



Admissions, Accessibility and Settling-In Policy

Written by: Simone Pattison

Date written: September 2026

Review date : September 2027

Policy Statement

At Mulberry Pre-School, we are committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming and accessible environment for all children and their families.

We aim to ensure that our provision is accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community, regardless of their child's or family's background, circumstances or individual needs.

We promote equality of opportunity and inclusion and will not discriminate against a child or family because of disability, special educational needs, social or economic background, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, language, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

We recognise that some children and families may experience additional barriers to accessing early education. We will take reasonable steps to remove or reduce these barriers and will work in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals to support children to access and participate fully in the life of the Pre-School.

Our practice reflects the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, the SEND Code of Practice and current Ofsted expectations for early years providers.

Admissions and Enquiries

- When an enquiry for a place is received, a member of staff will provide the family with a registration form to complete and return to the Pre-School Manager.
- We will provide prospective families with clear information about our provision, including our admissions arrangements, available sessions, fees and funded places, where applicable.
- We will make information about Mulberry Pre-School widely available through appropriate local advertising and communication channels so that families from all sections of the community have an opportunity to access our provision.
- We will provide information in an accessible format wherever reasonably possible. This may include written information, verbal explanations, visual information or support with translation and communication.
- Families who speak English as an additional language will be supported wherever possible. With parental consent and where appropriate, we will seek advice or support from relevant local

authority services, including Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS), where available.

- We will make reasonable adjustments to our admission and communication processes where required to support disabled children and parents/carers.
- Where a child has identified or emerging SEND, medical needs, disabilities or other additional needs, we will work with the family and, where appropriate, relevant professionals to understand the child's needs and identify the support and reasonable adjustments required.

Waiting List and Allocation of Places

Our waiting list will be managed fairly, consistently and transparently.

Places will normally be considered in accordance with the child's date of birth and the order in which applications are received, taking account of the following circumstances where appropriate:

- the child's age and eligibility for the sessions available;
- the child's proximity to the Pre-School;
- whether the child has a sibling already attending the Pre-School;
- whether the family is new to the area;
- whether the child is due to start school in the following academic year;
- the availability of appropriate sessions;
- any other criteria required by the local authority or applicable funding arrangements.

We will not disadvantage a child because they have SEND, a disability, require additional support, speak English as an additional language, or have another individual need.

Where possible, we will aim to maintain at least two places for children and families moving into the area during the academic year. This will be subject to the Pre-School's registered capacity, staffing, available spaces and the child's individual needs.

Where a child requires additional support, we will consider what reasonable adjustments and inclusive arrangements can be made rather than assuming that the child's needs prevent them from accessing the provision.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We will describe Mulberry Pre-School and its practices in a way that makes clear that we welcome:

- parents and carers;
- grandparents and other family members;
- foster carers and other significant adults;
- childminders and other professionals involved in a child's care, where appropriate.

We will respect each child's individual identity, family circumstances, culture, language, religion or belief, disability, SEND and social background.

Our practice will reflect our Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality Policy, SEND Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and other relevant policies.

We will identify children's needs as early as possible and work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to reduce barriers to learning, development, wellbeing and participation.

This includes working with:

- the Pre-School SENCO;
- parents/carers;
- health visitors;
- speech and language therapists;
- educational psychologists;
- local authority inclusion teams;
- social care;
- other specialist services, where appropriate.

This approach reflects the renewed Ofsted early-years inspection framework, under which inclusion is a specific evaluation area. Inspectors consider how settings identify and support children with SEND, disadvantaged children, children known to children's social care and children facing other barriers to learning or wellbeing.

Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

We will make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled children to access and participate in the Pre-School.

Adjustments may include, where appropriate:

- adapting the physical environment;
- adapting routines and transitions;
- using visual timetables, symbols, photographs or other communication supports;
- adapting activities and resources;
- providing additional settling-in opportunities;
- adjusting communication methods;
- working with specialist professionals;
- providing additional support at key transition points;
- adapting arrangements for drop-off and collection where appropriate.

We will consider each child's individual circumstances and avoid making assumptions about what a child can or cannot achieve because of a disability or SEND.

Opening Hours and Flexible Arrangements

We will consult with families about our opening times and session arrangements to ensure, where reasonably possible, that our provision meets a broad range of family needs.

We offer a range of start and collection times, which are published on our website and registration information.

Where a family's circumstances change, we will discuss whether a temporary adjustment to drop-off or collection arrangements can be accommodated.

Any agreed variation will:

- be discussed and agreed with the Manager or Deputy Manager;
- take account of the child's wellbeing and needs;
- consider the needs and routines of the other children;

- be for an agreed period where appropriate;
- be reviewed regularly;
- be recorded and shared with the parent/carer.

Any agreed arrangements will be documented, with a copy provided to the parent/carer and a copy retained securely within the child's records.

Funded Early Education

Mulberry Pre-School supports eligible families to access their funded early education entitlement.

The current 2026–27 arrangements include:

- 15 hours for eligible 2-year-olds receiving additional support;
- 15 hours for all eligible 3- and 4-year-olds;
- 30 hours for eligible working parents, subject to the relevant eligibility criteria, including eligible children from 9 months of age.

Families accessing funded provision will be given the relevant declaration and/or funding forms to complete.

We will provide clear information to parents/carers about funded hours, session arrangements, any additional charges and the terms on which funded places are offered.

A funded place will not be made conditional upon a parent/carer purchasing additional hours or optional services.

Where additional costs are permitted under the applicable funding arrangements, these will be communicated clearly to families and will not be used as a condition of accessing the funded entitlement.

