



Dunsford Academy Nursery Admissions Policy and Oversubscription Criteria 2026 - 2027

Policy Updated: Spring 26

Policy Review Date: Spring 27

As an academy, the Learning Academy Partnership Trust is the admission authority and has responsibility for setting these admission arrangements and for making decisions regarding admissions applications. These schools set their own oversubscription criteria.

These arrangements seek to comply with the government's [School Admissions Code](#), the [Local Conditions of Funding the Early Years Education for two-, three- and four-year-olds and the Early Years Pupil Premium](#), the [Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2014](#) and the [Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes of Devon County Council](#), the local authority (LA) for this area.

Change Log

Spring 2026	Updated Section 3: Existing section updated to clarify funded and non-funded entitlement for pupils aged two, three and four. Updated Section 7: Closing time now in line with school Updated Head of Academy
Spring 2025	Updated: Section 2 and 3 to reflect new funding entitlement and admission from September 2025 Section 4 - start and end times Section 5 - pricing structure for two-, three- and four-year-olds Section 6 - childcare voucher schemes, added payment type Student Grant, updated session choices Section 12 - Points of Admission to nursery for funded hours Section 22 - Claiming the Early Years Education Funding to reflect the new funding
Spring 2024	Updated Early Years Education Funding/childcare for two years olds to reflect the changes effective from April 24: Section 3 Updated charges per session to reflect price increase announced September 2023: Section 5 Updated Childcare voucher provider list: Section 6 Checked and updated links

1. The Ethos of Dunsford Community Academy

- **Collectively:** We are one team and agree to work together as one family.
- **Empowering:** We invest in each other our communities and our future, achieving more than we ever could individually, whilst preparing for the next stage in our development
- **Excellence:** We champion excellence for all and in all that we do.

2. Early Years Education Funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds

- 2.1. All three- and four-year-olds are entitled to a free early year's education place for 570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year from the term after they turn three.
- 2.2. Eligible working parents of two-year-old children or older may be eligible to the 9–23 month funding, up to 30 hours of free childcare per week, for 38 weeks a year.
- 2.3. For children aged two years old receiving some additional forms of support are eligible to 15 hours of early education for 38 weeks, up to 570 hours per year.
- 2.4. We expect to admit children that will be using their Early Years Education Funding as well as children whose parents are buying additional hours and those that are both funded and buying hours. There may be some children who are only attending for bought hours and some that only attend for funded hours. The minimum amount of funded time in a day is 3 hours and the maximum is 7.45 hours.

3. Admissions to the nursery

- 3.1. Dunsford Community Academy admits:

- Eligible two-year-olds funded from their second birthday under the 9-23 months working family's eligibility.
- Eligible two-year-olds funded from the start of the term following their second birthday – families receiving additional government support.
- Non-funded two-year-olds from the start of the term from their second birthday.
- Early Years Education funded three- and four-year-olds from the start of term following their third birthday.
- Non-funded three- and four-year-olds from their third birthday.

4. Patterns of attendance available

- 4.1. We are required to offer the Early Years Education Funding in a flexible way. Our school makes a core offer of:
- Morning sessions of 8.45am to 11.45pm and
 - Afternoon sessions of 12.15pm to 3.15pm and
 - All day sessions of 8.45am to 3.15pm during term time only.
- 4.2. If you choose an all-day session this includes the lunchtime period that is 11.45 – 12:15pm. This time is considered to be part of the day when children continue their learning and will be funded as part of the Early Years Education Funding.

5. Extended Hours

- 5.1. Some families may need a longer day; we can also offer funded nursery places in our Trust via our extended provision. These sessions are from 7.30am – 8.45am before school.
- 5.2. The provision before school will differ from the core early years provision between 8.45am and 3.15pm, as there will be older children attending. However, the provision will still adhere to the EYFS statutory guidance.
- 5.3. Before school childcare provision is made for all children (aged 2-11). The Trust manages this service, and this means that the Early Years Education Funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds can be offered between 7.30am and 3.15pm making our nursery provision extremely flexible.
- 5.4. When allocating places, the Trust take these extended services for two-, three- and four-year-olds to be an integral part of the nursery provision.
- 5.5. If you want to buy additional hours on top of the 15/30 funded hours, you can do this during any of our opening times. We do not sell part sessions.
- 5.6. Non-funded places are also available charged at £5.00 per hour for 3- & 4-Year-olds and £5.50 per hour for 2-Year-olds until the start of the term following their third birthday.

