



ADMISSIONS POLICY

Last reviewed:	May 2026
Next review due:	May 2027

The Little Firefly Forest School Admissions & Early Years Entitlement Policy

As an Ofsted-registered Early Years provider, **The Little Firefly Forest School** is legally bound to comply with Ofsted regulations, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and the Department for Education (DfE) *Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance*.

1. Enrolment & Waiting List Process

Children may be enrolled at any point during the academic year as space becomes available.

- **Expressing Interest:** To apply for a place, parents/carers must complete an expression of interest via our website (www.thelittlefireflyforestschool.co.uk).
- **Waiting List Deposit:** A £10 non-refundable deposit is required to secure a place on our general waiting list. **Exception:** In accordance with DfE regulations, families applying **exclusively for a fully funded place** (with no paid additional hours or voluntary extras) are exempt from this deposit.
- **Offering Places:** Places are offered via email. Parents must confirm acceptance by the deadline stated in the offer email, after which the place may be offered to the next family. Upon acceptance, the completed enrolment form and relevant fees/deposits must be submitted within one week.
- **Minimum Attendance:** Families accessing privately paid hours are asked to commit to a minimum of one day per week. Families accessing **funded entitlement hours only** may access their entitlement without being required to purchase additional private days or hours.

2. Admissions Criteria

When spaces become available, places are allocated in the following priority order:

- **Category A:** Children currently enrolled seeking to increase their attendance days.

- **Category B:** Children with a sibling (including children living within the same family unit) currently attending the nursery.
- **Category C:** Remaining spaces are allocated to families on the waiting list using the following criteria:
 1. Preferred start date
 2. Date joined the waiting list
 3. Age of the child
 4. Number of sessions required

Note: We reserve the right to withdraw an offer of a place prior to enrolment if conditions of acceptance are not met.

3. Government Funded Entitlements Overview

We participate in the Department for Education's early education entitlement schemes. Funded hours are delivered under a **stretched model**:

- **Buckinghamshire (Upton):** Stretched across 45 weeks per year (open 46 weeks).
- **Oxfordshire (Kingston Blount):** Stretched across 45/46 weeks per year.

Summary of Entitlements Offered

Entitlement	Eligible Age	Hours & Delivery	How to Access
Working Parent Entitlement	9 months through to starting school	Up to 30 hours per week (1,140 hrs/yr) stretched over 45 weeks (~25 hrs/wk) or 15 hours stretched (~12.5 hrs/wk).	Apply online via GOV.UK to obtain an 11-digit code. Submit the code and user details to us for verification.
2-Year-Old Targeted Entitlement	2-year-olds (families receiving additional support)	15 hours per week (570 hrs/yr) stretched over 45 weeks (~12.5 hrs/wk).	Apply through your Local Authority. Submit your eligibility voucher/code to the setting manager.
Universal Entitlement	All 3 & 4-year-olds	15 hours per week (570 hrs/yr) stretched over 45 weeks (~12.5 hrs/wk).	Universal access. Complete the Local Authority Parental Declaration form upon enrolment.

Residual Hours: Where stretched delivery leaves minor residual term time hours, these may be scheduled by agreement with the setting manager, subject to availability.

4. Voluntary Chargeable Extras ("Enhanced Experience")

Government funding covers the delivery of standard, high-quality care and education under the EYFS. It is **not** intended to cover the costs of meals, non-food consumables, or specialist extra-curricular activities.

To maintain our unique Forest School pedagogy, higher staffing ratios, and specialized outdoor environment, we offer an **Enhanced Experience Package**. This package covers:

- **Exceptional Ratios:** Maintaining a 1:4 staffing ratio across all age groups (exceeding statutory 1:8 / 1:13 requirements for 3–4 year olds).
- **Small Group Ethos:** Capped at 12 children per day.
- **Specialist Forest School:** Daily access to specialized outdoor practitioners, tools, and equipment.
- **Enriched Provision:** Organic snacks, specialized art/craft materials, and local excursions.

Breakdown of Charges (Voluntary)

In accordance with DfE invoicing guidelines, charges are broken down into transparent categories on your itemized monthly invoice:

1. **Food Charges:** Organic morning/afternoon snacks and specialist session drinks.
2. **Consumables Charges:** Sun cream, specialist outdoor craft resources, and forest materials.
3. **Activities Charges:** Forest School leader instruction, external workshops, and outings.

Weekly Additional Charges (Sample Schedule based on 12.5 stretched hours/week)

Setting	Age Group	1 Day/Wk	2 Days/Wk	3 Days/Wk
Kingston Blount	2-Year-Old Funding	£14.00	£57.00	£137.00
Upton	2-Year-Old Funding	£10.00	£52.00	£134.00
Kingston Blount	3–4 Year Funding	£22.00	£65.00	£135.00

Upton	3–4 Year Funding	£21.00	£63.00	£135.00
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(For 4–5 day schedules or 30-hour entitlement combinations, please request a personalized fee schedule from the nursery manager.)

5. Equity of Access & Stand-Alone (Fully Free) Option

Payment for additional services, food, consumables, and activities is **strictly voluntary**. Parents are under no legal obligation to pay these charges to access their funded entitlement.

- **Itemized Invoicing:** All invoices explicitly separate zero-rated funded hours from voluntary chargeable extras and private paid hours.
- **Stand-Alone Offer (Completely Free Access):** If a family chooses not to contribute to the Enhanced Experience charges, or is unable to do so, we provide a **Stand-Alone Funded Offer**. Under this offer:
 - Children receive their full EYFS curriculum entitlement without any charge.
 - Parents may choose to opt out of specific categories (e.g., opt out of Food by providing a suitable packed snack/lunch; opt out of Consumables by supplying their own sun cream, nappies, and wipes).
 - Where a family opts out of paid activity packages, children will continue to be provided with high-quality, fully inclusive EYFS early education activities delivered on-site.
- **Fee Waivers & EYPP:** Families in receipt of **Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)** or targeted 2-year-old support may have voluntary charges waived or reduced. Please speak confidentially to the Nursery Manager.

6. Standard Private Day Rates (Unfunded Hours / Additional Days)

For hours outside of government entitlements, or for non-funded sessions, our daily private rates apply:

Setting Location	Age Group	Daily Rate	Period Applicable
Upton	2 Years	£82.00	Until term after 3rd birthday
Upton	3–4 Years / Reception	£72.00	Until school entry

Kingston Blount	2 Years	£80.00	Until term after 3rd birthday
Kingston Blount	3–4 Years / Reception	£70.00	Until school entry

7. Operational Details & Guidance

- **Tax-Free Childcare & Vouchers:** We accept Tax-Free Childcare payments, Tax Credits, and all major employer childcare vouchers.
- **Swapping Days:** Permanent changes to agreed days must be requested in writing to the owner and are subject to availability.
- **Ad-Hoc Days:** Additional ad-hoc sessions can be requested via email (thelittlefireflyforestschool@gmail.com) with at least one week's notice.
- **Notice Period:** Terms of notice for terminating or altering a place are set out in our standard *Terms & Conditions* agreement.
- **Parental Conduct:** We expect mutual respect across all communications (written, verbal, and face-to-face). Aggressive or abusive behavior towards staff will not be tolerated and may lead to the immediate withdrawal of a child's place or removal from the waiting list.