Supporting Children Accessing Extended Hours

We recognise that children have individual needs and that a longer pattern of attendance may require careful planning and monitoring.

Where a child is accessing more than 15 hours per week at Mulberry Pre-School, practitioners will monitor the child's wellbeing, engagement, learning and development as part of our normal ongoing assessment and care arrangements.

If there are concerns that the child's pattern of attendance is having an adverse impact on their wellbeing, learning, development or ability to engage in the provision, the key person and Manager will discuss this with the parent/carer.

We will consider reasonable adjustments and appropriate support before considering any change to a child's attendance pattern.

Where a reduction or alteration to sessions is considered necessary, this will be discussed and agreed with the parent/carer and, where appropriate, relevant professionals. An individual support or inclusion plan may be developed with clear actions and review dates.

Any plan will:

- identify the child's strengths and needs;
- identify the support and reasonable adjustments to be provided;
- record agreed attendance arrangements where relevant;
- identify how progress and wellbeing will be monitored;
- include review dates;
- involve parents/carers in decision-making;
- be updated as the child's needs change.

We will not automatically reduce a child's funded entitlement because they have SEND or additional needs. We will consider how the provision can be adapted to enable the child to access and benefit from their entitlement.

Ofsted's current inspection framework specifically considers whether children who are disadvantaged or have SEND receive their full entitlement to early education and whether settings are reducing barriers to participation.

Parent/Carer Contract

Every family will be issued with a parent/carers contract once their child has started at Mulberry Pre-School.

The Manager will ensure that parents/carers have the opportunity to understand the contract and ask questions before signing.

The contract will be signed by the parent/carers and the Manager. A copy will be provided to the parent/carers and a copy retained securely within the child's records.

Minimum Attendance

The minimum number of sessions normally offered to each child is two sessions per week.

This is intended to support continuity and enable children to:

- become familiar with the Pre-School environment;
- develop secure relationships with their key person;
- build relationships with other children;
- become familiar with routines;
- develop a sense of belonging.

We recognise that individual circumstances may vary. Where appropriate, we will consider individual arrangements, including the needs of children with SEND or other circumstances that may affect their attendance.

Home Visits

We offer a home visit to all families in accordance with our **Home Visit Policy**.

Home visits provide an opportunity for the child and family to meet members of the Pre-School team in a familiar environment and for practitioners to begin developing a positive relationship with the family.

Where appropriate, home visits may also help us understand a child's routines, interests, communication, cultural background, individual needs and any support that may help them to settle into Pre-School.

Information gathered during the home visit will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with our confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Settling-In Arrangements

Every child will be offered two settling-in sessions, normally lasting one hour each.

First settling-in session

During the first session:

- the parent/carer will remain in the setting with the child;
- the child will have an opportunity to explore the environment and meet practitioners;
- the key person will spend time getting to know the child and family;
- any outstanding information or documentation will be completed with the parent/carer where required.

Second settling-in session

During the second session:

- the parent/carer will normally leave the setting for an agreed period;
- practitioners will support the child to develop confidence and independence;
- the parent/carer will remain contactable;
- if the child becomes significantly distressed and is unable to settle despite appropriate support, the parent/carer may be contacted and asked to return.

The settling-in process will be responsive to the individual child. We recognise that two sessions will not be sufficient for every child.

Where a child requires additional time to settle, the key person and Manager will discuss this with the parent/carer and agree an individual settling-in plan.

This may include:

- shorter sessions initially;
- additional visits;
- a parent/carer remaining for longer;
- a gradual increase in the length of separation;
- visual supports and photographs;
- comfort objects where appropriate;
- additional communication with the family;
- liaison with the SENCO or other professionals where appropriate.

The aim is to establish a secure and positive start while maintaining consistency and stability for all children.

Children with SEND and Additional Needs

We recognise that children with SEND may require additional preparation and support when starting Pre-School.

Where information about a child's needs is available before admission, we will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to plan an appropriate transition.

This may include:

- additional settling visits;
- visits to the home;
- meetings with parents/carers;
- information sharing with previous settings;
- liaison with health or specialist professionals;
- individual visual resources;
- an individual support or inclusion plan;
- environmental adaptations;
- additional transition support.

We will use a strengths-based approach and will not make assumptions about a child's abilities based on their diagnosis or identified need.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise parents and carers as important partners in their child's care, learning and development.

We will:

- listen to families and value their knowledge of their child;
- provide opportunities for parents/carers to share information about their child's interests, routines, culture, language, development and needs;
- involve parents/carers in decisions about additional support;
- keep parents/carers informed about their child's settling-in process;
- work collaboratively when concerns arise;
- signpost families to appropriate services and sources of support.

This partnership approach also reflects the current Ofsted inspection framework, which considers how effectively settings work with children, parents, professionals and staff when making decisions about children's support.

Safeguarding and Welfare

All admissions, settling-in and attendance arrangements will operate alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the EYFS welfare requirements.

Staff will remain alert to safeguarding concerns and will follow the setting's safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.

Confidentiality and Records

Information collected during the admissions, settling-in and inclusion processes will be recorded and stored securely.

Records will be maintained in accordance with the EYFS, our data protection arrangements and relevant legislation.

Where information needs to be shared with another professional or agency, we will follow our information-sharing and safeguarding procedures and seek parental consent where appropriate, unless there is a lawful safeguarding reason for information to be shared without consent.

Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there are changes to:

- the EYFS statutory framework;
- Ofsted inspection requirements;
- early years funding arrangements;
- SEND guidance;
- equality legislation;
- safeguarding requirements;
- local authority requirements.

Signed by: *SCPattison* Date: 28 September 2026

Simone Pattison

Manager