FIRST STEPS NURSERY

Nursery Admissions and Charging Policy

At First Steps Nursery, we are committed to being inclusive with regards to admissions. We strive to be a provider of funded childcare without it impacting the quality of our provision. This policy outlines our approach to nursery admissions, admissions criteria followed, and our plans for offering funded childcare in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Nursery Admissions

At First Steps Nursery we care for children between the ages of 6 weeks and 4 years of age, and the numbers and ages of children admitted to the nursery comply with the legal requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. When considering admissions, we are mindful of staff: child ratios and the facilities available at the nursery. We aim to ensure that all sections of our community have access to the nursery through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures. Places will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis if there are places available, but if there is a waiting list, the nursery will use the following admission criteria, length of time on waiting list, but each individual case will be looked at and considered dependent on the needs of the child and family.

Prior to a child attending nursery:

We provide a contract/registration form and parental agreement between parents/nursery and Wigan Council for the funded early education entitlement for 9 months, two, three and four year olds, which must be filled in prior to your child starting nursery (if your child will be eligible for funding).

Parents must pay a deposit to reserve a place at First Steps Nursery (unless the place is a funded only term time place in which case no deposit is required). This is non refundable should you later change your mind about requiring a place. The deposit is kept on file the entire time a child is at nursery and is used towards the final fees when you provide notice to leave.

You are welcome to visit the nursery prior to your child starting on a mutually agreeable date and time.

Our waiting list operates on a 'time on list' basis for each intake. Names, dates of birth and contact details are taken upon first enquiry.

If the place is no longer required, the next child on the waiting list will be contacted according to 'time on list' basis.

Although all efforts will be made to accommodate parental wishes for specific places, the final decision will be made by the Nursery Manager.

Attendance

For the purpose of monitoring attendance, if a child does not attend for their session and their absence is unknown, parents will be contacted to determine the reason for absence and recorded. We ask that all parents/carers contact the nursery to provide a reason for any absence prior to 10am which will be recorded on each child's individual absence sheet.

Staff will continue to establish reasons for absence if we do not have an explanation from parents as part of our Safeguarding procedures.

Funded places

The nursery is open 51 weeks a year and is closed for bank holidays and between Christmas and New Year. Government funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare only. We give the option of 'all year round' care (51 weeks) or 'term time' (38 weeks) for children who are in receipt of 2, 3 and 4 year funding. Prior to this we only offer all year around care.

To access 30 hour funding parents need to obtain a valid code, if parents do not obtain a valid code any sessions will be charged for. To check entitlement and to obtain a code please visit https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that the code remains valid by confirming eligibility as per their childcare account every 3 months.

Where parents/carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving the free entitlement in the correct way a complaint can be submitted in accordance with our complaints procedure – this is available for parents on our website.

We adhere to our Equality and Inclusion policy and ensure that all children have access to a nursery place, irrespective of their gender, race, disability, religion, beliefs or sexual orientation of parents.

We strongly believe that all children should have fair and equal access to meals, consumables and activities and we therefore do not charge any top-up fees for funded-only sessions.

Funding is available as follows:

For a child born 1st April to 31st August, funding begins in September. For a child born 1st September to 31st December, funding begins in January. For a child born 1st January to 31st March, funding begins in April. This is applicable for all children aged 2 years and over.

For children who are eligible for funding from 9 months old this starts the school term after the child turns 9 months old.

Starting Nursery before funding is available

Children may start nursery if a place is available before they are eligible for funding. Sessions will need to be paid for by the parent until funding becomes available.

Notice of increase of fees

If we need to increase prices we will give you 4 weeks notice of any increase. Fees are usually increased once a year in September. You will be issued with a clear explanation of how funding is allocated at this point.

Tax Free Childcare

We are registered with the Government's Tax-Free Childcare Service.

Payment terms

All families are asked to pay fees in advance as per your contract. Invoices and receipts can be provided to any parents who needs them. These are itemised to provide clear and transparent information concerning the charges. It will allow parents/carers to see that the entitlement is received completely free of charge and understand additional fees that have

been applied. If payment has not been received, we will follow our Late Fee Policy and your child's nursery place is at risk of being terminated.

Payment methods

Payments are to be made by bank transfer or tax-free childcare.

Account name: First Steps Private Day Nursery Ltd, **Sort Code:**09 01 51, **Account Number:**766 522 80**.** Please quote your child's name as the payment reference.

Cancellation policy / Illness

Once you have booked any additional paid for sessions, you are obliged to pay, even if your child does not attend for any reason including illness and holidays. You do not have to pay for funded places if your child does not attend.

Notice period

We ask that parents give as much notice as possible with the minimum being 4 weeks. Any payment that has been made for a place within the notice period will not be refunded and further payment will be required to complete your commitment to the end of the notice period.

Top tips for parents!

Starting nursery is a huge transition for children (and their parents) To help make things can go as smoothly as possible please see our top tips.

- Practice self-settling for sleeps in a cot (without a comfort toy if under 12 months) We have to follow Safer Sleep guidance and it is going to be easier for your baby if they are already familiar with falling asleep and napping this way rather than in a pram or on a person.
- Introduce finger foods as soon as you start weaning. Being able to self-feed makes babies safer eaters and reduces choking risk. Keep offering them a wide variety of healthy foods as this will help them transition to our menu.
- Where possible, practice leaving them with other trusted grown-ups, even if just for short periods. This really helps a child to understand that you always come back.
- Be prepared that not all children settle into childcare seamlessly. We will communicate with you honestly about how your child is settling in
- Be mindful that children will get dirty in nursery. We provide a lot of messy play as part of our learning journey for children. Children will need a spare set with them which we ask is clearly labelled.
- Remember they are mixing with lots of other children and will likely pick up some illnesses. Be familiar with our sickness policy and have a back up plan for when they are unwell. A busy nursery is no place for a poorly child as we can not provide one to one care and we are obligated to try and prevent the spread of illness. Children are not permitted to come to nursery if they have had paracetamol or ibuprofen as this can mask a temperature.