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Policy Framework:	Policy framework provided centrally for use by schools with minimal amendment to the core text Changes **must** be made to the text where indicated

Nursery Admission Arrangements Framework

St Christopher's Cowley

Approved by:	**Ethos & Governance**
Date:	**June 2026**
Review Date:	**31 July 2027**

Adopted by school:	**JGB**
Date:	**September 2026**

St. Christopher's CE Primary School, Temple Road,
Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2HB
https://www.st-christophers-pri.oxon.sch.uk/

Nursery Admission Arrangements

Our vision & values: At St Christopher's Cowley, our vision is to "have the courage to live life in all its fullness – to belong within our community, and to respect and love those around us." We live this vision every day through nurture, learning, and growing together.

School Name ('the School'):	St Christopher's Cowley
Local Authority ('the LA'):	Oxfordshire
How to apply:	Application form on school website
Admission to:	Nursery
Admission Numbers:	Funded places: 66
Contact details:	Romana Daci – on 01865 779772

Introduction

This policy sets out the arrangements for admission to nursery provision in schools within Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST). Nursery provision is part of the Trust's early years foundation stage (EYFS) offer in this school and is intended to provide high-quality early education in line with statutory EYFS requirements.

Important:
Admission to nursery provision *does not guarantee a place in reception class* at the school. Applications for reception must be made separately through the Local Authority's coordinated admissions scheme.

The Trust has delegated the administration of admissions to nursery classes to the School's Local Governing Body (LGB).

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the School will always be offered places.

Once a child is admitted to the nursery, the child is entitled to remain in a universal part time place in the nursery class until the term after their fifth birthday.* However this may not be the most appropriate place for the child if all his/her peers have taken up their reception place in a separate class within the school or another primary school.

*N.B. In the case of a summer born child, parents must either take up the school reception place by the April before the child's fifth birthday; or else need to re-apply through the next admission round for a place to start in the September, usually as a year one child. See the Primary School Admission Arrangements for more detail on deferring entry.

Where a family ceases to be eligible for the working parent entitlement, the place will return to the universal entitlement level (for children aged 3+) for the grace period, unless the parent/carer is prepared and able to pay for the extended hours. Parents/Carers are allowed to keep their child in their universal entitlement place even if they cease to qualify for the working parent entitlement.

The Trust will ensure admissions are fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory.

Over subscription criteria:

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan in which the school is named in Section 1 will always be admitted.

1. Children who are "Looked After" (LAC) by a Local Authority; "Previously Looked After" (PLAC), or "Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Children" (IAPLAC).

2. Disabled children who need to be admitted to a school on the grounds of physical accessibility. The definition of disability is that contained within the Equality Act 2010.

3. Children who have taken up, or are eligible for, a disadvantaged 2-year-old place at the time of application.

4. Children who live in the designated catchment area. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given in the following descending order:
   - Those children who, at the time of entry, have a sibling attending the nursery or the primary school to which the nursery is attached.
   - Those children who live closest to the school by the straight-line distance as calculated by the LA.

5. Children living outside the designated area who have a sibling attending either the nursery or the main school at the time of entry. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given within this group to children who live closest to the school by the straight-line distance as calculated by the LA.

6. Children who attend day care or a voluntary or private sector preschool on site at the school. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given within this group to children who live closest to the school by the straight-line distance as calculated by the LA.

7. Those children who do not meet any of the above criteria. Priority for any remaining places will be given to those who live closest to the school by the straight-line distance as calculated by The LA.

If there are more children than places, any child who is not offered a place can only be reconsidered and admitted at a later point if the parents have put the child's name on the school's continued interest list.

Waiting List

A waiting list will be maintained for each intake where the nursery is oversubscribed and children will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria, not the date of application.

Allocation of Sessions

Where demand exceeds availability for specific session patterns (e.g. full-day places), the school reserves the right to:

- Allocate alternative sessions
- Prioritise full-time working parents (for 30-hour places), where appropriate

This will be applied fairly and transparently.

