

# Admissions Policy



**Policy Code:** FS-ADM-001

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Effective Date: 26.03.2026

Review Date: Annually

## Statement of Intent

**Forest & Play** is committed to providing a fair, transparent, and inclusive admissions process in line with:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Local Authority funding agreements
- Equality Act 2010

We aim to offer high-quality outdoor early years provision while ensuring all admission decisions are made fairly, consistently, and in the best interests of children and the safe running of the Forest School environment.

## 1. Scope

**This policy applies to all admissions to:**

- Forest School provision
- Outdoor learning sessions
- Funded and non-funded places

## 2. Forest School-Specific Considerations

**Due to the outdoor nature of provision, admissions are subject to additional considerations:**

- The physical environment (uneven ground, woodland terrain)
- Staffing ratios for higher-risk activities
- Weather-dependent operation
- Children's ability to safely access and engage in outdoor learning

**All admission decisions will consider whether the setting can:**

- Safely meet the child's individual needs
- Maintain appropriate supervision and ratios
- Provide suitable support for SEND where required

**Reasonable adjustments will always be considered in line with our Inclusion Policy.**



# Admissions Policy

## 3. Admissions Process

- Parents must submit an enquiry or registration form
- A waiting list may operate where demand exceeds availability
- Places are offered via email
- Parents must confirm acceptance within the stated timeframe

### A place is only secured once:

- Registration form is completed
- Required documentation is received
- Deposit (if applicable) is paid

## 4. Waiting List

### Where a waiting list is in place:

- Joining the waiting list does not guarantee a place
- Places are allocated based on availability and suitability for sessions
- Priority is given based on the criteria below

## 5. Admissions & Allocation of Places

**Places at Forest & Play are allocated based on availability, staffing ratios, the needs of the child, and the operational requirements of the provision.**

### When allocating places, consideration may be given to:

- Existing children wishing to increase sessions or attendance patterns
- Siblings of children already attending
- Children requiring continuity and consistency of care
- The age and stage of development of the child
- Group dynamics and the wellbeing of the wider cohort
- Children with SEND whose needs can be appropriately supported within the provision
- Looked After Children or children supported by external agencies
- Session availability and staffing arrangements



As a small, relationship-based outdoor provision, maintaining consistent groups and supporting children's emotional wellbeing are important considerations within our admissions process.

The setting reserves the right to allocate places in a way that supports the safe, effective, and sustainable operation of the provision.

## 6. Settling-In and Transition Process

Before a child starts at Forest & Play, we work closely with parents and carers to support a smooth and positive transition into our woodland environment.

Where appropriate, a home visit may be offered before a child starts. Home visits are entirely voluntary and will always be arranged in partnership with parents and carers.

As part of the settling-in process, parents and carers will be encouraged to share information about:

- The child's interests, routines and individual needs.
- Any medical, dietary, developmental or additional support requirements.
- The child's communication needs.
- Preferred methods of self-regulation and emotional support.
- Any comfort items or familiar objects that help the child feel secure.
- Clothing and equipment needed for outdoor learning in all seasons.
- Any relevant risk assessments, care plans or involvement from external professionals.

### **All children will be offered a three-step settling-in programme:**

Settle 1: 1 hour with a parent/carer present.

Settle 2: 1 hour without a parent/carer present.

Settle 3: 2 hours independently.

This programme helps children become familiar with the environment, practitioners, routines and expectations of the setting, whilst enabling practitioners to build positive relationships and gain an understanding of each child's needs, interests and wellbeing.

The settling-in process may be adjusted where appropriate to reflect individual circumstances, the child's wellbeing and their readiness to separate from their parent or carer.

# Admissions Policy



Where children are transitioning from another setting or moving on to school, Forest & Play will work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals, where appropriate, to support a smooth transition and continuity of care and learning.

## 7. Funded Places

**Funded early education places are available subject to eligibility and availability.**

- Funded sessions are offered in line with government guidance
- Places may be limited to specific sessions
- Termly intake may apply depending on funding requirements

### Funded-Only Places

Children accessing funded-only hours:

- Will not be charged for funded sessions
- May be asked for a voluntary contribution towards:
  - Meals and snacks
  - Forest School resources and activities

Resources refer to additional activities, experiences, and enhanced learning opportunities, including celebrations and seasonal events such as specialist visits e.g. Zoolab

**All contributions remain voluntary and are not a condition of attendance.**

## 8. Inclusion and Equality

**We are committed to inclusive practice and will not discriminate on the basis of:**

- Gender
- Race or ethnicity
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Family background

We will work in partnership with parents and external agencies to support children with additional needs.



# Admissions Policy

## 9. Documentation Requirements

**Before a child starts, the following must be completed:**

- Registration form
- Contract/terms agreement
- Emergency contact details
- Medical and dietary information
- Permissions and consents

## 10. Right to Refuse or Withdraw a Place

**The setting reserves the right to:**

- Refuse a place where needs cannot be safely met
- Withdraw an offer if information provided is inaccurate
- Adjust sessions based on operational or safety requirements

## 11. Health, Safety and Suitability

**Admission is conditional on:**

- Children being well enough to attend
- Parents providing appropriate outdoor clothing
- Agreement to follow Forest School safety expectations

## 12. Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Forest School Risk Assessments

## 13. Policy Review

**This policy will be reviewed annually or following:**

- Changes in legislation
- Operational changes
- Forest School development updates