April) after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. This means some children will be eligible for five terms in Preschool, some for four and some for three.
2. If a child has not secured a place at Seedlings and is due to start school the following academic year (ie. The coming September), they will be prioritised on our waiting list. This is in order to provide as many children as possible with a full year at Preschool prior to starting school. If further places are available these will be allocated to children taking the criteria below into consideration. These children will then be prioritised for a place the following academic year (as above).
3. In addition our policy may take into account the following:
  - particular circumstances affecting the family
  - referrals from outside agencies
  - siblings previously or already attending the Preschool or Forest & Sandridge School
  - the date of birth of the child
  - the vicinity of the home to Forest & Sandridge School and Seedlings Preschool
4. The deadline for applications for September places will always be the second Friday in May for September admissions (i.e. Friday 13th May 2016 is the deadline for admissions for the school year starting September 2016). Applications are, however, welcomed at any time. Applications for January or April starters will be considered and any available places allocated in November and February respectively.
5. Application forms should be completed in full and submitted to the school office by the deadline date. Application forms which are missing information will be returned to the parent for completion before they are considered.
6. Parents are asked to specify preferred days and hours and give reasons for requests if appropriate. The parent must book a minimum of 6 hours for each child. When the deadline arrives allocation of spaces will be made to as many children as possible. We will endeavour to allocate as many children as possible for 15 hours. Additional hours will be allocated if they are available.
7. January and April starters will be offered a place if there are any spaces at those times. If there are no spaces in January or April, they will be prioritised for a place for the following September ensuring one full year in Preschool before they start school.
8. Personal details about children and additional family information will be requested when a place has been secured. This will include needing to see the child's birth certificate or passport in order to validate their identity prior to starting. A child will not be admitted to Seedlings without this documentation.

### **Notification of Places**

1. Parents may apply for a place at Seedlings at any time from February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 at Forest & Sandridge School office. Application forms are available on our school website (Class pages, Seedlings) or from our school office. Further information is also available on our website or from the school office.
2. Our Admin Officer aims to acknowledge receipt of all application forms within 2 weeks of submission. This acknowledgment does not secure your place for your child but acknowledges that your application will be considered in May after the annual deadline.
3. Letters will be sent out by the end of May each year detailing the provision being offered to individual children. There is no appeal process for Preschool places. Decisions made are final.
4. All offers require a response from the parent/carer, either accepting or declining the place offered. This will be required by a specified deadline. Offer letters will be sent by email where possible. If no

response is received by the deadline, our Admin Officer will attempt to make one phone call to the parent/carer as a reminder. If no written response is received within 48 hours of the deadline, regardless of whether our Admin Officer has managed to make contact with the child's parent or carer, the child's place will be forfeited.

5. Any family applying after the deadlines above will be offered places according to availability. Extra hours (more than 15) will be offered once as many children as possible have been allocated 15 hours.
6. Late September applications (after the closing date) will be considered (if spaces are available) as long as the application is received by the last day of June.

### **Waiting Lists**

- We cannot hold spaces (for example for a summer birthday).
- We do not allow parents or carers to pay to hold spaces because this discriminates against those who cannot pay. If a child does not secure a place in the term requested, they will be prioritised for the following year if possible (ie. If they are not starting school in the September).
- We will not discuss a child's registration with other parents/carers.
- The leadership team will make every effort to be fair and to accommodate as many children and their families' wishes and needs as possible. Even so, it is not possible to satisfy everyone. In all cases, the management's decision is final.