Admission of Children with Additional Needs

The Trust is committed to inclusion and will:

- Make reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities
- Work with families and professionals to support children with SEND
- Admit children with EHCPs where the nursery is named in the plan

Deferring and Part-Time Attendance

Parents may:

- Request a deferred start within the same term (where practical)
- Choose part-time attendance where available

All arrangements must be agreed with the school in advance.

Admissions for Two-Year-Old Provision (if applicable)

Where offered, places for two-year-olds will be allocated in accordance with:

- Government eligibility criteria
- Local Authority guidance

Priority may be given to funded children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Charging and Fees

- Government funded hours are provided free of charge
- Charges may apply for:
    - Additional hours
    - Meals
    - Enrichment activities

Full details will be published by each school.

Appeals

There is no statutory right of appeal for nursery admissions.

However, if parents are dissatisfied, they may:

- Request a review of the decision by the school
- Follow the School's complaints procedure

Fair Access and Equality

The Trust will ensure:

- No child is discriminated against due to protected characteristics
- Admissions arrangements comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Fair access is maintained for all applicants

Data Protection

All personal data collected will be processed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018

Privacy notices are available on school websites.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the School.

Key Terms

Academies

Academies are independent, state-funded schools, which receive their funding directly from central government, rather than through a local authority. The day-to-day running of the School is with the headteacher, but they are overseen by individual charitable bodies called Multi-Academy Trusts.

Within ODST, the academies are always referred to and known as 'schools'.

Admission Arrangements

The arrangements and rules for a particular school at the normal year of entry (Reception, Year 3, 5 and 7) determine the procedures and decision-making for admitting pupils to the School.

Admission Authority

The body responsible for setting and applying admission rules for a school or schools. As a multi-academy trust the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) is the admissions authority for all its schools. ODST is legally responsible for determining admission arrangements. The Trust has delegated the administration of admissions to nursery classes to the School's Local Governing Body (LGB).

Admission Number

The number of funded places, in part time equivalents (15hrs) agreed each year with the County Council and published in the Council's Pupil Place Plan.

The number of additional (non-funded) places which the nursery offers.

The LA

The LA is referenced in Table 1.

Year

Refers to the academic year (September to August).

Reception

The year children become 5.

Summer-Born Children

Children born between 01 April and 31 August (based on the school year running from September to July).

Designated (Catchment) Area

Living within the School's designated area gives a high priority for admission but there is no guarantee that a place will always be made available. The catchment area for the nursery will usually be the same as for the primary school. Designated areas can be viewed on the LA websites.

Oxfordshire County Council
Oxfordshire schools search | Oxfordshire County Council
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Schools directory | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Reading Borough Council
Schools in Reading - Brighter Futures For Children
West Berkshire Council
School Admission Arrangements - West Berkshire Council
Bracknell Forest Council
School admissions arrangements | Bracknell Forest Council

Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- 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;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

Having parental responsibility means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. People other than a child's natural parents can acquire parental responsibility through:

- being granted a residence order;
- being appointed a guardian;
- being named in an emergency protection order (although parental responsibility in such a case is limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child's welfare);
- adopting a child (in the case of stepparents) in agreement with the child's mother (and other parent if that person also has parental responsibility for the child) or as the result of a court order.

Where a child's parents are not married to each other, the child's father can gain parental responsibility by:

- registering the child's birth jointly with the mother;
- through a 'parental responsibility agreement' between him and the child's mother;
- as the result of a court order.

In addition, a LA can acquire parental responsibility if it is named in the care order for a child.

Siblings

For admissions purposes, a brother or sister is defined as one of the following:

- A brother or sister (both parents the same) living at the same home address; or
- A half-brother or half-sister (one parent the same) living at the same home address; or
- A stepbrother or stepsister (sharing a parent who is married or in a civil partnership) living at the same home address; or
- An adopted child who, by reason of the adoption, now shares one or more parents with a child living at the same home address.

Sibling priority will only apply to those with a brother or sister attending the School at the applicant's 'time of entry'. This means there will be no sibling connection for applicants to the entry year group if they have a brother or sister who will have left by the time the younger child is due to start.

Education and Health Care Plan

A plan made by the LA under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special education provision, health and social care required for that child. Therefore, this is not an oversubscription criterion.

