

Mapledene and Queensbridge Children's Centre

Admissions Policy Day Care

Overview of policy

At Mapledene and Queensbridge Children's Centre, we aim to provide equal access to high quality early education in a vibrant and welcoming environment. In order to prepare the children for adulthood, we aim to encourage a fair and representative community, free of all prejudices where our children mix, as much as possible.

To do this, we:

- Fully comply with a 'first come, first served' policy
- Operate an open Admissions Register which is regularly updated and refreshed
- Endeavour to engage in ongoing dialogue with prospective parents

We comply with the Hackney Education policy for admissions into Children's Centres, which is detailed in the following pages.

Hackney Children's Centre Childcare Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) research, found that an integrated approach to quality early education and childcare, improves the intellectual, emotional and social development of children, in particular children from disadvantaged communities.

Hackney children's centres play a significant role in improving the life chances of young children and families. Parents can access a range of universal and universal plus services from our network of children's centres, inclusive of childcare. Nurseries funded as part of the children's centre funding formula, do not operate a catchment area. This means that parents can access childcare from any children's centre of their choice, irrespective of where they live in Hackney.

Parents may choose a children's centre nursery because:

- the centre is located within their neighbourhood and is convenient for their family needs;
- the centre is on route or near to their place of work or study; or
- the centre is close to their family network.

2. Principles

When allocating places, our admission policy seeks to:

- make early education and care accessible to children from Hackney's diverse communities, thereby reflecting Hackney's population;
- provide fair access for children from a range of backgrounds, with the greatest number of places offered to children in lower income households, specifically those in funded places, income Band 1 and 2. A smaller number of places should be offered to children in income Band 3, in order to maintain sustainability;
- maintain gender balance; and
- promote inclusion by giving children with special educational needs and disability an opportunity to benefit from early education and childcare to support their development.

3 Eligibility Criteria

- I. The child should be aged twelve weeks to five years (children must leave by the term after their 5th birthday).
- II. The child should not attend another setting unless the care is wrapped around a school place, due to the child having to become familiar with different rules, routines, structures and relationships. There may be unique circumstances where this may be necessary, but should not be the norm.

III. A child whose parent live or work in Hackney.

4 Admission priorities

Hackney children's centres will use the following criteria in order of priority, to allocate oversubscribed places, whilst maintaining the principles of the admissions policy such as gender balance:

- I. Child on Child Protection or Child in Need Plan.
- II. Child in a part time place at the Centre whose parents wish to increase their days.
- III. Child has a sibling attending the Centre. Siblings will not be considered if their older sibling is due to leave the Centre before the younger sibling starts.
- IV. Child meets MAT Targeted Childcare for Vulnerable Children criteria inclusive of children with special needs or disability; and the Centre has been identified by a professional as best placed to meet their needs.
- V. A maximum of 1 place may be allocated to school or centre core staff where the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

(NB Practitioner's who work in Hackney Education Centres, will not be allocated a childcare place in the centre in which they work).

Vacancies may be offered to children living out of borough at Band 3.

Children attending school based children's centres will not be prioritised for a school place and must adhere to the school admission arrangements.

i. Fee Structure

Fees will be charged in accordance with the income band addendum
Parents will be charged on income Band 3 unless they provide evidence of family unit household income which places them in a lower income band; or they meet the criteria for:

- 15hrs free nursery entitlement at 2yrs;
- 15hrs free nursery entitlement at 3 and 4 yrs. subject to available places;
- A Child in Need (CiN) place administered by Children's Social Care CiN panel;
or
- MAT Targeted Childcare for Vulnerable Children administered by MAT (multi-agency team) meeting.

6 Universal places

Nursery admission is managed locally by each children's centre.

