9. Childcare Practice Procedures

9.1 Admissions

It is our aim to make our preschool accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We are committed to being as inclusive as possible regarding our admissions for our preschool.

Accessibility

Pirton Pre School aims to ensure its services are accessible to all sections of the community regardless of their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, background, religion, ethnicity or competence in Spoken English as per our Inclusion policy. The setting will attempt to communicate its services throughout the community in such places as the Pirton Parish magazine, Childcare Information Service, Hertfordshire Local Offer, independent local service guides (e.g. 'Mum's Guide to Hitchin') and Facebook and in more than one language as appropriate.

The preschool welcomes both fathers and mothers, other relations and carers, including childminders.

Provision

- We run 2 sessions a day, 5 days a week (Monday to Friday):
    - Morning session: 09:00 to 12:00
    - Afternoon session: 12:00 to 15:00
- Children can attend both sessions, providing care from 09:00 to 15:00
- We endeavour to be flexible about attendance patterns to accommodate the needs of individual children and families, providing these do not disrupt the pattern of continuity in the setting that provides stability for all the children.
- As such, we require children to attend a minimum of 4 sessions per week, over a minimum of 2 days. For continuity of care, we require that children attend for a minimum of three terms although exceptions can be agreed at the discretion of the Manager.

- We have a legal maximum capacity of 32 children per session, but this is subject to staffing levels and maintaining the correct ratios for each age group under our care.
- In order to comply with statutory requirements we reserve the right to 'cap' numbers if it is felt that the quality of care could be affected due to the needs of each cohort.
- Our application process is non-bias and non-discriminatory and advocates to improve outcomes for all children regardless of protected characteristics.

Applications and allocation of places

- Children can start at Pirton Pre School at beginning of the term (September, January, April) after they have turned two.
- On completing an application form, parents must arrange for their child's original birth certificate or passport to be viewed by a member of staff. The relevant reference number shall be noted on their child's file.
- We encourage families to submit their application at least 18 months before the desired start date, and to submit session-change requests at least 1 term before the desired change.
- We allocate sessions to children according to date of receipt of the application (or the session-change request), and we try our best to accommodate all requests.
- In the rare event that we have more requests than spaces available in a particular session (and these applicants do not wish to swap to other sessions that do have availability), available places in that particular session will be allocated by applying the following criteria, in this order:
  1. Business day on which the application was received (Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm).
  2. Children with a formally identified special educational need or disability where reasonable adjustments can be made to cater for their individual needs.
  3. Children who are in the care of the local authority (looked after children).
  4. Funded children.
  5. Children with siblings attending Pirton Preschool on the requested start date.
  6. Children with siblings attending Pirton School on the requested start date.
  7. Children for whom Pirton Preschool is the nearest Preschool (as the crow flies).
  8. Distance to Pirton Preschool (as the crow flies).

Please note that attendance of sessions at Pirton Pre School has no influence on applications to attend Pirton Primary School. Parents must apply for a place at Pirton Primary School through the Local Authority and places will be allocated according to the Local Authority criteria.

Admissions

- The Senior Administrator will contact the parents/carers using the information provided on the registration form and inform them if they have been successful in obtaining a place, or whether they have been added to the waiting list.
- Once the parents/carers have confirmed their place and the settling in process is scheduled, a 'Welcome Pack' is sent to them which includes information on our curriculum, routines and FAQs

- All registration documents are stored in a child's file. These include;
  - Terms and Conditions - govern the basis by which we provide childcare.
  - Registration form - contains personal information about the child and family that must be completed in full prior to the child commencing.
- All other consent and/or permission forms are completed on the home visit prior to the child starting.

Children with SEND

- The SENDCO(s) must seek to determine an accurate assessment of a child's needs. If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core budget, then an application for SEN inclusion funding must be made immediately, if applicable.
- Children with identified SEND must be offered a place when one becomes available as with any other child, if reasonable adjustments can be made, However, the start date for children with more complex SEND will be determined by the preparations made to ensure the child's safety, well-being and accessibility in the setting. If a child's needs determine that adjustments need to be made, the manager must outline a realistic timeframe for completion, detailing the nature of adjustments e.g. risk assessment, staff training, health care plan and all other adjustments required. The child's safety at all times is paramount.
- During the settling-in process but prior to the child starting, the manager must check to see if a child's family is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, if so, the manager must ask for evidence to enable them to claim the Disability Access Fund directly from the local authority. If the family is eligible but not in receipt of the allowance, the setting manager will support the family in their application. More information can be found at **www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children/how-to-claim.**
- Preparation for admitting a child with SEND must be made in a reasonable amount of time and any delay in the child starting is scrutinised by the setting manager to avoid discrimination and negative impact on the child and family. During a preparation period the family and relevant agencies and the local authority must be regularly updated on the progress of the preparations.

Safeguarding/child protection

If information is provided by the parents that a child who is starting at the setting is currently, or has had involvement with social care, the designated person will contact the agency to seek further clarification.

Parents are advised on how to access the setting's policies and procedures.