Looked After Children

A 'looked after child' is a child who is either:

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 at the time of making an application to a school.

In Oxfordshire these children are also known as 'Children We Care For" (CWCF).

Previously "Looked After" Children

The School Admissions Code 2012 introduced a requirement for all admission authorities to broaden the existing priority for 'looked after' children or children in care (defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) to also include 'previously looked after' children. Children who were 'previously looked after' were defined for admissions purposes as those who, immediately after being in care, became subject to an adoption[1], residence, or special guardianship order[2].

A revised School Admissions Code came into force on 19 December 2014, and this stated that 'previously looked after' children include those who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976

[1] An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) or an order under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).
[2] 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/s.
(see Section 12 - Adoption Orders) and not simply those children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 - Adoption Orders). In addition, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders. Those who previously received a residence order are now deemed to have a child arrangement order

If applying on behalf of a "previously looked after" child, who was previously in state care in England, the parent will need to provide the following evidence:

- an Adoption Order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; or
- an Adoption Order under the Adoption Act 1976; or
- a Child Arrangements Order; or
- a Residence Order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989; or
- a Special Guardianship Order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s), under section 14A of the Children Act 1989.

Children who appear to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care after being adopted ("internationally adopted previously looked after children") (IAPLAC)

A further revised School Admissions Code was agreed in July 2021, and this came into force on 1 September 2021. The new Code further broadens the existing priority for 'looked after' children and 'previously looked after' children to include those children who appear to an Admission Authority to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. In the School Admissions Code 2021 they are referred to as "internationally adopted previously looked after children" (IAPLAC).

The Code regards a child as having been in state care outside 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.

Responsibility for determining whether a child is eligible to be considered as an IAPLAC rests with the Admission Authority. If there is doubt about the acceptability of evidence provided by the parent, advice will be sought from the relevant Virtual School. This Admission Authority will take a pragmatic approach to the decision-making process where evidence is lacking.

Home Address

The home address is where the child lives at the time of application. This is the address at which the child spends the majority of term-time school nights.

If parents are moving house, evidence of the move will be requested when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts.

An address of a second home with the main home being elsewhere will not be accepted. If there are two or more homes, or where a family is returning from elsewhere, evidence will be required of the main home. An allocation of a place based on an address which might be considered only temporary or where the address given is a second home will not be made.

An address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement will not be accepted.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

Multiple Addresses

Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which the child spends the majority of the school week as determined by the LA.

Measuring Distances from Home to School

Information about how measurements will be made to calculate home to school distances using a straight-line distance using the LA's Geographic Information System is available online. Please refer to LA websites listed in Table 1.

Government Childcare Support

15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds (Universal Entitlement)

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England can get 570 free hours per year. It's usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year. You can choose to take fewer hours over more weeks, if your childcare provider offers this option.

Free Childcare for Working Parents

Free Childcare for Working Parents: Check if you're eligible - GOV.UK

Children aged 9 months to 4 years old

30 hours of free childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year.

Child is 2 to 3 years old and the family gets extra support

30 hours of free childcare through 2 separate schemes if both of the following apply:

- Eligible for Free Childcare for Working Parents
- Parent/carer or child receives extra support

15 hours per week if the parent/carer or child get extra support (children will continue to get these hours even if the family is longer eligible for Free Childcare for Working Parents)

15 hours per week through Free Childcare for Working Parents

30 hours of free childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year.

To apply, contact the early years team or Family Information Service at your local council.

What counts as extra support

Families are classed as getting extra support if any of the following apply:

- In receipt of Universal Credit, and household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments

- Children with an Education and Health Care plan
- Children get Disability Living Allowance
- Children who have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

Grace Period

The grace period for the working parents' childcare entitlement allows children to keep funded hours for a short time following job lose or income changes. It typically lasts between 3 to 5 months, depending on exactly when the eligibility status changes.

Appendix

Legal Framework

These arrangements and over-subscription criteria meet all lawful requirements including those set out in the following Acts, Codes, policies and relevant case law:

DfE Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance
www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2/early-education-and-childcare-valid-from-1-april-2026

Equality Act 2010
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

EYFS Statutory Framework
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2