



This policy was agreed by Governors on 11th June 2026

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-2.30pm, Monday to Friday. A charge will be made for the 45 minute period at the end of the school day (2.30-3.15pm) should parents require this. From April 2026, this charge is £4.20 per day or £21.00 per week. **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/30 hour 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 funds

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 31st August 2026, 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	The beginning of the autumn term on or after 1 September
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/30-hours-free-childcare)

Please note that parents/carers are responsible for checking termly that they are still eligible to receive 30 hour 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 – 2.30pm

Tuesday: 8.30am – 2.30pm

Wednesday: 8.30am – 2.30pm

Thursday: 8.30am – 2.30pm

Friday: 8.30am – 2.30pm

A charge of **£21.00** per week (£4.20 per day) will be made if parents/carers require childcare for their child between 2.30-3.15pm each day. Payment for this must be made in advance.

Each child accessing 30 hour provision must bring a packed lunch each day. Please remember that Merridale Primary School is a **nut-free** school.

Lunchtime at in Nursery Merridale (11.30am-12.15pm):

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 may be withdrawn and offered to the next child on the waiting list. You will always be notified in writing if attendance falls below the expectation and a monitoring period has commenced.

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 8.40am 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.

Late collection from Nursery

Nursery children must be collected at 11.30am or 3.15pm (for children accessing 15 hour provision) or 2.30pm or 3.15pm (for children accessing 30 hour provision). Children must always be collected by a named, responsible adult.

At the point of enrolment in Nursery, parents and carers have the opportunity to name and nominate adults who are authorised to collect your child at the end of their session. A collection password is requested in enrolment in order to establish that the person collecting is authorised to do so by providing this password.

Children will only be released to their parent/carer or authorised people unless staff have been informed of changes beforehand and the password has been given to authorise this.

Parents and carers must inform the Nursery immediately if their child is going to be collected by a person not named during enrolment. If staff are unsure about who is collecting your child or if a password is not given, your child will not be released. Staff will then try to contact parents/carers by telephone to inform them and arrange collection or alternative arrangements.

We appreciate that, occasionally, children may be collected late due to unforeseen circumstances. We ask that parents/carers inform us in advance if they are unable to collect their child on time. If no contact has been made and your child has not been collected five minutes after the expected time of collection, your child will be taken to the school office. Staff will then endeavour to make contact with parents/carers by telephone using the contact numbers in your child's file.

If your child is regularly collected late, you will be invited to a meeting to discuss this with the Headteacher.

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 3rd birthday falls after 31st August 2026 may be offered a place in January 2027 if places are available. If places are not available, these children will be considered for entry to nursery in September 2027.

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.

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/education-and-schools/school-admissions>

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@merridale.twp.school

DFE 30 Hours Free Childcare Application Form:

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

Transition into Nursery

Starting a new Nursery or setting is an important time for your child and family. Nursery staff will support your child through this transition and we recognise that some children require more support than others. Getting this transition right and ensuring that starting Nursery is a positive experience is vital for making sure that your child's learning journey begins successfully.

Positive transitions are vital for young children's well-being and development. Children experiencing childcare for the first time is a huge adjustment – this is especially true for children with additional or more complex needs. Transition is a process and not an event. High quality transitions help children to feel safe and secure in the setting. Transitions ensure that staff can take time to build positive and nurturing relationships with children and have opportunities for dialogues with parents and carers to ensure that your child's needs can be fully met in the setting.

Some children will require a longer transition than others. School staff will let you know if this is required for your child and will meet with you to discuss this as early as possible. This could mean that, for an initial period of time, your child will not attend for their whole Nursery session but will have shorter sessions. These will be regularly reviewed and increased over time as your child becomes more settled. Many children and families find this process to be helpful in ensuring a positive transition into the setting.

Children will feel more secure when the provision they are entering has been tailored to meet their needs and interests. It is important that we ensure that we are supporting children to be ready for transitions both mentally and emotionally. This initial period of induction for a child can be very overwhelming, and it is crucial they are provided with time to adjust. Every child is different and will need different levels of support during this transition.

How can parents and carers help to support this transition?

- Attend the Nursery welcome meeting. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the school office to let us know.

- Ensure that you are able to attend the home visit that will be completed by nursery staff in July or September. This meeting is vital for ensuring that staff are able to gather important information about your child and that you have an opportunity to share any strengths, interests or worries.
- Provide your child with lots of information and reassurance about starting Nursery – explain what is going to happen and help them to know that their parent/carer will always be back to collect them at the end of the session.
- Ensure that your child attends their initial visits and sessions in Nursery in September to support their transition. Make sure you know the times and dates for their sessions.