6. Charging

- 6.1. There is no charge for applying for a place, for admission or for the provision of education. We will not request donations before or during the admissions process

and any donations made to the school following admission are entirely voluntary. No bought activities, such as visits, are compulsory.

- 6.2. The school must comply with Devon County Council's [Local Conditions of Funding](#)¹. A charge cannot be made if a child is only attending the nursery as part of their Early Years Education Funding.
- 6.3. If you want to buy additional hours on top of the 15 funded hours, you can do this during any of our opening times. We do not sell part sessions.
- 6.4. Non-funded places are also available charged at £5.00 per hour for 3- & 4-Year-old and £5.50 per hour for 2-Year-olds until the start of the term following their third birthday

7. Childcare Vouchers and Tax-Free Childcare

- 7.1. Our school accepts childcare vouchers (Sodexo, Edenred, Fedeliti, Computer Share, Pluxee and Busy Bees) from parents who were part of a scheme prior to 2018.
- 7.2. For parents who are an enrolled student, we accept Childcare Grant payments, subject to eligibility.
- 7.3. For working families, including self-employed we accept Tax-Free Childcare.
- 7.4. The table below sets out our session times. When applying for a place please tell us what sessions you need. We only consider requests for sessions AFTER the oversubscription criteria have been applied.

Session choices	Hours	Funded/bought hours
7.30am – 8.45am	0.75	Only counts as funded time/free childcare if staying at a morning session as well. (the minimum amount of funded time is 3 hours)
7.30am – 11.45pm	4.25	As part of the Early Years Education Funding/free childcare or bought.
8.45am – 11.45pm	3	As part of the Early Years Education Funding/free childcare or bought.
11.45pm -12.15pm	0.5	As part of the Early Years Education Funding/free childcare or bought.
11.45pm – 3.15pm	3.5	As part of the Early Years Education Funding/free childcare or bought.
12.15pm – 3.15pm	3	As part of the Early Years Education Funding/free childcare or bought.

¹ The Local Conditions of Funding are continually being updated so please make regular visits to the document.

7.30am – 3.15pm	7.45	As part of the Early Years Education Funding/free childcare or bought.
8.45am – 3.15pm	6.5	As part of the Early Years Education Funding/free childcare or bought.

- 7.5. Parents only wishing to use their 15 funded hours with us need to choose sessions carefully so that they can access the full 15 hours e.g. sessions of 3 +3 + 3 + 3 + 3 hours = 15 OR 7.45 + 4.25 + 3 hours = 15

NB The funding can only be taken between 7.30am. and 3.15pm.

8. School Lunches

- 8.1. If your child is entitled to FSM and attend nursery for both before and after lunch sessions, a free school meal can be provided. The same [benefits criteria](#) apply to nursery school children as apply to children in school.
- 8.2. Registered nursery children who do not meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals can pay for a school lunch or bring a packed lunch or both.

9. Visiting

- 9.1. We welcome visits from parents and children who are considering applying for a place here. This is an opportunity for you to see what we have to offer. Visits are not a compulsory part of the admissions process and will not affect decisions on whether a place can be offered at our nursery. If you would like to visit, you should contact the school to make an appointment.
- 9.2. A 'stay and play' session or a 'taster session' can be attended before applications are made for a place. Please contact us to arrange one of these options.
- 9.3. Stay & play and taster sessions are offered when places have been accepted also. The Nursery lead will also discuss a phased start if required.
- 9.4. Most children will start at the nursery at the start of the term. Other children join us "in-year" at other times. This may be because they are new to the area or would like to transfer from another school or early years provider.
- 9.5. Please complete the expression of interest form or School Nursery Application Form.
- 9.6. Places are not allocated to a child automatically, even where:
- there is an older sibling attending here.
 - a child attends a particular toddler group attached to the school.
 - a parent has expressed an interest at any time in the school; or
 - the child has always lived close to the school.
- 9.7. No places will be held in reserve for a child who applies late; the school cannot hold places empty if another child applies for admission. We will publicise the need to apply but the responsibility for making an application will be with you as the parent.

10. How to apply for a nursery place

- 10.1. Parents may complete an Expression of Interest form for all children 1 year old and under. Parents who wish to apply for a 2-year-old or 3-year-old place must complete the School Nursery Application Form and return it to the school.
- 10.2. The closing dates for applications for the nursery intake are: 1 May (for a September start), 1 October (for a January start) and 1 February (for an April start). You can apply after these dates, but your application may not be considered until after all of the applications that were on time. If you couldn't apply before because, for instance, you moved to this area, you should make sure that you inform the school. If the reason for applying after the closing date is accepted, your application will be considered at the same time as everyone who did apply on time if this is still possible.

