



Hotwells Children's House

Admissions Policy





ADMISSIONS POLICY

Hotwells Children's House is a new, inclusive, non-profit nursery and pre-school that opened at Hotwells Primary School in September 2024.

This policy has been written in conjunction with Bristol City Council and B.A.N.D.

Admissions and waiting list

We are a small and inclusive nursery and preschool provision, in the grounds of, but independent from, Hotwells Primary School.

We have space for a maximum of 24 children per day, aged from two to five years old. We are open term-time only, 38 weeks of the year. We provide free-flow snack for children during their time with us. The cost of this is included within our private fees but also forms part of the cost of our 'voluntary contribution' (more details to follow). All mornings only children will need to be provided with packed lunches, for all day pupils there is an option to pay for hot school dinners.

We are open four days per week, from 8.30 – 16.00. Preschool children (3 years plus) can access our full day provision, two year olds can attend for half days, from 8.30 – 12.15. This allows a total of 30 hours for three and four year olds, and 15 hours for two year olds. We are closed on bank holidays, so no fees will be requested on these days. Children can be dropped off and collected any time within these hours, except for morning only pupils who will need to be collected at 12.15.

We accept the government funded hours and request a 'voluntary contribution' to reflect the true cost of high quality early childhood education and care. Our staff team are exceptionally well qualified and we offer a specialist Montessori pedagogy – always working above minimum qualification levels and ratios. This 'voluntary contribution' is essential for the sustainability of our setting and its enriched services.

We usually only take new children each September. Children must be two years old or older before the 1st September of the year they are starting. There may be occasional exceptions to this rule if all spaces are not filled by the start of the academic year.

We operate a waiting list system. Those who have registered their interest will be invited to a tour in the Autumn or Spring Term and may then complete an application form to be considered for a space. When application forms are returned to us, we can sometimes confirm spaces straight away if you meet certain criteria in our admissions policy. We aim to confirm September spaces in March. We sometimes have spaces available mid-year for children who meet certain criteria in our admissions policy, depending on availability.

We will always offer two entirely free **15 hour** spaces. These spaces are only offered to:

- Families who are signposted to us by Bristol City Council because the council have said that they are entitled to a 'free early education for two year olds' space
- Families of three or four year old children who meet one or more of the following criteria: are from a refugee or asylum seeker family, have an Education, Health and Care Plan, have a child protection plan, are a looked after child or are eligible for certain benefits such as Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP).





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These two spaces will solely be paid for using the Government Early Years Entitlement hours and will not be expected to give any 'voluntary contribution'. We work alongside Bristol City Council and senior leaders at Hotwells Primary School to decide who these spaces are offered to.

We are currently situated in a Reception Classroom at Hotwells Primary School whilst some essential building works are still taking place in our permanent residence. Once we move into our permanent nursery space we will be very lucky to be able to deliver our sessions in a beautiful, purpose designed space for early childhood education and care. As part of the terms of our licence agreement we have a duty to support the school's admissions, so we must always prioritise the following:

- Younger siblings of children attending Hotwells Primary School
- Children who live locally to the school

In order to protect the sustainability of our setting, we must strive to fill all spaces. This means that we must prioritise:

- Children applying for the suggested number of sessions, for example four days or two days. Families applying for three days or a mixture of days and mornings can leave us unable to fill remaining spaces so three day/mixes of mornings and full day requests are only given as an exception, if there is capacity.
- For sustainability purposes, as a private business, we must also prioritise families who are able to pay our 'voluntary contribution' (apart from our two fully funded spaces detailed above).

Children wanting part time hours will be matched with other children also wanting part time hours, in order to make up a full week.

We do not offer sibling discounts but will not take refundable deposits for siblings. We offer a 5% discount for twins.

Alongside the above essential priorities we will also strongly consider:

- Siblings of children who previously attended The Clifton Children's House
- The earliest an 'expression of interest' was sent
- Children with SEND
- Children from minoritised or disadvantaged groups
- Children who were born preterm*
- Children who are the siblings of a disabled child*

*These link to the leaders particular experience and expertise

Fees

Once a place is offered to your child you will be given the option to accept and secure it or decline it. If you choose to secure your child's place then you will pay a refundable deposit of £100. This will be refunded to you as a credit in your first bill but kept if you decide to not take up your place. We do not take refundable deposits for siblings.

