



Muddy Ducks @ THS

Nursery and Pre-school Admissions and Fees Policy

Adopted by Governors Full GB:

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Date of last review:

June 2025

Date of next review:

June 2026

NURSERY AND PRE-SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND FEES POLICY

1. AIMS

Our aims are:

- To ensure access and entitlement to the benefits of high quality child centred education on a fair and equitable basis.
- To establish an admissions policy governed by clearly defined criteria.
- To ensure, as far as possible, that all children who gain a place will fully benefit from nursery education and so will make the very best of our resources.
- To provide high quality child centred nursery education to children and families in our local community.

1. MUDDY DUCKS NURSERY

Muddy Ducks Nursery is a 78 place Nursery (39am and 39pm) for 2 and 3 year olds.

2. MUDDY DUCKS PRE-SCHOOL

Muddy Ducks Pre-School is a 60 place Nursery (30am and 30pm) for 3-4 year olds.

3. NURSERY OPENING HOURS

Nursery sessions run from 8:30am – 11:30am and 12:15 – 3:15pm Mon-Fri only.

Children can attend for either 5 morning sessions, 5 afternoon sessions or 5 full days.

4. FUNDED PLACES OFFERED AT MUDDY DUCKS

The following funded places are available at Muddy Ducks;

Type of funding	Hours available (term time-38 weeks a year)	Starting age	Eligibility
Funded 2 year old	15 hours per week (3 hours per day)	Term after they turn 2	Parents apply for code
Universal 3 year old	15 hours per week (3 hours per day)	Term after they turn 3	Available to all children the term after they turn 3.
Extended 3 year old	Additional 15 hours per week (6 hours per day)	Term after they turn 3	Parents apply for code

The table below shows when children are able to join Muddy Ducks. For example, a child whose birthday is on the 1st April would not be able to join until the Autumn term starts in September.

Child's birthday before:	Term child is entitled to funding:
31 st December	Spring Term
31 st March	Summer Term
31 st August	Autumn Term

In the event of oversubscription, the following priority criteria will be used to allocate places;

1. Children eligible for 2 year funding
2. Universal Funded places for children aged 3 (15 hours)
3. Extended Funded places for children aged 3 (30 hours)
4. Paid Places

Within each of these groups the following priority list will be used to allocate places;

1. Children in the care of a Local Authority (Looked After Children)
2. Children with a particular compelling educational and/or social or medical need as referred by a professional (e.g. social worker, speech therapist, doctor, etc).
3. Children of members of staff working at Thomas Hickman School
4. Children who have an elder sibling currently attending Thomas Hickman School in the term of their admission ranked by distance.
5. Children living in the catchment area of Thomas Hickman School ranked by distance.
6. Children living out of catchment area of Thomas Hickman School ranked by distance.

Within the above criteria, each application is always considered very carefully on its individual needs. We will hold a Consideration (waiting) list and encourage parents to state their preference of session so we can try to accommodate parental choice. In the situation where we are not able to allocate a place, your child will remain on the Consideration list and you will be contacted if a space becomes available.

5. THE NURSERY 'CONSIDERATION LIST'

- A consideration (waiting) list will be kept by the school of names, addresses, date of birth, telephone number and preference of session of children who are interested.
- The consideration list will not operate on a 'first come, first served' basis. The length of time on the consideration list in no way influences the decisions about places.
- Parents will be contacted the term before their child is due to start with information about the settling sessions.

6. ALLOCATION OF PREFERRED SESSIONS

Parents will be asked to give a preference in regard to morning or afternoon sessions when they apply for a place. Account will be taken of any preference for session options expressed by parents but preference will be allocated subject to availability and are not guaranteed. If the preferred session is unavailable, the child will be offered an alternative session.

7. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO MUDDY DUCKS NURSERY AGE 2

Muddy Ducks Nursery a 78 place nursery based on 1 session a day of 3 hours duration. The Government funds eligible 2 year old for 15 hours a week.

To check if a 2 year-old child is eligible to access Funded Entitlement childcare hours, parents are advised to check their eligibility via the following website:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/early-years-and-childcare/funded-early-education-and-childcare/>

In order to access the 2 year funded place, parents will need to provide school with their eligibility code which will be 6 characters long in one of the following formats;

- A mixture of letters and numbers e.g.: 1a2b3c
- Just numbers e.g.: 123456
- Just letters e.g.: abcgeu

School will then check with Buckinghamshire Council Early Years Service to confirm the code is valid before confirming a funded childcare place with the parent.

8. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO MUDDY DUCKS NURSERY/PRE-SCHOOL AGE 3

All 3&4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of Funded Entitlement childcare per week during the academic term, from the start of the term **after** their 3rd birthday. Because these 15 hours are available to all 3&4 year olds, they are called the “**Universal Funded Entitlement**”. Depending on their birthday, children will either join Muddy Ducks Nursery or Muddy Ducks Pre-school.

Some parents of 3&4 year olds will be entitled to an additional 15 hours of Funded Entitlement childcare per week for the academic term. The parent’s eligibility is determined solely by HMRC and Buckinghamshire Council has absolutely no influence over this decision. These additional 15 hours are called the “**Extended Funded Entitlement**”.

9. 30 HOURS FUNDED EDUCATION

The additional 15 hours of Extended Funded Entitlement childcare is not universal; working parents may be eligible for an additional 15 hours per week, bringing the total to 30 hours of free childcare. To qualify both parents (or the sole parent in a single-parent household) must be working. There is also an additional requirement regarding income threshold. To check your eligibility, please use the following website:

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/

If eligible, parents should give their code to school, so the code can be checked via the 30 hour check portal. If valid, the child is then eligible to take up the 30 hours Funded Entitlement offer from the start of the term following the confirmation from HMRC and availability of spaces. It is the parents’ responsibility to go online and re-validate their code approximately every 3 months when prompted to by HMRC either via text message or email.

