

## LITTLE OAKS NURSERY

# Admissions & Allocation of Places Policy

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| <b>Policy</b>         | Admissions & Allocation of Places                                         |
| <b>Setting</b>        | Little Oaks Nursery, Barn 1 Oakbank, Bolesworth Road, Tattenhall, CH3 9HL |
| <b>Legal provider</b> | Little Oaks Education Ltd (company number 16858208)                       |
| <b>Age range</b>      | Children from birth to five years                                         |
| <b>Adopted</b>        | 23/09/2026                                                                |
| <b>Review date</b>    | 23/09/2027                                                                |

## Important

Applications and offers made before Little Oaks receives its Ofsted registration are conditional on registration being granted and on the nursery being able to open safely with the required staffing, premises and regulatory arrangements in place.

## Introduction

Little Oaks Nursery aims to provide a fair, transparent and inclusive admissions process for children and families. This policy explains how families can apply for a place, how places are allocated when demand exceeds availability, and how government-funded early education and childcare places are offered.

The nursery follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), relevant equality and SEND duties, local authority funding requirements and its published Terms & Conditions. The number and ages of children admitted at any time will always be determined by available space, staffing, statutory staff:child ratios, the needs of children already attending and any conditions of our Ofsted registration.

## 1. Our rooms and availability

Little Oaks provides care and early education for children from birth to five years across three age-based rooms:

- Hedgehogs – babies and younger children, approximately 0–2 years.
- Squirrels – toddlers, approximately 2–3 years.
- Owls – pre-school children, approximately 3–5 years.

Room age ranges are a guide rather than an automatic transition date. A child's move between rooms will be planned around their individual development, relationships, available space and the needs of the wider group, in partnership with parents.

A place is not guaranteed simply because a family has registered interest, joined a waiting list or previously discussed availability with the nursery.

## 2. Applying for a place

Families may register their interest and, when applications are open, complete the Little Oaks application process. Registering interest is not the same as making a completed application and does not guarantee or reserve a place.

An application is treated as complete when the nursery has received the information it reasonably requires to assess the requested place, including the child's date of birth, preferred start date, requested attendance pattern and parent/carers contact details.

Parents should tell us at application stage about any medical, dietary, developmental, SEND, accessibility or other needs that may affect the arrangements required for their child. This information is used to plan appropriate support and reasonable adjustments; it will not be used unlawfully to discriminate against a child.

### 3. How places are allocated

We aim to accommodate family preferences wherever possible. In deciding whether a requested place can be offered, Little Oaks will first consider:

- the child's age and the room in which a place is required;
- the space and staffing available on the requested days and sessions;
- the statutory staff:child ratios and qualification requirements;
- the nursery's ability to maintain safe, high-quality care for all children;
- the proposed start date and attendance pattern; and
- any reasonable adjustments or individual arrangements that need to be planned before the child starts.

#### 3.1 Priority criteria where we are oversubscribed

Where there are more completed applications than available places for the same room, start period and attendance pattern, applications will normally be considered in the following order:

1. Children who are looked after by a local authority or who have previously been looked after.
2. Children identified as vulnerable, including children with a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan, or where a relevant professional or local authority has identified an urgent welfare need for early years provision.
3. Siblings of children who are already attending Little Oaks and are expected still to be attending when the new child starts.
4. Where applications remain equally placed, the date on which the completed application was received will be used as the final tie-breaker.

Little Oaks may exercise reasonable discretion in exceptional circumstances where this is necessary to safeguard a child or respond to an evidenced welfare need. Any departure from the published criteria will be documented.

#### **SEND and disability**

A child will not be refused a place simply because they have SEND, a disability, a medical condition or require additional support. We will work with parents and relevant professionals to understand the child's needs, consider reasonable adjustments and identify any additional funding or support that may be available. Where a safe start requires planning, this will be discussed openly with the family.

### 4. Equality, inclusion and reasonable adjustments

Little Oaks is committed to equality of opportunity and inclusive practice. Admissions decisions will not unlawfully discriminate because of disability, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or any other characteristic protected by law.

We have regard to the SEND Code of Practice where applicable and will make reasonable adjustments for disabled children. Where a child needs support beyond ordinarily available provision, we will work with the family and relevant services to explore appropriate support, including local inclusion funding where available.

Developmental stage, toilet training, communication differences or additional needs will not in themselves be used as grounds to refuse admission.

### 5. Government-funded early education and childcare

Little Oaks Nursery offers government-funded early education and childcare places for eligible children, subject to availability and the nursery's approval to receive local authority funding.

Funded places are considered alongside all other applications using the admissions and allocation criteria set out in this policy. Parents are not required to purchase additional private hours in order to access their funded entitlement.

Full details of how funded hours are offered at Little Oaks, including session patterns, eligibility, additional private hours and any optional chargeable extras, are set out in our Fees, Funding & Chargeable Extras Policy and on our Sessions, Fees & Funding page.

