Admissions Policy for Waterside Day Care

Ethos
This procedure has been implemented to provide clear expectations to families and staff when registering their interest in a place in Waterside Day Care.

Aims
- To provide a fair admissions process and procedures for all children.

Responsibility of the Day Care Senior Management Team
- To ensure that staff are aware of this policy and implement it consistently
- To ensure that families are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding confidentiality.

Responsibility of families
- To update Waterside with any changes to their waiting list information including contact details.

Admissions Procedure

- **Expression of Interest:**
  - When a parent/carer expresses an interest in admitting a child into Waterside, they are given a Parent Information Pack containing a waiting list form and fee structure.
- **Waiting List Form:**
  - Fill out the form stating the child's name, date of birth, sessions required, and expressed start date.
  - Upon submission to the Waterside office, note the date on the form. Details are then added to the waiting list file.
- **Priority Admission:**
  - Priority is given according to the admissions criteria below.
  - Allocate spaces from the waiting list according to the date received.
- **Minimum Sessions:**
  - Minimum registered sessions per week are two half-days (a combination of mornings/afternoons) or one full day.
- **Waiting List Movement:**
  - Movement up the waiting list is possible only when available sessions do not suit previous applicants.

Admissions Criteria

If places are required that include any or all the following criteria, they will take priority.

1. **Children in care or with social care involvement:**
   a. Children looked after (in care)
   b. Children with a Child Protection Plan
   c. Children with a Child in Need plan

2. **Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as defined by the SEND Code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010):**
    a. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
    b. Children receiving SEN Support
    c. Children with identified additional needs (whether formally diagnosed or not) that require reasonable adjustments to access early years provision
3. **Staff children** - Children of staff currently working at Norcot Early Years Centre
4. **Siblings** - Children who have a sibling attending Norcot Early Years Centre at the time of admission.
5. For exceptional circumstance, Day Care Manager discretion will be applied.

Supporting children with SEND:
When applying for a place families should inform us of any special educational needs or disabilities their child has, or any additional support their child may require.

Before offering a place to a child with SEND, we will meet with families to discuss the child's needs and what reasonable adjustments we can make to support them. We are committed to making our provision accessible to all children and will work in partnership with families and external professionals to achieve this.

We will only decline a place if, after considering all reasonable adjustments, we genuinely cannot meet the child's needs in a way that is safe for the child and others.

Offer and Acceptance

- When a space is available, contact the families to complete the appropriate forms.
- Provide a Letter of Offer; a contract should be signed to accept the place.
- A deposit of 3 weeks' fees is required to secure the place, refundable in the last month's fees when the child leaves. The deposit is not refundable if the child does not take up the space, 4 weeks' notice is not given for leaving, or fees are still outstanding when the child leaves.
- The Day Care Manager has discretion to apply the following deposit requirement if a child receives Early Years Funding and fits the following registration:

Sessions of 8am to 12.30pm x 5 per week or fewer	£200 deposit
Sessions of 8am to 4pm for 3 days per week or fewer	£250 deposit

Please see appendix for justification agreed by governors July 2026.

Contractual Agreement

- Families should sign the contract only after reading and understanding the Information Pack, which includes terms and conditions.

2-Year-Old Early Learning Funded Places

- Applications are subject to criteria set by the Local Authority
- The admission procedure for Day Care is followed, and the Local Authority will confirm funding availability.

- Inform the Early Years Team of the start date for each child via the portal at each headcount return.

Sibling and twin discount:
A 10% sibling discount is offered on fees charged relevant to the oldest sibling. This is not transferred when older child leaves Norcot.

A 5% discount is offered on fees charged relevant to each twin.

Staff Discount

- A 60% discount applies to working days only for current staff in Waterside Day Care. This includes 9-month-old and 2-year-old funding, universal 15 hours, and extended hours under the 30-hour scheme each school term.
- The staff discount of 60% cannot be used in conjunction with a 10% sibling discount.

