

Hartford Infant and Preschool



Preschool Admissions Policy September 2026-27

Lead person: Mrs Rae Lee
Adopted by Governors: Spring 2021
Reviewed: September 2025

Introduction [This policy is applicable for the academic year 2026-27 for a September 2026 intake].

Hartford Preschool is a part of the Cam Academy Trust providing education for 3 and 4 year-olds. The maximum number of children that can be admitted is 24 per session (sessions are either morning **OR** afternoon). Children attend Monday to Friday in term time.

There is no maximum limit on the amount of hours a child can attend* and sessions can be Nursery Education Funded [NEF]. All 3 and 4 year old children, are entitled to 15 hours of free early education and childcare per week. Some 3 and 4 year old children are also entitled to an additional 15 hours per week (30 Hours Childcare). NEF spaces are funded by the Government and/or paid for at a rate of £18 per 3 hour session. This ensures that the child has continuation of childcare provision. To promote this, we **will not take** children for less than 3 sessions (9 hours) a week.

Sessions times are:

- 5 morning sessions of 9.00am – 12 noon [15 hours] **or**
- 5 afternoon sessions of 12 noon – 3.00pm [**bring a packed lunch**] [15 hours] **or**
- 5 extended sessions of 9.00am – 3.00pm [30 hours]

The Preschool anticipates that there may be occasions when we are unable to offer places to all parents wishing their child to attend the Preschool. It is unfortunate when this occurs, but the Preschool has a set limit beyond which it cannot function efficiently, pupil/teacher ratios will become unacceptable, and the Preschool may not comply with various Health and Safety Regulations. To allocate places on a fair basis to all, we have formalised the admissions procedure and clearly defined the method of prioritising in the event of oversubscription.

Bespoke timetables may be offered, subject to Headteacher approval and regular review, following applications from parents requesting all five morning or afternoon sessions.

The Preschool places no constraints on who may apply for entrance to the Preschool, and all applications will be considered and processed in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Children will be admitted without reference to ability or aptitude.

*Sometimes it is in the best interests of the child that they begin their allocated time within the Preschool on a reduced timetable, this can be organised in a variety of ways. Such a decision is always made in partnership between home and school and with the child's best interests at heart. We will work closely with parents to ensure the children's wellbeing is supported and that appropriate adjustments are made to enable the child to be happy, and safe.

All Preschool places are funded by the Government. The Preschool makes no charge in relation to the free entitlement to 15 hours of Preschool provision. Every child is entitled to these 15 universal hours a week from the term after they turn 3 years old. At Hartford Preschool that equates to either **5 morning sessions** or **5 afternoon sessions** of free provision. Our main intake of children is in September each year. **If your child is not yet eligible for funding an additional charge of £18.00 per 3-hour session will apply.**

Some children are eligible for a *further* 15 hours a week of government funding (extended provision). You will need to visit the website <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> to find out if you are eligible for this. Please note we have limited capacity to accept children entitled to the extended provision and currently only offer **15** of these full-time spaces. Please see below to understand how we allocate these **15** spaces.

This document sets out to state the following regarding admission to Hartford Preschool:

- Admission criteria applying to an application.
- Prioritising in the event of oversubscription.
- The method of applying and the way in which the application will be handled.

It must be noted that, due to the funding arrangements, only applications from parents who wish to take up **all 5 morning or all 5 afternoon sessions** will be considered in the first instance.

Definitions

Throughout this document the word '**parent**' is to be taken to mean parent(s) or carer(s) of the child.

'**Brother or sister**' is defined as children aged 4 to 16, living in the same family unit.

'**Home address**' is to be taken as the address of the adult(s) with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. The home address is that which applies at the time of application. Where children spend time with parents at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the pupil is ordinarily resident. Where children spend equal time with both parents, the address used will be the one most advantageous to the application e.g. closest to the Preschool. Changes of address occurring shortly after application can normally be considered if notified in writing to the Preschool. Places cannot be allocated based on intended future changes of

address, unless house moves have been confirmed through the exchange of contracts or the signing of a formal lease agreement. Proof of address would be required in this circumstance. A temporary address will only be used for allocation purposes where no permanent address is available.