### 6. Waiting list

Where the requested place is not available, parents may ask for their child to remain on the waiting list. We may contact families if an alternative attendance pattern becomes available.

Being on the waiting list does not guarantee a future place. Availability changes as children alter sessions, move rooms or leave the nursery. Parents should keep contact details and requested attendance information up to date.

Little Oaks may periodically contact families to confirm whether they still wish to remain on the waiting list. If we cannot make contact after reasonable attempts, the application may be treated as withdrawn.

## 7. Offers and accepting a place

An offer of a place will be made in writing and will normally confirm the proposed start date and attendance pattern. The offer will state the date by which it must be accepted.

A place becomes confirmed only when the parent has completed the acceptance steps specified in the offer, including signing the relevant registration/parent agreement and Terms & Conditions and providing the information required for the child to start safely.

For offers accepted on or before 4 January 2027, there is no place-acceptance charge. For offers accepted from 5 January 2027, a £100 place-acceptance deposit applies where the place includes private childcare. It is credited in full to the first private invoice. No deposit is required for a place made up only of funded entitlement hours. Full cancellation and refund terms are in the Terms & Conditions.

Offers made before Ofsted registration is complete are conditional and may need to be changed or withdrawn if registration, opening arrangements or regulatory conditions affect the nursery's ability to provide the place.

## 8. Information required before a child starts

Before attendance begins, parents/carers will be asked to provide information needed to care for the child safely and meet our legal responsibilities. This will include, as relevant:

- the child's full name, date of birth and home address;
- parent/carer contact details and information about parental responsibility;
- at least two emergency contacts where reasonably possible;
- authorised collection arrangements;
- medical conditions, allergies, dietary requirements and medication;
- SEND, development or accessibility information relevant to the child's care;
- GP and other relevant health/professional details where needed;
- consents and permissions required by the nursery; and
- funding eligibility/declaration information where a funded place is being claimed.

Personal information is handled in accordance with our Privacy Notice and Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.

## 9. Settling in and start dates

We want each child's start at Little Oaks to feel secure and unhurried. Once a place is confirmed, the nursery will agree settling-in arrangements with the family based on the child's age, previous experience, individual needs and family circumstances.

If a family wishes to defer a confirmed start date, change days or alter sessions, this must be agreed with the nursery and is subject to availability. A different attendance pattern cannot be guaranteed.

## 10. Changes to attendance after admission

Requests to increase, reduce or change sessions will be considered subject to availability and the nursery's Terms & Conditions. Existing attendance arrangements remain in place until a change has been agreed in writing.

Where an existing child is moving between Little Oaks rooms, we will plan continuity and transition internally. Room moves do not create an entitlement to a particular session if capacity or staffing arrangements change.

## 11. Nursery attendance and school admissions

Attendance at Little Oaks does not give a child priority for, or guarantee admission to, any particular primary school. Parents must apply separately for a school place through the relevant school admissions process.

## 12. Withdrawing an application or offer

Parents may withdraw an application at any time before accepting a place. Little Oaks may withdraw an offer where:

- the offer has not been accepted by the stated deadline;
- information needed to provide safe care has not been provided after reasonable requests;
- material information supplied in the application is found to be deliberately false or misleading;
- the requested provision can no longer be offered because of registration, staffing, premises or regulatory constraints; or
- another circumstance arises under the nursery's Terms & Conditions that permits withdrawal.

We will not withdraw an offer for a discriminatory reason. Where a child has SEND, a disability or medical needs, we will first consider reasonable adjustments and available support.

## 13. Questions, decisions and complaints

Parents are welcome to ask how an admissions decision has been made. As a private early years provider, Little Oaks does not operate the statutory school admissions appeal process. If a parent believes the published policy has not been followed, or has another concern about the admissions process, they may raise it under the Little Oaks Complaints Policy.

## 14. Legal and guidance framework

This policy has been prepared with reference to:

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026).
- Department for Education: Early education and childcare statutory guidance for local authorities (valid from 1 April 2026), including transparency, inclusion and chargeable extras requirements for funded provision.
- Equality Act 2010.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Childcare Act 2006 and Childcare Act 2016.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Relevant Cheshire West and Chester early years funding and inclusion arrangements.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, local authority requirements or Little Oaks' operating arrangements change.

Source note: This Little Oaks policy is adapted from the NDNA Admissions Policy (England V1.0, July 2026) and expanded to reflect current admissions transparency, equality/SEND duties and Little Oaks' own admissions process. Detailed funding and chargeable-extras arrangements are set out separately in the Fees, Funding & Chargeable Extras Policy.

| This policy was adopted on | Signed on behalf of the nursery | Date for review |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 23/09/2026                 |                                 | 23/09/2027      |