



**This policy was agreed by Governors on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

This policy will be used to determine admission arrangements for children wishing to start nursery at Merridale Primary school. All admissions decisions can be justified by reference to the following criteria.

After reaching the age of 3, children are entitled to apply for 15 hours a week of free learning and care in an early years setting. This can commence from the start of the term following their third birthday, if places are available. The patterns of attendance that we offer are outlined below.

Morning Session: 8.30am-11.30am, Monday – Friday

Afternoon Session: 12.15pm-3.15pm, Monday – Friday

All children entitled to 15 hours provision will attend either all morning sessions or all afternoon sessions. There is no option to have part full days and part morning/afternoons.

In addition, some eligible families will be entitled to 30 hours per week free provision. These sessions will run from 8.30am-3.15pm, Monday to Friday. A charge will be made for the 45 minute lunchtime period. **Please see page 4 for more information on the 30 Hours Flexible Offer at Merridale Primary School.**

We offer a 40 place nursery with places divided as follows:

- 20 morning Places
- 20 afternoon Places
- 8 (maximum) full time places (children with a full-time place require one morning and one afternoon place)

#### **DFE 30 Hours Entitlement**

You may be entitled to 30 hours free childcare if:

- You live in England
- Your child is 3-4 years old

The aim is to help families by reducing the costs of childcare and to support parents to increase the number of hours they work and/or encourage them into employment.

However, this increase will only be available to families who meet a certain criteria.

### Who is eligible?

**Up-to-date details available here:** [30 hours free childcare - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare)

The additional hours will be available to families where:

- Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family);
- Both parents are working includes circumstances where:

One or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on parental, adoption, maternity or paternity leave;

One or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay;

One parent is employed and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring; or

One parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits.

- Each parent has a weekly minimum income equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or living wage (parents do not necessarily need to actually work 16 hours a week, but rather their earnings must reflect at least 16 hours of work at national minimum wage or national living wage).
- Neither parent has an income of more than £100,000 per year.
- Foster carers are only eligible for the extended entitlement for their own children (if they meet the criteria); they are not eligible for children that they foster.

The definition of 'working' will include employed and self-employed persons and parents on zero hours contracts who meet the criteria.

Many parents have irregular work patterns and the government are keen that the childcare offered is flexible to meet parent's needs. Parents who are studying and grandparents or other family members with parental responsibility for a child aged 3 or 4 will be eligible for the extended entitlement if they meet the above criteria.

**Important** – If your child is in reception class, you can't get free childcare. Once your child is of compulsory school age, they are no longer eligible.

You are **not eligible** if:

- You're in receipt of a childcare grant
- You're a full-time student/an intern

- You're not entitled to receive public fund

### **When and how can you apply?**

The 30 hours will be delivered in every area of England from September 2017.

**If your child will be 3 before the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025, you can now check if you're eligible and apply for the 30 hours free childcare scheme.**

The date your child can start depends on your child's birthday. Your child is eligible:

- From the term following their third birthday until they reach compulsory school age
- If they usually live with you – you do not have to be their parent however foster carers are exempt

### **Child's Birthday**

### **When you can claim**

1 January to 31 March	The beginning of the summer term on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August September	The beginning of the autumn term on or after 1
1 September to 31 December	The beginning of the spring term on or after 1 January

### **Merridale 30 Hours Flexible Offer**

Merridale Nursery offers a fixed number of places for the 30 hours entitlement, at the moment this is fixed at a maximum of **8 places**.

If you are eligible to a full-time 30 hours place, you will need to apply via the DFE website. Once you receive confirmation through the DFE website that you are eligible for a 30 hours place, you will need to share this with the school office.

See if you are eligible here:

[30 hours free childcare - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/30-hours-free-childcare)

Please note that parents/carers are responsible for checking termly that they are still eligible to receive 30 our free childcare for their child. You will receive a reminder each term from the DFE to do this through your government gateway childcare account.

Once your eligibility has been confirmed, you will be provided with a code that you will need to share with the school office. This code is needed to ensure that your child still receives their 30 hours free childcare.

**The pattern of attendance that we offer for a full time (30 hour) place at Merridale Primary is:**

Monday: 8.30am – 3.15pm

Tuesday: 8.30am – 3.15pm

Wednesday: 8.30am – 3.15pm

Thursday: 8.30am – 3.15pm

Friday: 8.30am – 3.15pm

A charge of **£18.00** per week will be made for the cost of supervision at lunch time (payable in advance). Children must bring a packed lunch each day – lunchtime supervision cost **does not** include food. Please remember that Merridale Primary School is a **nut-free** school.