11. Information provided in an application

- 11.1. We would like all applications to be fully and honestly completed. It is important that where we offer places to some and refuse others we do so fairly and consistently. Where we have reason to believe that information is false and has been provided knowingly, we may withdraw the offer of a place. This is particularly relevant where an address is given which is not the one from which a child will actually attend nursery, and this disadvantages another child. If necessary, we will ask for evidence of a child's home address and date of birth before admission.
- 11.2. If you know or believe that your child's address will change before admission, you must inform the school as this may affect your application.
- 11.3. You will be asked to provide date of birth evidence so we can check your child's age.

12. What happens next

- 12.1. If there are fewer applications than places, then no application will be refused. Only if there are more applications than there are places available will the Trust prioritise applications according to the oversubscription criteria below.
- 12.2. By 1 June, 1 November and 1 March we will contact successful parents to welcome them to the nursery and to make arrangements for admission itself. You will also be contacted if we do not have a place available so that you can apply to another provider.
- 12.3. If you need help finding a place at another provider, please visit [Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/education-and-families)

13. Points of Admission to nursery for funded hours

- 13.1. Generally, children will start at nursery at the beginning of a term, as defined by the DFE. Eligibility for two-year-olds in receipt of 9–23-month funding can start from their 2nd birthday. Eligibility for two-year-olds in receipt of government support is from the start of the term following a child's second birthday and eligibility for all three-years-olds to receive the Early Years Education Funding is at the start of the term following their third birthday. This funding will be paid up until the time when

the child reaches statutory school age if the parent chooses to defer or delay entry into school.

Children who are eligible for 2- or 3-year-olds		
On or after	And on or before	Funding starts:
1 September	31 December	Spring Term
1 January	31 March	Summer Term
1 April	31 August	Autumn Term

- 13.2. There is a legal requirement that all children begin full time education by the beginning of the term following their **fifth** birthday. All places offered in reception at the normal round are for full-time admission in the September following the **fourth** birthday. This is a legal requirement on schools but not on parents who retain a right to defer admission or send their child part time.

14. The Admissions Process

1) Children become eligible for a place when they were born:	On or after 1 April and on or before 31 August	On or after 1 September & on or before 31 December	On or after 1 November & on or before 31 March
2) Visit the nursery in:	Spring term	Summer term	Autumn term
3) Apply by:	1 May	1 October	1 February
4) Admissions panel meet in:	May	October	February
5) Receive a letter about your application before:	June	November	February
6) Reply to the letter	Reply to the letter within 2 weeks to accept a place (or ask why you did not get a place). You can telephone, email or write to the school.		
7) Start at Nursery (or at the start of term closest to that month)	September Autumn Term	January Spring term	April Summer term

15. Published Nursery Admissions Number (PNAN)

- 15.1. This is the number of places we intend to make available for our normal nursery intake. Once we set this number, we will not refuse admission for applications below the PNAN. If there is unexpectedly high demand and we believe we could admit more children, we inform Devon County Council's Early Years and Childcare Team and either some children will be admitted above the PNAN or we will increase the PNAN. The number of children that can be admitted will depend on their age, the amount of floor space we have and whether additional staff will be required.
- 15.2. The Trust also factors in the local demand for places. If there is a change to the PNAN part way through the year this must be published.
- 15.3. If there is an increase in the demand for places, the Trust may decide to increase the PNAN at the start of the following term in order to accommodate children on the waiting list and conversely reduce the PNAN if there is a very low demand.
- 15.4. The table below sets out our Published Nursery Admissions Number (PNAN) for 2025-26

The maximum number of 2-year-olds (dependant on ratio), 3- and 4-year-old children that will be admitted at any one time:	30
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- 15.5. Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available the Trust will use the following oversubscription criteria to prioritise applications for both funded and bought hours:

A child with an Education, Health and Care Plan naming the nursery will be admitted.

Looked After Children or those who were Looked After but ceased to be because they were adopted, made the subject of a child arrangements order or made the subject of a special guardianship order.

Priority will next be given to children with an exceptional medical or social need to attend this setting.

Priority will next be given to children who live in the catchment area set out in the map below, who are eligible for the Early Years Education Funding for two-year-olds.

