



Pre-school Admissions, Attendance and Cancellations Policy

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1 Introduction – St Mary’s

This policy sets out the process through which St Mary’s allocates places for eligible children for its Pre-school. It outlines its procedures to promote regular attendance of all children occupying a place in the Pre-school and it sets out the processes and conditions for changing or cancelling places already secured.

2 Why we have this policy

To ensure that access to the early years service St Mary’s Pre-school offers is fair and equitable to all eligible families in the local community.

To ensure that the children who have secured a place gain the maximum benefit from the service.

To ensure that St Mary’s is able to make the best use of its resources for the benefit of local families.

3 The Admissions process

St Mary’s Pre-school operates term time only 38 weeks of the year and has the equivalent of 24 full time places.

Admission to the Pre-school is through a formal application process made in advance by parents or legal guardians using St Mary’s online application form through our website. Applications submitted will be sent a submission receipt.

Government funded free entitlement

All 3 and 4 year olds are eligible for 570 hours of free childcare a year starting from the term after which they turned three years old. At St Mary’s Pre-school we cater for this entitlement by offering 15 hours each week for 38 weeks a year (term time). Since September 2017, many working parents of 3 and 4 year olds have been eligible for 30 hours per week free childcare, rather than the 15 hours.

Some 2 year olds are also eligible for 15 hrs of funding per week, though all parents need to apply and gain approval for their funding eligibility on-line before 31st August in order to access their free sessions for September intake. The following website has further information about the criteria on funding entitlements

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/benefits-and-financial-support/free-early-learning>.

Parents and carers can book from the below list of sessions, subject to eligibility and availability:

Full Day	9.00 - 4.00
6 Hrs Day	9.00 - 3.00 For children eligible for the 30 hrs /week free entitlement
3 Hrs morning	9.00 - 12.00

4 Hrs Morning	9.00 - 1.00 Limited availability of places
3 Hrs afternoon	1.00 - 4.00

Please note:

1. The minimum number of hours we will accept an application for is 15 hrs / week
2. Parents and carers seeking to book only for the minimum 15 hrs free entitlement can choose from either the 3 Hrs AM or 3 Hrs PM sessions. In exceptional circumstances we will consider two and a half days booking requests.
3. Due to the staff child ratios our numbers are restricted between 12 -1pm to a small number of 2 year olds seeking the 4 Hrs AM session with the payable additional hour.

Submitting an application form does not guarantee a place. Parents of applicants will be contacted with an offer of a place when a place becomes available for their child. We will aim to offer places for the requested sessions but cannot guarantee to match the request with our offer.

To allocate places for future term vacancies we operate with application deadlines. The applications received by the deadline for future term vacancies will be assessed against our admissions criteria. Places will be offered in the weeks commencing the deadline.

The following deadlines will apply for applications for future term vacancies:

For the Autumn term (Sept to Dec) applications will need to be submitted by the 30th June.

For the Spring Term (Jan –April) applications will need to be submitted by the 15th Nov.

For the Summer Term (April – Jul) applications will need to be submitted by 15th Feb

Place allocation priorities

In the event of oversubscription relative to the available vacancies in the Pre-school St Mary's will allocate places by applying the following priorities in the order listed below:

- a. Children in care of local authority
- b. Children with a particular compelling educational and/or social or medical need as referred by a professional (e.g. social worker, speech therapist, health visitor, doctor etc.)
- c. The age of the child that promotes a balance of ages across the entire intake of children in any given term
- d. Children who have an elder sibling currently attending St Mary's Pre-school
- e. The position of the children's home address in relation to the setting
- f. In order of receipt of applications for a given term (first come first served)

The offer of a place will be made in writing and with a deadline for accepting the place offered. In the meantime parents and guardians are encouraged to book and come in to visit the Pre-school. Once offered a place parents and guardians are required to complete our registration form before the acceptance deadline. The registration form will ascertain additional information not obtained on the application form. Proof of identity, address and the eligibility letters and codes for a free place and the child's birth certificate or passport will also be required.

Following registration, a home visit will be arranged for the child's allocated key-person to meet the family in person or virtually. During the home visit there will be an opportunity to discuss the child's individual needs and background and the Pre-school's settling in procedures and policy. (See the settling and key person policies). Children receive a welcome booklet with a summary of supporting information about the pre-school. This can also be obtained online at www.stmaryislington.org. Details of the child's health red book will also need to be seen at this stage.

4 Fee and payment terms

The payment of an upfront booking deposit will be required for 6 weeks' worth of chargeable bookings placed over and above any free entitlement. This deposit will be payable at registration. This deposit will be held by St Mary's until the child leaves the setting and will only be returned once all outstanding fees have been settled. If after accepting a place and paying the deposit the parent/guardian changes their minds and decides not to take the place the deposit will not be returned.

St Mary's will issue invoices on a monthly basis in advance of the period the invoice relates to. Invoices must be settled prior to the first day of the month they relate to. Failure of payment will result in service withdrawal.

We will accept payment by Credit or Debit Card paid on our premises or by a link sent to you via our admin team or by BACS.

When making a BACS payment, please ensure to enter the invoice number as a reference so we can identify who the payment belongs to and send an e-mail to childrenbookings@stmaryislington.org notifying us of your payment.

5 Cancellation and Bookings changes

Unless otherwise specified children's places are secured for the duration of their time within the pre-school until the end of the academic year before going into reception at Primary School for the sessions they are booked for. Should parents/carers wish to take their children out of the Pre-school sooner we require them to give minimum 6 weeks written notice during which period the fees for the booked places remain payable according to the applicable rates and charges.