Government funding is intended to cover the cost of delivering a 6-hour session per day, each day, as part of the free 30 hour funded package. *A full school day is 6 hours and 45 minutes.

To ensure your child has access to a ***full school day**, a payment of £3 is requested to cover the additional time and supervision. This allows children to stay at Muddy Ducks from ****8.30 -3.15 uninterrupted**.

Please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the EYFS team if this payment causes a financial burden.

Parents of children attending for 30 hours are required to provide them with a packed lunch.

*** Additional paid hours = 2.30-3.15*

10. DECISIONS ON PLACES

Decisions to offer a place will be based on the criteria laid out in this admissions policy. Being offered a place does not guarantee first preference with regards to session options. Decisions will be made final and there is no

right of appeal. The offer of a nursery place does not in any way mean automatic entitlement to the main school.

11. PAID PLACES OFFERED AT MUDDY DUCKS (See Appendix 1 for more information about the payments)

Following the admissions criteria, if space allows, parents can access daily additional sessions for their 2,3 or 4 year old Nursery child. 3 hour sessions cost £18. Payments will be invoiced half-termly in advance. If payments have not been made, the additional sessions will be offered to another family on the waiting list. If a parent/carer is having difficulty in meeting the payments, they must make an appointment to discuss options with the Nursery manager/Bursar. Refunds are not available if your child is unable to attend due to illness. Refunds are also not available for closures which are out of our control e.g. snow days. A nominal fee may be charged for late pick up or to hold a place.

The following paid places are available at Muddy Ducks:

Type of funding	Hours available (term time-38 weeks a year)	Starting age	Cost (2025-26)	Cost (2026-27)
2 year old	15 / 30 hours per week (3 hours per day)	Term after they turn 2	£18 per 3 hour session	£20 per 3 hour session
Additional Session for Universal funded 3 year old	15 hours per week (3 hours per day)	Term after they turn 3	£18 per 3 hour session	£20 per 3 hour session

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS CONSUMABLES

Our government funding is intended to cover the cost of delivering 15 hours or up to 30 hours of childcare a week for the 38 weeks we are open. It is not intended to cover the cost of snacks or consumables. We have introduced a consumable charge which has become necessary for our sustainability and to help maintain the quality of our provision.

15 Hour Place	£5	Half Term
30 Hour Place	£10	Half Term

12. NURSERY VISITS/SETTLING IN PROCEDURE

Parents are welcome to arrange visits to the Nursery prior to their child starting. The Nursery team will arrange home visits during the half term before their children start. To enable children to settle in quickly to our nurseries, staff liaise with any other professionals previously involved with individual children and be given access to records from previous settings. Within the settling sessions the Nursery staff will explain our rationales; how we settle the children in; how teaching and learning is planned, organised and assessed. As a priority there will be opportunities to discuss any concerns, answer any questions and speak to the Nursery team during your home visits. This enables parents/carers to begin to become familiar with our nursery.

The team will arrange settling in sessions during your home visit. These sessions give both the staff and parents/carers/child the opportunity to get to know each other and our facilities, learning opportunities and organisation of the Nursery.

The staff will help children feel secure by;

- Responding to individual needs
- Acting as a positive role model
- Introducing the children to resources
- Ensuring that the children know where necessary amenities are and how to use them
- Encouraging the children to choose activities and supporting them in their choice
- Explaining and supporting them in becoming familiar with routine
- Encouraging the children to interact with each other to facilitate friendships

13. LEAVERS DURING THE YEAR

If a child is withdrawn by their parents from nursery/pre-school during the school year, parents must give the school a minimum of four weeks' notice if possible. The place of the child who has been withdrawn cannot be held open for a trial period and will be automatically made available to allocate a child on the waiting list. If parents later wish their child to return to the nursery/pre-school then they will need to re-apply for a place on the waiting list and the application will be considered according to the criteria along with all other applications. The fact that the child has previously been in the nursery/pre-school class, or any other nursery/pre-school class, will in no way influence the decision on being offered a place.

14. ATTENDANCE & LOSS OF NURSERY/PRE-SCHOOL PLACE

If attendance and punctuality is poor or erratic the nursery teacher/leader will talk to parents and remind them that for the child to benefit from nursery education, attendance needs to be regular and punctual due to the great demand for places. This conversation is recorded and dated in the child's folder and the attendance file. If after a period of two weeks attendance and punctuality remain poor a letter will be sent to the parents inviting them to meet with the Headteacher and Attendance officer.

If following the meeting, there is no sustained improvement in attendance within an agreed period then the child may lose their place. Parents will be notified of the loss of place in writing.

If a child is absent for a period of three weeks without any contact from the parents and the school has been unable to make contact within this time, the child may lose their place and it may be offered to someone else. This will be decided by the Headteacher, and a letter explaining the situation will be sent to the parents.

15. TRANSFER FROM NURSERY/PRE-SCHOOL INTO RECEPTION CLASS AT THOMAS HICKMAN SCHOOL

All parents and carers must be made aware that a place in the nursery or pre-school does not guarantee a place in Thomas Hickman School and that they must still go through the correct Buckinghamshire Council's admissions procedure.

The Nursery/Pre-school staff will liaise closely with colleagues in Reception classes to plan for a smooth transition to their chosen or allocated school. Nursery staff will send reports and other agreed records to the school admitting the pupil as appropriate.