Priority will next be given to children living in the school's catchment area, who are siblings of pupils on roll at this nursery or school when the application is made.

Priority will next be given to children of members of staff who have been employed at this school for more than two years when the application is made or recruited within the past two years to fill a vacancy for which there was a skills shortage.

Priority will next be given to children living in the school's catchment area.

Priority will next be given to children who live outside the catchment area who are eligible for the Early Years Education Funding for two-year-olds.

Priority will next be given to children living outside the school's catchment area, who are siblings of pupils on roll at this nursery or school when the application is made.

Other children who live outside of the catchment area

Tie breaker – to prioritise applications in the same oversubscription criterion, we will use: a) straight-line distance from home to school and, b) where distances are equal (within a metre) we will use a Random Ballot.

16 Exceptional social or medical need for admission to our nursery.

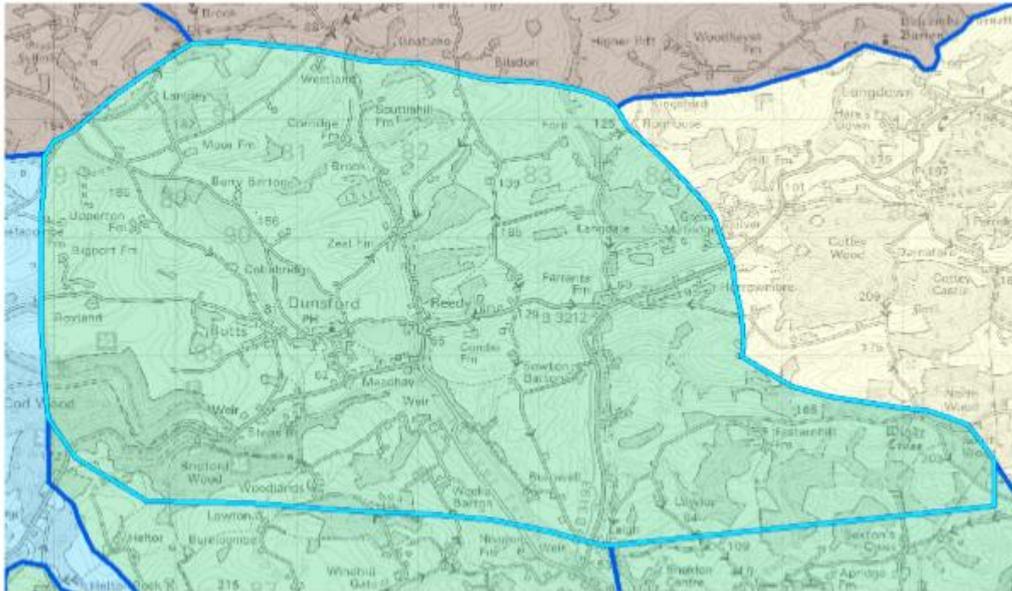
16.1 We give higher priority for children where there is an exceptional social or medical need to attend this nursery. The need must be specific to this nursery: the child may have very challenging circumstances that requires additional support but if that support could also be provided at another nursery, there would be no exceptional need to attend this nursery. Exceptional social or medical need could include:

- A serious medical condition, which can be supported by medical evidence.
- Significant caring responsibilities, which can be supported by a social care officer;
- Where the child has a disability that may make travel to another nursery more difficult, which can be supported by medical evidence.

16.2 These examples aren't meant to be exhaustive or exclusive. Neither should it be assumed that similar circumstances would impact on different children and families in the same way.

17 Catchment Area

17.1 Our catchment area is in the middle of the map, bordered by a light blue line. You can view it in more detail at devon.cc/schoolareamaps. This will confirm whether addresses close to the boundary are inside or outside our area. We welcome admissions applications for children living inside and outside our catchment area.



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18 Waiting lists

18.1 Following the allocation of nursery places the school will retain a waiting list. Waiting lists will be kept in order of the oversubscription criteria above. Places on lists will not be prioritised according to how long a child's name has been on that list or by the age of the child or by whether the sessions are funded or bought. It is possible that a child's name could go down on a list as well as up.

18.2 If a place is only available for a short period of time, i.e. half a term or less, then the school will discuss with the parent whether it would be in the child's best interest to attend the nursery for such a short period of time before having to find a place at another provider. Continuity and consistency of care is most important in the early years and having lots of transitions can be disruptive for a child.

Parents with very young children, i.e. those that are not due to start within the next two terms, will be asked to complete an expression of interest.