'Nearest the Preschool' in oversubscription criteria, will in each case be measured in a straight line to the home address from the Preschool using Google maps which locates the address by postcode.

Admission Criteria

In the first instance we encourage a September start to be in line with the rest of the school. To qualify for entry in September, the children must have reached the age of three by the 31st August in that year. If your child turns three later in the academic year you can still apply for a place which would be subject to availability. E.g. if your child was three in January 2027 your child could start in the Summer term April 2027.

Offer and Acceptance Procedures

It is vital that applications are made **on time** so that the Preschool can process them and let parents know where they stand well before their son or daughter is due to start. If we are unable to offer a place this will ensure that parents have time to make alternative arrangements. We therefore will not prioritise any late applications until all timely applications have been offered a place and decided to accept or reject it.

Admission Dates

- **Autumn intake** – last date for applications is 30th April, offer letters will be sent out by 31st May.
- **Spring intake** – last date for applications is 30th September, offer letters will be sent out by 31st October.
- **Summer intake** – last date for applications is 31st December, offer letters will be sent out by 31st January.

Applications must be made using the application form available from the school office (01480 398046 or office@hartfordinfantschool.org) or our school website (www.hartfordinfantschool.org). This will ensure that the Preschool has all the necessary information.

The sequence of events will be as follows:

- Application form received by the Preschool, registered and dated, by **30th April** (for a September 2026 start).
- In May prior to the September admission, a place will be offered to all children meeting the priority criteria, up to 24 places.
- Acceptance of a place is open for 10 working days.
- The Preschool would naturally welcome being kept up to date regarding any changes in circumstances (e.g. an impending move from the area or decision to go to another school, or a decision to reduce the number of sessions) to be as fair as possible to others on the waiting list.

When an offer is made the applicant is to confirm that they wish to accept the space within 10 working days. In the event of oversubscription, and in fairness to those on the waiting list, the Preschool must know quickly how many places will be taken, so that spare places can be offered to others. We would not expect applicants to hold more than one Preschool offer.

If we do not receive a reply to the offer within 10 working days, we will consider this as rejecting the place. We will of course attempt to contact applicants before doing this.

Admissions Criteria

- **First Priority**
Children who are either 'Looked After', have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a child who was previously looked after but became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order.
- **Second Priority**
Children who have a brother or sister, (as defined by the Children Act 1989), at Hartford Preschool, Infant School or Hartford Junior School, at the date of application.
- **Third Priority**
All other children.

If there are more children in any category than there are places available, places will be prioritised and awarded to children who **live nearest** to the Preschool.

If there are more children who are eligible for the extended hours provision of which we have limited capacity [15 spaces

only] again places will be prioritised and awarded to children who **live nearest** to the Preschool.

Ethnic Origin

It is the Preschool's policy that children of all ethnic backgrounds shall have equal consideration relating to the admission to the Preschool.

Application to Hartford Infant School

Although the Preschool is part of the Cam Academy Trust, there is **no** automatic entry to the Reception year of the Infant School. Parents must apply and register for the Infant School separately in accordance with the Infant School's Admissions Policy. Children attending Hartford Infant and Preschool **do not** have higher priority in the Infant School Admissions Policy. It is not a requirement to have attended the Preschool to be able to apply for a place at Hartford Infant School.

Oversubscription for morning/afternoon sessions

Whilst we will endeavour to allocate your preferred session, in the event of oversubscription for either mornings or afternoons, places will be allocated based on the admissions criteria.

Applications will be kept on a list in accordance with the admissions criteria and parents will be contacted in accordance with that list, should a place become available subsequently for the preferred session.

Admission Criteria other than September intake

Applications must be made using the application form available from Hartford Infant School office (01480 398046 or office@hartfordinfantschool.org) or from the Hartford Infant School's website www.hartfordinfantschool.org.

If you wish to register your child for the spring or summer terms only, then a place will be offered subject to availability during the term before and the same priority criteria will apply as before.