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# Little Dukes: Admissions Policy

## Monitoring and review...

This policy will be continuously monitored, refined and audited by the Marketing and Admissions Director, who will also review it annually to assess how efficiently duties have been carried out over the year. This review will take place no later than one year from the date shown below, or sooner if needed due to changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines.

## Current Version:

Adopted February 2024

## Reviewed by:

Rik McShane, Director of Little Dukes Nurseries  
Ben Murray, Marketing and Admissions Director - Little Dukes Nurseries

**Next review due: January 2025**

## Please note:

This policy applies to all nursery schools within the Dukes Education Group, including:

- Hove Village Day Nurseries
- Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nurseries
- Little Dukes Day Nurseries and Preschools
- Miss Daisy's Nursery Schools
- The Kindergartens Nursery Schools
- Reflections Nursery and Forest School
- Riverside Nursery Schools
- Sancton Wood Nursery School

Any reference to 'Little Dukes', 'Dukes Education Group' or 'DEG' applies to all the nurseries named above.

## Introduction:

We know that starting nursery is an exciting, key moment in a child's life that can also feel daunting. We understand that you will have many questions about nursery processes, values and about how your child will be spending their time with us. We will always endeavour to answer your questions fully.

The aim of this policy is to help you understand our admissions process and criteria, fee payments, cancellations and notice periods.

This policy is linked to the Little Dukes set of group policies, which you can find on our website at [www.littledukesnurseries.com](http://www.littledukesnurseries.com) or on the website of the nursery you are considering.

At Little Dukes we strive to do all we reasonably can to provide a happy and secure environment in which your child can develop at their own pace and with a sense of belonging. Our curriculum and the structure and composition of our classes are designed to achieve these aims. As the nursery is a constantly developing and changing community of children, staff and parents, there will always be some variations in these elements, but we will always give as much notice as possible of any significant changes.

### **Application process:**

You can apply to one of our nurseries by telephone or email, or by filling in a contact form on the website of the nursery you are considering.

Your enquiry will be passed to an admissions' team member who will respond and advise you about our process for booking a tour and joining any waiting lists for places.

The capacity for every nursery varies depending on location and the number of places available in each of the nursery rooms.

Our nurseries are registered with Ofsted and the local authority, with care provision applying to children aged 3 months to 5 years old or 2 to 5 years old.

We generally have a larger intake to nurseries in January and September but we can offer places all year round. Our nursery opening hours vary – some operate for 51 weeks of the year, some for 48 weeks of the year, and some for term-time (38 weeks) only.

Daily opening hours will also vary. Please ask at the nursery of your choice for opening time details.

Once you have expressed your interest, we will get in touch to arrange a visit. Visits can be made individually, in small groups, or as part of an Open Day tour which also gives you the chance to meet some of the team and ask any questions about the nursery.

We will ask you for some details about your child including their date of birth and medical conditions; the month and year you would like them to start and how many days a week you would like them to attend. Once we've received these details we can begin the process of securing a place for your child.

*[Please note that the Dukes Education Group will hold the details you supply securely for up to six years. We may use them to talk to you about future school options within the Group and we may refer to them should you wish to have another join us in the future.]*

The next step will be to pay the registration fee to start the process of securing a place, and then to pay a deposit once you receive an offer of a place from us.

Details of these fees can be found on the nursery website or can be provided to you by a member of the admissions team.

Note: the registration fee is non-refundable, regardless of whether your child starts at the nursery.

Deposits are refundable after your child leaves the nursery (provided you have given the nursery appropriate notice in writing to terminate their place). You do not need to give us notice if your child is leaving to go to school in their Reception year.

### **Criteria for admissions:**

Where there are fewer applicants than the number of places, all children will be admitted. The nursery must admit all children who have an EHC plan where the provider is named.

Children with SEND who do not have an EHC plan will be treated equally to all other applicants in the admissions process. This includes children who may need extra support or reasonable adjustments to be made. The details of our nursery SEND provision can be found in our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at [www.littledukesnurseries.com](http://www.littledukesnurseries.com) or on the individual website for the nursery you are considering.

