Chelwood Nursery School
Chelwood Walk
St Norbert Road, London, SE4 2QQ

Admissions Policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain what places we offer and to who
- Set out how we make decisions about allocating places
- Explain how to apply for a place at Chelwood Nursery School

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):
School Admissions Code 2021

Early Years Entitlements – operational guide

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

3. General Principles

At Chelwood Nursery School we believe that all children should have access to high quality care and provision, and that these places should be allocated fairly.

Chelwood Nursery School offers places to children **aged between 2 and 5 years** on either a part time or full-time basis. We are a local authority maintained nursery school and places are offered to different age groups using different criteria.

Most of the places we offer at Chelwood are free. However, families can also opt to pay for additional hours over and above the governments free hours or pay for additional services, depending on the availability of places.

We accept children for our application list as soon as they are one year old (to be admitted when they turn two). The length of time a child's name is on the application list does not give a child priority over later applicants (see our admissions criteria set out in section 4).

Decisions on admissions are usually made in the Spring term (March-April) this is due to the one point of entry into Primary schools in Lewisham and Southwark. Most admission places are filled for the following September but occasional vacancies arise throughout the year.

4. When and how we offer places

Our main point of intake is September of each year. We will begin to offer places for a September start in the Spring term (February – April) of the same year. We will offer children places throughout the year depending on availability. We aim never to run with an empty place.

In making decisions about admissions, we follow the guidelines laid down by the London Borough of Lewisham for schools. These places are for three-year olds and 'rising-threes' (children who are within three months of their third birthday).

Criteria for admissions to the nursery school, in order of preference are as follows:

1. Children transferring internally, from two-year funded places at Chelwood.

2. Children in public care (details supplied by an allocated social worker or foster carer). A looked after child is a child who is in care to a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by that authority.

3. In exceptional circumstances there is discretion to admit children with an acute medical or social need, who would not otherwise qualify for admission. The application would have to be supported by a letter from a hospital consultant, social worker or similar professional.

4. Children whose brother or sister is on the roll of the school on the closing date for applications, and who will still be attending the school on the intended date of admission. Siblings must live at the same address.

5. Children for whom it is the nearest nursery school or class.

6. Distance of the child's home to the school (proof of address will be required – council tax bill, child benefit letters, utility bills). Because we are a Lewisham School, priority is given to Lewisham residents first.

In deciding on the educational, medical and social needs of individual children, consideration will be given to their specific cognitive, physical or linguistic needs and family circumstances. Advice from social workers, health visitors, speech and language therapists and other professionals will be noted if applicable.

5. Our Offer

5.1 Two-year-olds

Our two-year-olds are welcomed into our 'Garden room' provision, which is a nurture space, carefully designed to support the developmental needs of these very young children. As they develop in confidence, they will gradually explore our wider school learning environment, supported by their 'key person' or familiar adult from the Team.

Our offer to two-year-olds is 15 hours per week, taken as either 5 mornings or 5 afternoons. This is for families in receipt of the Lewisham 2s funding. We also offer limited 30hour places for families in receipt of the Working Family Entitlement. There is also an option to pay for the above but priority is given to families with funded childcare entitlement.

Who is eligible for free two-year old funding

Two-year-olds can get free childcare if you live in England and get one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- child tax credits, and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit

Two-year-olds can also get free childcare if they:

- are looked after by a local authority
- have a statement of special education needs (SEN) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- get Disability Living Allowance
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

For more information about who is eligible to receive two-year old free early education, visit https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds .

When will my two-year-old child be eligible for free government funding

If eligible, your child can access free funding the term after their 2nd birthday. For example:

A child born on or between	Will become eligible for a free place from
1 January and 31 March	1 April following their second birthday
1 April and 31 August	1 September following their second birthday
1 September and 31 December	1 January following their second birthday

Please note that we usually only start children in September and January. We do not usually have an April intake.

Applying for funding for two-year-olds

You can apply for eligibility through the Lewisham Early Years - Two year Old Funding

Please note that we are unable to accept certificates of eligibility from other boroughs, however you can apply for eligibility through Lewisham local authority even if you are not a resident in Lewisham.

Once you have your proof of eligibility, you will need to provide this, along with your application form. If you have any queries about the process, or would like help applying for eligibility, get in touch with our Admissions Team admissions@chelwood.lewisham.sch.uk and we can help you.

