



OPEN ENROLMENT:FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

4th January 2021

Open Enrolment Procedure

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we are unable to hold face-to-face open days and visits this year. All information and links will be posted on our school website as soon as possible in January. We are currently producing some photos, links and short videos along with general information about our nursery setting and we will try our best to keep you as up-to-date as possible.

In relation to the online application process, all information is on the Education Authority website - www.eani.org.uk

FAQs- Frequently Asked Questions

Each year we have queries from parents regarding the open enrolment procedure. We have included these in order to assist parents this year due to us not holding a face-to-face open day event.

I don't have my child's name on a waiting list, can I still apply?

Yes. Not all schools compile a waiting list or expression of interest list. All parents apply on an equal basis in January regardless of if you have expressed an interest in a school or not. Some schools choose to keep a list in order to know how many people have an intention to apply. Having a name held on a school list does not give you priority and parents still must apply through the same process. The Education Authority online application process opens on 7th January 2021. All details in relation to applying can be found at www.eani.org.uk

Is the criteria for all pre-schools and nursery places the same?

There are both statutory criteria set by the Department for Education and individual criteria set by the school. Admissions Criteria for all schools can be found at: <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions/search-schools-and-admissions-criteria>

Statutory criteria relating to Social Disadvantage and Pre-School Age are the same for every setting.

Schools then set their own criteria agreed by board of governors. These are applied very strictly. You **MUST** read the criteria for the schools and settings you are applying for. There are no exceptions. Supporting letters from medical professionals, MLAs, ministers, social workers cannot be taken into consideration. Childcare circumstances cannot be taken into consideration. Medical needs and special needs can only be considered where the Education Authority has involvement and has informed the school of such circumstances.

ALL SETTINGS HAVE THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL CRITERIA. Not all settings have the same criteria which is why it is vital that you read the criteria for **ALL SETTINGS YOU ARE CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR.**

I do not qualify for Social Disadvantage, do I still have a chance of getting a place?

Yes. In Sunnylands Nursery School, once the applicants who qualify for Social Disadvantage are allocated places, our sub-criteria includes priority for 1st preference applications, followed by children who are currently attending in their penultimate year, followed by children who have had siblings attend the school within the last 7 years. Next are children who are the only/eldest child in the family, and finally, if none of the above criteria are met, the first letter of the child's surname is used to determine priority according to the randomised list on our Admissions Criteria.

Please be aware that other settings may give priority to eldest or only children in their criteria.

I am not sure if I am socially disadvantaged or not? How do I find out and is it worth me going to get a form verified?

The school does not verify if a parent receives social disadvantage status. You will need to contact the benefits agency for verification. Check the EANI website for further details. If you are eligible, it will mean that your application may be further up the criteria and a benefit to your application. Without verification, the school cannot apply the socially disadvantaged criteria to your application. It could be the difference between securing a place and not securing a place in some circumstances.

Can I request an AM place on my application?

All 4 of our classes are part-time 2½ hour sessions: 2 morning sessions, which run from 9:00am - 11:30am, and 2 afternoon sessions, which run from 12:30pm - 3:00pm. You can mention that you would prefer a certain session in the

Additional Information section of the online application. Applicants who qualify for Social Disadvantage allocated one of our 52 morning places unless they request an afternoon place. The remaining morning places are then assigned in accordance with our sub-criteria and then we start allocating the afternoon places, with any applicant who expressed a preference for the morning class automatically going onto our Morning Class Waiting List. Penultimate children that is a child who is in their pre pre school year will only be allocated an afternoon session.

Do you save spaces for underage, pre-preschool children and can my child apply when they are 2yrs and 10mths?

We do not save or reserve any places for underage children. No pre-school setting reserves places. The application process must give priority to children in their target pre-school year before they attend Primary 1 the following year. Pre-preschool/penultimate pre-school/underage children are children who are in the year before their pre-school year. They still have a pre-school year the following year. It is true that you are able to apply for places BUT your child can only secure a place if there are places remaining after all target age pre-school children have been processed. Underage children must not be placed before target age children. Only where there are no more applications for target age children can underage children be considered. This is also on a strictly eldest first/chronological basis (the range of birth dates allocated places is different every year depending on who applies to our school). Underage children are only eligible for afternoon places in Sunnylands Nursery School.

My child has additional needs, will they get support?

Unfortunately, children cannot be provided with 1:1 support by the nursery school unless the Education Authority has assessed your child, along with medical professionals, prior to attendance. In order to secure 1:1 support, your child must be allocated a Statement of Special Educational Needs by the EA. Without this, your child can still be supported in school along with other children in their class, but 1:1 assistance cannot be provided. For some children, transition to nursery can be difficult but for others, support alongside their classmates is sufficient. If you are worried about your child's development or have any other worries about their needs, please speak to your Health Visitor or GP. This can help your child to be assessed in advance and will be much more proactive in order to assess your child's individual needs in advance of starting nursery school. It is really useful to provide details of your child's needs to the schools and pre-schools as this allows much more thorough planning in advance of meeting your child.

Does my child have to be toilet-trained before starting pre-school?

In Sunnylands Nursery School, we expect children to be toilet-trained before they start with us, unless they have a medical or physical need. Children will need to be able to access and take care of their needs for toileting, hand washing and personal hygiene. We have 2 staff to 26 children in a class and 1:1 toileting support is not a reality. We accept that accidents occasionally happen and in line with our intimate care policy we will support individual children. We work closely with our parents with regards to any toileting issues their children may have and we will provide you with support guidance.