Parents may request changes to their child's bookings by requesting and completing a change of booking form which can be requested from the pre-school or reception. We will try to accommodate changes to booking patterns, subject to availability as soon as possible. Any change will be confirmed in writing through a system generated message set to the parent/guardian.

The terms & conditions of taking up funded places are set out in the registration form and agreement at the point of offering a place. St Mary's Pre-school can only claim the cost of childcare for eligible children from the government if the children continue attending their booked sessions and are not removed from the pre-school prior to HEADCOUNT DAY (as specified by the Local Authority).

Headcounts are submitted between the 3rd and 5th week of each term to draw down the funding against eligible children's bookings. If a child using a free place is taken out of the pre-school prior to the headcount day the pre-school will not be able to claim any funding for that child's childcare cost.

In such cases the parents will be charged the fees applicable for their child's sessions from the start of the term plus the applicable fees for the 6 weeks cancellation notice as detailed above. Fees are applicable when a holiday is taken during term time. See Appendix.

6 Supporting families and Safeguarding

We recognise that sometimes families may need extra support with attendance and punctuality, therefore good communication is essential between parents/ guardians and their children's key person. St Mary's staff will take a daily register of the children. Where children's attendance is poor and not improving we will contact the guardian if we have not been given a reason for the child's absence. We will also explore further support such as bedtime routines, or referral for other services through Children Centres; for example family support or parenting classes.

St Mary's have a duty of care to keep children safe and protect them from harm and poor attendance, which can be an indication of neglect. If we do not hear from you over a period of two weeks, it could be deemed that your child is missing which would then be reported to Children's Social Care.

If there are no other indicators of concern or vulnerability and your child has failed to attend for 4-6 consecutive weeks without a justifiable reason, we will withdraw your place for the following term and inform the local authority.

7 Procedures and our beliefs to support attendance

Although education is not compulsory until the age of five, encouraging children's regular attendance has a positive impact on their development; developing routines as well as feeling settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available. Research shows that regular part time attendance from the age of two in a good quality early years setting has a lasting impact on children's social development and intellectual attainment throughout their school life. (Research Brief RBF15-03 The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education Project: Findings from the Pre-school Period. Sylva et al, IOE, 2003).

At St Mary's we promote good attendance and punctuality by

- Ensuring children attend for their expected session through registration
- Require parents/carers to call /text if their child is going to be late
- Require parents to inform us via a phone call/text or email if their child is going to be absent stating the reason.
- Require parents to complete a holiday form and give it to the key person for our record if they are going on holiday for more than a week during term time.
- We will call parents if we do not hear why a child is absent at least twice in a week or email.
- We will monitor children's absence.
- We will consistently follow up poor attendance and punctuality by asking to meet and discuss it with parents/guardians.

We believe by doing the above procedures, this will support your child to have good habits and will maximise their development experiences.

8. Transitions to another setting

If you decide to move your child to another setting due to reasons such as moving home, please inform us as soon as possible bearing in mind the six week cancellation notice. This is so that we can take your child off the register and send on records of development to their new setting to ensure a smooth transition. (Please also refer to the cancellation section)

Appendix 1

Contact details:

Sharon Ellis
Child Care Services Manager
t: 020 7704 2873
e: sharon.ellis@stmaryislington.org

Request for child's leave of absence during term time

This form needs to be submitted at least a week prior to the proposed holiday leave if your leave is more than 2 days holiday.

PLEASE USE CAPITAL LETTERS TO FILL THIS FORM IN

1. Name of child: _____ Date of Birth: _____

I wish to inform you of my child's absence from pre-school during the following dates:

Date of last day of pre-school: _____ Date of return: _____

Total number of days missed: _____



If your child will not be able to attend on the date of return to preschool, please make sure that you inform us. This needs to be done by phone or email. Failure to follow this requirement could result in your child being deleted from the pre-school roll and it may lead to referral to Children's Social Care, or 'Children Missing from school' investigation team.

Please state the purpose of this period out of pre-school and why it must be taken during term time and not in school holidays.

2. Contact details whilst abroad/absent from pre-school

If your child is being taken out of pre-school during the term time and the details of their location is not provided, this could turn into a serious safeguarding issue. When a child is absent or missing from school, they could be at risk of harm. The pre-school have a duty to keep children safe and this includes knowing where they are. If parents/carers fail to provide required information then the pre-school may make a referral to Social Care team as a 'missing child'.


Address whilst away:

Contact details whilst away:  _____  _____

3. Mother/care: Title _____ Full Name: _____  _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Father/care: Title _____ Full Name: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____ 

4. Name of staff receiving form: _____ Date: _____

St Mary's Pre-school request for booking amendments.

Child's Name:

Parents Name:

Please complete this form and state your current times and days here..... and required days in box below

AM [9AM - 12PM] PM [1PM - 4PM] 30 Hours [9AM -3PM]

35 Hours [9AM - 4PM] 2.5 days Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri (tick preferred days)

Please note although you have requested these sessions, they are subject to availability.

Sessions for 2yr olds will be kept at strictly AM or PM sessions - unless you are a working parent.

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we are planning for our new school year, we will need to know who will be returning to the pre-school and who will be beginning at a new setting.

My child [child name] will/will not be returning to St Mary's Pre-School in September.....

If your child is leaving, please state where they will be attending

If your child is returning, please state the session they will need:

AM [9AM - 12PM] PM [1PM - 4PM] 30 Hours [9AM -3PM]

35 Hours [9AM - 4PM] 2.5 days

Please note although you have requested these sessions, they are subject to availability.

Sessions for 2yr olds will be kept at strictly AM or PM sessions - unless you are a working parent.