At Little Dukes we do not unfairly disadvantage, whether directly or indirectly, any child based on a protected characteristic or economic disadvantage.

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Where there are more applications than places available, the nursery will apply the following oversubscription criteria, in this order:

*Siblings:*

Siblings of children who currently attend or previously attended the nursery, or another location/setting within the Dukes Education Group. Priority extends initially to the location, then the nursery brand, and finally to other nurseries within the Little Dukes Group.

*Children who are twins, triplets or from multiple births:*

Same-age siblings who have not previously been at the nursery. In cases where we aren't able to offer a place to both/all children from multiple births, their application will take priority to ensure they can access the same nursery.

*Children of nursery employees:*

Children who live with parents who are employees of the nursery, provided they have been employed by the Dukes Education Group for a minimum of 12 months at the date of application or to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable shortage and have a permanent contract. This criteria is a suggestion, and actual priority/terms applied to employees of Dukes Education Group will be made at the discretion of the Principal.

*Distance:*

Children living closest to the nursery, based on most appropriate method of transport/commute.

**Offer of a place:**

Once you have made your enquiry, visited your chosen nursery, completed the registration form and paid the relevant registration fee, we will make you an offer of a place for your child, subject to availability and our criteria for admissions.

This offer will be based on the discussions we will have had with you about the days and times that you wish your child to attend, their anticipated start date and the length of time they will be with us (if applicable). It will also include information on fees and the deposit amount you will be expected to pay to secure their place.

Returning the signed admissions policy and nursery terms and conditions, along with payment of the deposit (usually required within seven days) will constitute your acceptance of the place we offered and also of these terms and conditions.

*To accept an offer, we must receive from you:*

- Acknowledgement of this admissions policy and return of signed nursery terms and conditions.
- In cleared funds, the deposit as set out in the offer of a place letter/email.

These requirements are without prejudice to the terms set out in this policy.

Your child cannot be transferred from one location to another after an offer is accepted, except at the sole discretion of the Principal.

**Receipt of deposit and fees:**

The deposit is non-refundable once it is paid whether we have received a signed copy of these terms or not, except when your child leaves the nursery having provided the appropriate notice as set out below.

We reserve the right, at our discretion, to cancel your child's offered place at one of our nurseries if you fail to send us a signed and dated copy of these terms. Please note that in this case, the deposit is also non-refundable.

### **Deposit:**

Your offer letter will set out the deposit you need to pay in order to accept a place for your child. The deposit is non-refundable except at the sole discretion of Dukes Education Group. You may use the deposit to pay your child's last nursery fee invoice, provided the appropriate notice has been given to withdraw them from the nursery. If you don't choose to use your deposit in this way we will refund it to you shortly after your child leaves the nursery.

We may refund the deposit if a child is withdrawn at our request; and we may refund the deposit if we are unable to provide the nursery services as set out in this agreement. We will inform you in writing if we consider there is justifiable reason for refunding your deposit. There is no automatic entitlement to a refund.

We will not refund your deposit if your child does not start at the nursery or if it is cancelled by you before your child starts at the nursery.

Please note: Deposits are not required where your child is accessing fully funded Free Entitlement only hours.

### **Fees:**

Our fees cover the normal curriculum, including classes which are included within the curriculum. Any other items may be charged as extras. Our fees are subject to an annual increase. A note of our current fee structure will be provided in the offer letter to you, although it may change by the time your child joins the nursery. If you have any questions about this, please reach out to the admissions team who are happy to help.

Fees for your child's first month or term (depending on the nursery and payment schedule, which will be advised on the offer letter) are paid in advance of each month/term. We will send you an invoice for upcoming fees and we must receive payment before the date that each term or period of care starts otherwise we may refuse your child admission.

This means that fees are payable in advance of any care provided and are not refunded if you postpone or cancel your child's entry to the nursery, or if they are absent by reason of illness or otherwise (either prior to or during the relevant period).