19 Increasing the hours attended

19.1 If a place becomes available part way through a term and there is a waiting list, priority for the place will be given to the child/children on the waiting list. If the parents on the waiting list do not want the places at the times that are available, then the places can be offered to parents of children who are already attending the nursery. Similarly, if there is not a waiting list and there are parents of children that already attend the nursery who want to either take up additional funded hours and/or buy extra hours then a list of those parents will be made, and the oversubscription criteria will be applied to determine who should be given priority for that place.

20 Admissions appeals

21.1 If a nursery place is refused, parents can go through the schools' complaints process to express their concerns. The Trust will review the decision and decide whether the refusal was justified on the grounds that the nursery is full. Even if it is agreed that the nursery was full, it will also consider the impact on the child and family and may still award a place at the nursery if there is both the physical space and sufficient staff available.

21 Transport

21.1 No transport is available for pre-school children.

22 Uniform

22.1 Children attending this nursery are encouraged to wear a uniform. Some of the items required can be purchased from Price and Buckland and the rest of the uniform can be bought from retail outlets.

23 Claiming the Early Years Education Funding

23.1 The Early Years Education Funding can be taken at more than one provider. Although there is no upper limit on the number of providers a child can attend careful consideration must be given to ensuring that the child feels settled, safe and can form relationships with significant adults.

23.2 It is important that both the school and parent can see what time is funded and what time is being bought.

23.3 Parents must not claim more than the 15-hour entitlement, checks are carried out to ensure that over claims are not made.

23.4 All 3 and 4-year-olds in England already get 15 hours a week, or 570 hours a year of free early education. If their parents are living and working in England, 3 and 4-year-olds may be entitled to 30 hours free childcare. An extra 570 hours of free childcare a year, so 1140 hours in total.

22.5 Eligible working parents of two-year-old children or older may be eligible to the 9–23 month funding, up to 30 hours of free childcare per week, for 38 weeks a year.

22.6 Some two-year-olds receiving some additional forms of support are eligible for a funded place in provision that Devon County Council has approved as being good or better quality. Our nursery/foundation stage unit (FSU) is an approved provider and can admit two-year-olds from the start of the term following their second birthday or at the start of the term in which they have their third birthday, for 38 weeks, up to 570 hours per year.

23.7 The eligibility criteria are the same as the ones for Tax-Free Childcare, except you can continue to get these types of support at the same time as 30 hours free childcare:

- tax credits
- Universal Credit
- childcare vouchers or salary sacrifice schemes
- childcare grants and bursaries

23.8 When you apply, you'll be confirming that you need childcare so that you and your partner, if you have one, can work. If your child's already in a full-time reception class in a state funded school, you won't be eligible for 30 hours free childcare.

23.9 You may be asked to help complete a Conflict Buster and Parent Declaration Form if you want some funded time with us and some at another provider.

24 Changes to attendance

24.1 Changes to the times when a child is attending will generally only be agreed to take effect from the start of a term. The oversubscription criteria will be applied to both 1 and 2 below to determine within each group which children should be given priority. Order of priority for the consideration of unfilled places.

- 1) New applications from parents whose children do not yet attend the nursery.
- 2) Requests by parents whose children attend the nursery, and they want to increase OR change the times their child attends

24.2 It is expected that parents will ensure that their child will attend at the times agreed on so that children can establish a routine and be ready to start school.

24.3 If a child is sick the parent must inform the school. If a child does not attend the nursery for a period of more than two weeks without informing the school that child's place may be offered to another child.

25 Induction and transition arrangements for starting nursery

25.1 Every child is different; this is why we will gain as much information as possible from parents prior to their child's settling in session. Our registration forms will inform us of anything that we need to know to be able to safely care for each child (for example, any allergies, health concerns, food intolerances or preferences). We will also collect family and emergency contact details.

25.2 Before a child starts with us, we ask parents to comment on their child's likes, dislikes, favourite activities and personality. This enables our nursery staff to understand what to expect from the child whilst we are getting to know them, and also the activities the child would enjoy the most. This information helps to ensure a child enjoys their first nursery experiences. We also ask for the parents' expectations of us as a nursery so that we can meet and hopefully exceed these standards.

25.3 Once a child is registered, a parent is very welcome to join us for an hour or two with their child before their first official session. This is optional but could help them to get a feel for our nursery, to get to know our staff and to experience being in nursery with them.

26 Contacts and further information

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27 Policy Version

27.1 This policy was determined by the Trust on 25th February 2026