Government Grant Funding

- If eligible for government grant funding under the 9-month, 2-year-old, or 3-year-old schemes, a funding form will be issued for completion and return.
- The funding code must be supplied and verified on the Early Years Portal before funding can be allocated.
- Parents must renew their funding code on time to avoid funding withdrawal.

Associated Policies
- Safeguarding
- All GDPR UK policies
- Confidentiality
- Electronic Info & Communications Policy
- SEND policy
- Equality Policy
- Accessibility Plan

Procedure agreed: July 2026

Procedure review date: July 2027

Norcot Early Years Centre 30 hours Free Childcare offer

What is 30 Hours free childcare?
From September 2024 many working parents of 9 months, 2, 3 to 4 year olds in England became eligibile for 30 hours of free childcare.
If you are eligibile for the additional free childcare, you will have the the option to use it for up to 30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year (term time), or stretch the entitlement over 51 weeks giving fewer hours.

Will my child get it?
Not necessarily, as not everyone is eligible. Everyone will still receive the universal 15 hours free education entitlement if your child is aged 3 or 4 years old.

There is detailed guidance available on the DFE website:

https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/

The basic eligibility rules for 30 hours free childcare are:

- Your child will have achieved their 9 month anniversary at the start of the term or be aged 2, 3 or 4 years by the end of the spring, summer or autumn term.
- Both parents must be working – or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family.
- Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage.
- Each parent must have an annual income of less than £100,000.
- You live in England.

Your eligibility will be checked using a online tool provided by Reading Borough Council prior to your childs' admission and will be checked each term.

At Norcot we are offering up to:

- 30 hrs term time only
- 22.35 hrs (22 hours and 21 minutes) if stretched – this is 51 weeks.

Consumables Charge – for children in receipt of 3- & 4-year-old funding - The term after their third birthday only.

We offer an optional consumables charge of £1.73 per funded hour, which covers:

- **Food**: 5 freshly prepared meals and snacks per day from our onsite chef
- **Non-food items**: personal hygiene items such as wipes, nappies, sun cream (for children needing them)
- **Extra-curricular activities**: For example - Groovy Movers, farm visits, hatching eggs, and other cultural capital experiences.

Our £1.73 hourly charge is voluntary. You are not required to pay this charge as a condition of taking up their child's funded place. However, if you choose not to pay this charge as the majority of the charge is to cover food, you will need to provide food for breakfast, a packed lunch and food for snacks.

PLEASE NOTE:
You will <u>not</u> be able to accrue unused hours. For example: If you only use 21 hours during term time you cannot bank hours to use for after school childcare.
Each offer is up to the hours quoted. i.e. Up to 30 hours for 38 weeks, up to 22.35 hours for 51 weeks
It is very important that you decide on the offer that you require. Eligibility will be checked before each term. You will need to ensure you renew your funding code each term.

If you have any queries please contact:
Waterside Day Care: 0118 9375677

Appendix

To reduce the deposit taken in Waterside to £200 & £250 from 3 weeks in certain situations:

Justification

- Early Years funding (15 or 30 hours) now covers a significant proportion of fees
- The "at-risk" amount per child (parent-paid top-up fees) is lower than previously
- A £200 & £250 deposit still provides adequate protection against the reduced risk
- This makes your setting more accessible to families who may struggle with the upfront cost

Financial Impact:

- Average weekly parent-paid fees after Early Years funding are applied

Deposit taken	Sessions	Ladybirds	Bumblebees	Dragonflies	Monthly fees when leave
£200	Fees for 8 – 12.30 x 5 days a week	£1.36	£1.29	£38.93	£165.42
£250	Fees for 8-4 x 3 days a week	£14.96	£14.20	£52.86	£224.65

- The deposit still covers this risk adequately
- This could reduce financial hardship for families
- We will still maintain clear payment terms and debt recovery procedures
- We reserve the right to increase deposit up to 3 weeks if they increase sessions hours