Parents/carers are expected to set up a monthly or termly Direct Debit for ease of payment.

If you accept an offer of a place for your child, pay the required deposit and pay the fees for the upcoming period but then cancel your child's place, the deposit and fees already paid will not be refunded, even if you accept an offer of a place for the same child (or another child) in the future. In this event, you will need to pay additional fees.

Fees are non-refundable if your child is absent due to sickness whether the fees have been paid in respect of a new or already registered child.

All fees must be paid in pounds sterling. We do not accept payments in cash. We will apply a £100 administration charge to your account if your payment isn't made on its due date, plus £100 for each whole week it remains unpaid.

Children may be excluded from the nursery and the registration may be terminated, if fees remain unpaid for more than two weeks after the due date. In this case your deposit will not be refunded to you.

No compensation will be paid, or refund given if the nursery is closed due to any reason beyond the control of the nursery, such as power failures or weather conditions.

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Fees will not be refunded due to holidays.

**Cancellation of an offered place:**

“Commencement Date” means the start date set out in our offer letter.

“Final Cancellation Date” means, the latest date we will accept a cancellation notice to avoid paying fees beyond that period.

If you accept a place and then cancel your acceptance on or before the last date that we can accept a cancellation notice, you will not be liable for any fees, but we will keep the deposit.

If you accept a place and then withdraw your acceptance after the last date that we can accept a cancellation notice, fees will become due for the next period (month or term) and we will retain the deposit.

**Deferral of an offered place:**

Once the offer of a place is made for your child, our nurseries will ensure everything is ready for the time they join us. This preparation involves costs such as but not limited to; staffing, supplies and consumables, as well as the fact that their place then becomes reserved.

We understand that deferring your child’s place is sometimes unavoidable. At the sole discretion of the nursery and factors such as current occupancy and demand, you can request that your child’s place be deferred for up to 2 calendar months for all year-round nurseries and 1 term for term-time only nurseries. Deferral requests are subject to the same notice periods as set out in the section below ‘Notice periods for leaving the nursery’.

Deferral of your child’s place for longer than 2 calendar months for all year-round nurseries and 1 term for term-time only nurseries will result in their place being cancelled and your deposit being retained.

**Notice periods for leaving the nursery:**

You must give us appropriate notice of your intent to leave the nursery or cancel your child’s offer. This notice is currently:

- 2 full calendar months for all year-round nurseries.
- 1 full term for term-time only nurseries.

As we have many fixed overheads (such as rent and staff costs) to account for, the notice periods set out above are necessary for us to meet these overheads.

By signing this admissions policy, you agree that the fees payable during the notice periods set out above are a fair and genuine pre-estimate of the loss that we are likely to incur for the early withdrawal of your child or your cancellation of an accepted offer.

In all cases where you withdraw your child without providing the notice required as set out above, you will forfeit your deposit.

All notices must be given in writing to the Headteacher/Nursery Manager or admissions team.

The terms of this clause do not apply if we have requested the withdrawal of your child.

*Example – Term-time only nurseries:*

If you notify us of your child’s withdrawal during the Spring term, you will be liable for all fees which accrue for the remainder of that term and to the end of the Summer term.

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If you notify us of your child's withdrawal during or before the end of the Autumn term, you will be liable for all fees which accrue for the Spring term, but not the Summer term.

*Example – All year-round nurseries:*

If you notify us of your child's withdrawal on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, fees would be due in full for the full month of September and October.

If you notify us of your child's withdrawal on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, fees would be due in full for the period until the 14<sup>th</sup> November.

Please note: Where your child is accessing fully funded Free Entitlement only hours, the notice period for leaving the nursery will be 4 weeks.

*In all cases, we reserve the right, at our absolute discretion, to deduct or forfeit the deposit if you still owe the nursery money.*

**Acceptance of your child's place at one of our nurseries constitutes acceptance of this policy and the nursery terms and conditions.**

I/WE HAVE READ THIS ADMISSIONS POLICY:

Parent or Guardian 1 Print Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian 1 Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian 2 Print Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian 2 Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_