Children will be greeted in their Nursery classroom by their midday supervisor and teaching assistant at 11.30am. Their midday supervisor and a teaching assistant will supervise them throughout the lunchtime period in the nursery classroom. They will be supported in:

- Developing independence in health and self-care skills e.g. washing and drying hand before lunch
- Reinforcing table manners and social skills around the dinner table.

### **Attendance**

Although it is not compulsory for children to attend a Nursery, if you do choose to take up a place at Merridale nursery, the expected attendance is at least 96%. If your child's attendance falls below this, the attendance officer will then monitor and review. If there is no improvement, **or if your child is absent from school for 5 sessions (for part-time) or 10 sessions (for full-time) within a four week period, the Nursery place will be withdrawn and offered to the next child on the waiting list.**

### **Punctuality**

Nursery sessions begin at 8.30am (morning) and 12.15pm (afternoon) promptly. Staff will be available on the Nursery gate between 8.30am and 8.35am and 12.15 and 12.20pm to receive the children and any messages parents/carers may need to give. If you arrive after this time, the gate will be opened again at 8.50am and 12.35pm. This is to ensure that Nursery staff are able to register and settle children into Nursery at the start of the session.

The start of the Nursery session is an important time for children to transition into the school day and it is important that Nursery staff are available to support them with this. Very young children can often be unsettled and dysregulated as they come into school at the start of their session.

If children arrive late, parents/carers must ring the bell once and wait until 8.50am/12.35pm. Please be aware that Nursery staff will not be able to spend time talking to parents and carers and receiving messages if children arrive late. If parents/carers have something important to

pass on, please go to the main school office and give the message to office staff who will ensure that the message is given to Nursery staff.

To ensure that children get into a good routine and are able to settle into Nursery successfully, it is important that they arrive at school on time at 8.30am or 12.15pm. We appreciate that sometimes parents and carers may be a little late but, if this becomes a regular occurrence, a child's place may be at risk. If you have any attendance or punctuality issues that you would like to discuss, please contact the Nursery teacher at school to arrange an appointment in the first instance.

### **How to apply for a nursery place**

All applications can be obtained from the school office. This form should then be filled out and handed back to either the school office or directly to the nursery department.

To apply for a nursery place starting during the academic year 2025-2026, forms must be completed and returned as soon as possible.

Children whose 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday falls after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 may be offered a place in January 2026 if places are available. If places are not available, these children will be considered for entry to nursery in September 2026.

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. The final decision on when/whether a child is admitted, the number of hours and his/her pattern of attendance rests with the headteacher.

Please be aware that nursery places are in high demand. As a result, good attendance is expected if you child is offered a place. Children whose attendance is deemed to be poor could be at risk of losing their place. At Merridale we expect all children to maintain a minimum of 96% attendance.

If you need any help completing you nursery application form, there are always staff in the office who will be willing to help.

Please note that applications for a place in Reception are made separately, directly to Wolverhampton Local Authority.

[Allocation of a nursery place does not guarantee a place in Reception class.](#)

### **Admission oversubscription criteria**

Ideally, we would love to offer nursery provision to every child. However, as indicated earlier, we are only able to offer a limited number of places. Therefore, in the event of over-subscription, places will be allocated according to the criteria outlined below:

- Children looked after by a Local Authority and previously looked after children
- Children with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)
- Children who have exceptional medical or social needs

- Children on the child protection register
- Children who already have siblings in the school
- Children who live in the school's catchment area
- Children who have a parent employed by the school

If you feel your child has any other extenuating circumstances, please inform us of this on the application form. These may also be taken into consideration when allocating places.

In the event of oversubscription, children will be placed on a waiting list.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits are carried out in the last week of the summer term and the first week of the autumn term ready for children to start in September. These visits are important as a first contact opportunity for Early Years staff, parents and children. You will be sent an appointment by school. If you are unable to make this appointment, **it is your responsibility** to call the school on 01902 558760 to re-arrange. If you are not in when Early Years staff come for the appointment, this will jeopardise your child's chance of being offered a place.

### **Key contacts for further information**

Merridale Primary School: 01902 558760  
office@merridaleprimary.co.uk

DFE 30 Hours Free Childcare Application Form:

[Apply for 30 hours free childcare - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-30-hours-free-childcare)