- i. Parents must be given information about:

- opening hours, set closures, INSET days and staff meetings;
 - fees;
 - 15hrs free entitlement at 2, 3 & 4 yrs;
 - tax credits and how to claim these; and
 - application form and admission profile and parent contract (2022), to be completed with the parent on entry.
- ii. Parents will not be charged for:
 - 1 week Christmas closure;
 - 2 week summer closure;
 - Bank holidays; and
 - 5 INSET days annually which should be attached to a set closure. (Arrangements may vary slightly from centre to centre).
 - iii. Parents will be charged for staff meetings which must take place at the beginning or end of the nursery day and may result in late opening or early closure.
 - iv. Parents may obtain application form from Hackney Education website or the children's centre office.
 - v. Parents must complete and return application forms to the children's centre of their choice and receive immediate written confirmation of receipt when hand delivered.
 - vi. The application form must be entered onto Family.co database admission register within 5 working days of receipt.
 - vii. Parents who posted or sent their application form electronically, must be sent within 10 working days' confirmation of receipt of their application form, which should be logged on Family.co database.
 - viii. The admission register should be reviewed a minimum of six monthly. The Centre must:
 - a) contact parent on admissions register by phone or email to find out if they still require a place and wish to remain on the admission register.
 - b) Record any changes in circumstances and update contact information on First Steps.
 - c) If the parent has not been contactable or has failed to respond to correspondence, a second attempt should be made by email or letter to the home address requesting the information.
 - d) If parents have not responded to the second attempt to contact them, their details should be removed from the admissions register.
 - e) A letter must be sent to the home address confirming that their child's name has been removed from the admissions register.

- ix. Information on Family.co data base must be updated.
- x. Vacancies must be planned in advance around key transitions points to ensure that all vacancies are allocated promptly within 2 weeks of notice and prior to summer and Christmas closure.
- xi. Interviews/ home visits for new parents must be arranged promptly with an agreed admission date to commence within 3 weeks of notice, at the earliest opportunity.
- xii. Parents who do not wish to accept a place that has been offered to them, may be placed at the bottom of the admissions register or removed, as appropriate.
- xiii. Parents must be given a formal start date that commences after an initial settling period of 3 days to 2 weeks.
- xiv. Parents should not be charged for the initial settling period of 3 days. Settling periods exceeding 3 days should not impact on ratios or staffing cost, as parents/ carers should be available to meet their child's needs. Stay and play sessions may be used to assist transition and support a swift settling process.
- xv. Fees will be payable from the formal start date, irrespective of whether or not the child is fully settled or the parent is required to remain accessible.

7 Complaints procedure

The admissions process is managed by the children's centre. Parents who are unsuccessful in gaining a nursery place may wish to complain. Complaints should be addressed to the Children's Centre Manager in the first instance, before making a formal complaint using the Centres or School complaint procedure.

Advice and guidance may be sought from:

Early Years' Service, Hackney Education, 1 Reading Lane E8 1GQ
0208 8207594

Appendix A

Children in need

Eligibility Criteria

The term 'children in need' is defined under section 17 (10) of The Children Act 1989.

Children in need assessed by Social Worker:

- a) he/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a local authority.
- b) Health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services.
- c) Or is disabled: A child who has no sight; sensory impairment or has physical and learning disability.

"Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development and "Health" means physical or mental health.

The definition of 'children in need' is not the same under the Act as 'vulnerable children'. Vulnerable children deals with a larger group of children and is a term used in relation to the Children's Fund and the category of assistance the fund is expected to administer too. The duty to provide services to children in need is a duty upon the whole Local Authority and not just Social Services.

Children in need

Priority (1)

- Children who are looked after by local authority
- Children who as a result of section 47 are placed on a child protection plan being at risk of significant harm.

Priority (2)

- Children suffering from a substantial and permanent illness or disability which seriously impairs their development and where the family is in need of support in order to maintain the child within the family network.
- Children who are at evidenced and serious risk of family breakdown owing to difficulties within the family and where the assessment indicates that the provision of support for a defined period is in the child's best interest and likely to ensure his/her long term welfare and prevent accommodation.
- Children where there is a pattern of neglect or poor care affecting the child's welfare and development and which would cause the child to be at risk of significant harm and subject to registration without intervention and monitoring and where the assessment indicates a good level of parental cooperation for working with relevant agencies.
- Children whose parents are known to adult mental health services or adult learning disabilities.
- Children in families who have no recourse to public funds i.e. cannot claim Income Support.

Priority (3)

- Children where there is a pattern of anti social behaviour/poor parental control or care significantly affecting the child's development and welfare which is likely to further deteriorate but where there is no assessed or significant harm.
- Carers experiencing significant stress without family friendship back up requiring short term support in order to cope with their child's behaviour/stage of development or family circumstances but where the child is not assessed as being at risk or harm.
- Children with mild disabilities or serious illness, which combined with other adverse factors, i.e. isolation, a number of dependent children.