Rising 3's

A small number of two-year-olds who will turn three during the term of their admission are admitted and fully integrated into our classes with our three and four-year-olds and their learning will be supported by our highly personalised curriculum and by our staff team's specialist knowledge of child development. These children are sometimes termed as 'Rising 3's'. We have a number of funded places for these two-year-olds whose families meet certain criteria as detailed by the local authority and central government.

5.2 Three and four-year-old's offer

Our offer is based around the government's free 15 and 30 hour funding for three and four-year-olds, with parents able to pay for 'additional' hours over and above those free hours provided by the government.

All three and four year olds are entitled to 15 hours free "Universal' childcare. In addition to this, working parent are entitled to a further 15 hours "extended' childcare. For further information about eligibility and to apply visit www.gov.uk/30hours-ree-childcare.

15 hours free

We offer 15 hours as either 5 mornings (9:00 – 12:00) or 5 afternoons per week (12:30 – 15:30). Our offer is across five days (Monday – Friday) and we are not able to mix mornings and afternoons. We also offer a small number of 15 hour funded places spanning 2.5 days (Mon-Wed AM or Wed PM - Fri).

30 hours free

Our 'full time' offer incorporates 30 free hours as 9:00 – 15:30 Monday to Thursday and 9:00 – 13:00 on a Friday. Parents are then able to extend their child's place with 'paid hours' charged at the rate set out in our scale of fees.

Children in a full-time place are offered a two-course hot meal as part of their provision. The Government 30-hour funding does not cover the cost of lunches which will need to be paid for separately. We do not allow children to bring their own lunches due to the fact that we have children with severe allergies.

For parents who are not eligible for the governments free 30 hours, but who wish their child to be full time should speak to the school office about paying for additional hours for a full-time place.

NB: 'Rising-threes' will only be eligible for free funding from the term after their 3rd birthday, so they will need with a Lewisham 2 letter, Working Entitlement funding code or have pay for their first term.

6. How to apply

We accept applications year-round. We would recommend you apply by the **beginning of March** in order to be considered for a place in September, however we continue to offer places throughout the year when we have spaces.

Application forms can be obtained from our Reception any day between 8:30 and 16:00 or by visiting our website.

If you are offered a place you will need to provide a copy of:

1. Your child's birth certificate (long version with names of both parents) – this is used as proof of date of birth
2. Current Council tax bill – this is used as proof of address
3. Current utility bill (dated within the last 3 months) – this is used as 2nd proof of address
4. Child benefit notice showing the name of the child or child's NHS registration card – this is used as proof of parental responsibility

5. Two-year old eligibility letter (if applicable)

We will consider your application in line with our admission criteria and if we can, we will offer you a place.

If we can't offer you a place, we will keep your child's application on file so that if a place becomes available, we can offer you the place.

7. What happens next

Once we have a place to offer you, we will contact you to let you know and to ask you to attend a short meeting at the school or via zoom to complete some paperwork. We will also ask you to bring the documentation listed above.

Our usual practice is to do a home visit to each family where you would be visited at home by your child's new key person and another member of the class team. We find that this really helps children to settle into nursery and gives them the opportunity to start building a relationship with staff in a place they feel comfortable.

During the first weeks of term priority is given to settling new children into the nursery. All families are asked to settle their children over a period of a week or two, initially spending the whole session with their child and building up the time that their child is playing without them gradually during that time.

As the first week progresses, and if the children are settling well, you can spend time away from them whilst the child is with their key worker/team.

This settling in period may be extended if the child appears to be upset or unhappy or it is felt that they need longer to adjust to being at the nursery. This can be negotiated with the class team. It is very important that you talk to your key person about how you are feeling about your child's settling in as this will help us to develop a plan together. If you are a working parent, we would always suggest taking some annual leave (a week or two,) to support this process or reach out to your support network.

Children all take different amounts of time to settle into nursery and their age and stage of development will impact on this too. It will be a very different experience for them, even if they have attended another nursery in the past. Please try not to worry if your child is finding it hard or it is not going as quickly as you would like – the Chelwood Nursery School staff team are here to support you and your child.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body every year.

As a local Authority School, Chelwood Nursery School follows the agreed Lewisham admissions policy.