



# Essendon C of E (VC) Primary School

## Nursery Provision Policy

### Background

At Essendon, we are fully supportive of the government's initiative to support all children having access to early education via the 15 hours and 30 hours funding scheme.

We understand fully the pressures on parents and carers with work commitments and the difficulty of juggling childcare, school runs and work.

However, we believe very strongly in putting the needs of our pupils first and any decision about our Nursery provision is taken with the children's best interests at heart. Our school is structured so that our Nursery pupils and Reception pupils learn together in one class. This has a great many advantages for our Nursery pupils including helping them to settle quickly as they have the Reception pupils who act as fantastic role models. It also aids transition into Reception as the children are already used to the features and expectations of the environment and have built up good relations with staff.

But, our physical space and having two year groups together also limits the flexibility available to some settings. The education of our pupils in their reception year isn't held back or restricted – they need to be stretched and challenged to reach their full potential which only happens with careful planning of each session with our pupils' needs in mind. They develop a lovely relationship with the nursery children, some of which are only 3 months younger.

### Pupil numbers and staffing

We can accommodate up to 10 pupils in our Nursery at any one time together with our 15 Reception pupils. There are never more than 25 pupils in the unit at any given time.

Our Early Years team comprises three adults. There are never fewer than two adults in the class, when the setting is full.

### Admissions

Admissions are handled by the school office and applications should be made directly to school using the Application Form which is available both on our website and in hard copy from the school office if not done so already.

The deadline for applying to Nursery is **30<sup>th</sup> April** each year. In the event that we receive more than 10 applications, the same criteria as the local authority uses to allocate Reception places apply:

1. Children with an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan** that names the school.
2. **Children looked after** and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order. (Evidence is required).
3. Children with a particular **medical or social need** to attend Essendon (evidence from professional is required).

4. Children with **siblings** on roll at Essendon (siblings includes: brother or sister; half-brother or half-sister; adopted brother or sister; children of the parent or carer or the parent or carer's partner; children look after or previously looked after).
5. Children for whom Essendon is their **nearest school**.
6. Children **living closest to the school**.

Late applications are allocated places in the order they are received. In the event that no places are available, we operate a waiting list.

Many pupils are ready to join the Nursery class in September because they are confident and have already experienced a nursery or other setting. However, for those pupils whose birthday falls between March and July, they may not be ready to join the Nursery class until January and we are happy to accommodate this. You should apply in the same way but ask for **deferred** place on your application form. Your child's place will then be reserved until the spring term.

It is very important that you make clear the Nursery option you want when you apply to help us with managing our pupil numbers (two pupils wanting 15 hours over two and a half days can be accommodated without taking up any more spaces than one family wanting 15 hours each morning or 30 hours over the week).

Please be aware that once a pattern has been chosen (including days of the week), we will try to accommodate your request to change the pattern during the year but will need to consider the limited number of spaces and the complexity of timetabling families' preferences.

## **Costs**

We are an inclusive Church of England School and aim to make our provision as accessible as possible to all families. We offer a 15 hour and 30-hour Nursery option, both of which are funded by the DFE (provided, in the case of the 30 hours option, you have applied for and received a code). Other options enable families to extend the free hours (this is referred to as 'topping up'). To keep costs to an absolute minimum for our families, the current charge for the top up is £7.00 per hour as of September 2025. This may be subject to change in April 2026, following DFE/EYFS updates.

## **Possible Nursery Options**

### **A. Morning Nursery: all pupils**

Any child is welcome into our Nursery class in the academic year in which they will have their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday (i.e. the year in which their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday falls between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> August).

Morning nursery begins at 8.45am and ends at 11.45am every day (i.e. 15 hours per week).

There is no charge for this because the government offers 15 hours of funding for all pupils from the term after their third birthday (although we do sometimes ask for a voluntary contribution towards extras such as school trips, as set out in our Charging and Remissions Policy). The same applies with the government 30 hours funding.

### **B. 30 hours Nursery**

Although we are pleased to accommodate pupils under the 30 hours scheme, it is **very** important that families wishing to take up 30 hours places have visited the setting and feel comfortable with the way the day and the environment are structured (including lunchtime) before their child joins our Nursery.

Please make an appointment to look round the school if you are considering a 30-hour place at Essendon. We would love to meet you and your child.

30 hours Nursery begins at 8.45am and ends at 2.45pm each day. There is no charge for this if you have applied for and been issued with a 30-hour code (although we do sometimes ask for a voluntary contribution towards extras such as school trips, as set out in our Charging and Remissions Policy on the school website).

#### **Topping Up:**

If you would prefer your child to stay for an extra half hour until the end of the school day (3.15pm) each day, you are welcome to do so. The cost is £3.50 per day or £17.50 per week.

#### **Lunches:**

Currently, Nursery aged pupils are not included in the government's Universal Free School Meals for Infants pupils and therefore, if you wish your child to have a school meal, a charge will be made for this (currently £2.61 per day as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025).

#### **Wrap around care:**

We run our own breakfast club but outsource our after-school club to Foundation Sports & Play. They started with us in October 2024. They have a range of activities to offer daily. Breakfast club starts at 7:30am where a light breakfast will be served which includes toast, cereal, cereal bars etc. Please ask about breakfast club at our school office.

The after-school club runs until 5:00pm and have different options to offer an extended booking until 5:15pm. If you wish to use the after-school club provision and would like to be provided with more information, please contact Mr David Greene on [herts@foundation-sports.com](mailto:herts@foundation-sports.com).

### **D. 15 hours flexi**

We appreciate that for some families, 15 hours spread across 2 and a half days will be more helpful than 5 mornings.

Subject to availability, we are happy to accommodate 15 hours pupils for two full days and a morning, subject to the same arrangements as for our 30 hours pupils' families in terms of visiting the setting and feeling confident that it is suitable for their child.

Flexi 15 days begin at 8.45am and end at either 2.45pm (full days) or 11.45am (half day).

#### **Topping Up:**

If you would prefer your child to stay for an extra half hour until the end of the school day (3.15pm) on their full days, you are welcome to do so. The cost is £3.50 per day or £17.50 per week.

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Currently, Nursery aged pupils are not included in the government's Universal Free School Meals for Infants pupils and therefore, if you wish your child to have a school meal, a charge will be made for this (currently £2.61 per day as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025).

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## **Answering your questions**

We appreciate that choosing your child's Nursery class is a huge responsibility. We are always delighted when families choose to join the Essendon community. We understand that the complexity of options offered with a view to providing as much choice and flexibility as possible can sometimes be overwhelming.

Ellie Moore, our Office Manager, is always available in our school office to guide you through the application process.

Equally, our Early Years team or the principal will be happy to meet with you by appointment to show you round our setting and/or to answer any questions you have. We offer Open Days for parents, and these will be advertised on our website and banners.

It is important that you feel well informed in your decision making and we're here to help with that.