We accept the government funded hours. For further information on how to see if you are eligible for various different types of funding, please see Appendix 1.





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We operate as a **non-profit**, fees are calculated carefully to ensure the sustainability of the setting. If there is ever any surplus at the end of our financial year, then we will publish a document outlining what it has been invested in. As time goes on, we hope to increase the number of fully funded spaces we are able to offer.

For children attending sessions funded by the Early Years Entitlement, we request a 'voluntary contribution' (for all but two spaces – see above) – this is to reflect the true cost of high quality Early Childhood Education and Care and is for the following reasons:

- We have an exceptionally well qualified and experienced staff team. Having just one Early Years Teacher in a setting is proven to improve outcomes for children, all senior leaders and most staff will be qualified Early Years Teachers.
- We offer a specialist method of teaching. The majority of our staff team are Montessori qualified and we provide a broad range of Montessori materials. We follow a flexible, modern and inclusive version of Maria Montessori's method.
- We operate at higher than statutory ratios.

We are registered for Tax Free Childcare and we strongly encourage families to use this scheme – this government scheme will contribute up to £2000 per year, per child towards the cost of childcare. Find out more here: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>.

Invoices will be sent termly via 'Tapestry' and will need to be paid prior to the start of each long term. Please speak to us if for any reason you are unable to pay termly. A £10 late charge will be added to fees not paid by the due date on the invoice. Fees are generally reviewed annually, but in exceptional circumstances increases may occur throughout the year. If there are any changes to your nursery fees, you will be given at least a month's notice of these.

Appeals Process

We operate an open door policy and welcome you to contact us if you are unhappy about any aspect of our admissions and fees. If you have any specific complaints about any aspect of our delivery of free hours but would rather not speak to us directly, please contact Bristol City Council to discuss your questions and concerns. Please email the Family Information Service, askcyps@bristol.gov.uk or call 0117 357 4192.

Notice Periods

We value the community aspect of starting a group of children in September and spending the whole year together. We believe this gives children secure relationships and a settled start to their education. For this reason we strongly encourage families to commit to spending the maximum possible periods of time at our setting.

As a minimum, parents are asked to make a termly commitment. This means that once parents sign the EYR1 Parental Declaration Form a contract is made. If parents then decide to transfer to another provider, funding will not always be re-directed to your new childcare provider until the start of the following term (September, January, April). The only group who can give a shorter notice period will be Eligible 2 year olds who will only need to give 1 months' notice. Please approach us directly to discuss this. Private fees and voluntary contributions will be payable until the end of the term in which you wish to leave.

If families decide they want to leave the setting they must give a minimum of half a term's notice.





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Late Collection Fees

We reserve the right to charge a late collection fee in instances of persistent late collection. These will be charged at £1 per minute past collection time.

Bank Holidays

Bank Holidays are not funded by Bristol City Council. If your funded hours fall on a bank holiday, the funded session will not be rescheduled.

Other policies

For further details on complaints and GDPR please see our separate policies on these. These will be made available shortly.

Appendix 1

Eligibility Codes (for working families) www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

- Eligibility codes need to be reconfirmed every 3 months. The eligibility code will remain the same after reconfirmation. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to keep their child's eligibility code valid at all times.
- Verification checks will be made on Bristol City Council's Provider Portal, using the following data:
 - a. Your 11-digit eligibility code
 - b. Your National Insurance Number(s)
 - c. Your child's date of birth
 - d. Your written consent(s) from your signed EYR1 Parental Declaration Form to verify eligibility.

Once the code is verified, you will be contacted to discuss sessions.

- Grace Periods – If you do not reconfirm the eligibility code and the code becomes invalid, the 'grace period' starts. The grace period is a short period of time where a child can still access their extended / funded hours. Once the grace period has expired we will discuss what to do about the funded hours you have lost. Codes which are already in their grace period must be reconfirmed before claims can be made for expanded or extended funded hours.

