



LITTLE FISHES NURSERY

ST NICOLAS & ST MARY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Admissions and Oversubscription Policy and Procedures 2026/27

Admissions Authority

Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust is the admissions authority, responsible for the admissions policies and decisions on applications for admission to the schools and nurseries within the Trust. The Trust delegates the responsibility for admissions arrangements for each academic year to the Local Governing Body of the school.

Nursery places are limited so that the school can ensure a suitable adult : child ratio is maintained, taking into account the size of accommodation, government regulations and best practice.

The Governors' policy is to admit children, one of whose parents fulfil the admission criteria shown overleaf, with priority being given in the order shown numbered 1 to 7.

Definitions

- **Parent** – the term 'parent' includes legal guardian.
- **Siblings / Step brother/sister** – a sibling is a full, half or step brother or sister, adoptive or foster brother or sister, permanently living in the same household.
- **'Children Looked After'** – A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order* including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

**An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).*

- **Children of UK Service Personnel and Crown Servants** - For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, governors must:
 - allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area (as long as one is available), provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date. Governors must not refuse to process an application and must not refuse a place solely because the family do not yet have an intended address, or do not yet live in the area
 - use the address at which the child will live when applying their oversubscription criteria, as long as the parents provide some evidence of their intended address.

In addition, governors are required to use a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria, where a parent requests this.

Age for Admission

Little Fishes Nursery is open to pre-school children who are 3 or 4 years old and 2 year olds approaching their third birthday i.e. children will be able to start in Little Fishes Nursery during the term in which they turn three years of age, please see the table below.

If child is born between:	They can start in:
1 September 2023 and 31 December 2023	September 2026
1 January 2024 and 31 March 2024	January 2027
1 April 2024 and 31 August 2024	April 2027

Free Childcare

2 year olds

Your 2 year old may be eligible for free entitlement.

To qualify, the child must be of eligible age, and the family in receipt of one or more of the following income-based benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credits, Working Tax Credit or both
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Or the child meets one of the following non income based criteria:

- They are looked after by a local authority.
- They have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order.
- They have a current statement of special educational needs (SEN) and have a current education, health and care (EHC) plan or receives a Disability Living Allowance.

If your immigration status says you have 'no recourse to public funds', you may still get free childcare for your 2-year-old *

2 year old free childcare for working families

From 2 January 2024 applications opened for the new 2 year old free childcare for working families. This offer is available for those who work the equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum wage, or more per week.

You can apply if both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone-parent family) and each parent earns:

- Less than £100,000 per year.
- More than the equivalent of 16 hours at the national living wage or minimum wage per week. Apprentices are also eligible as long as they earn the equivalent of 16 hours at the apprentice minimum wage.

You may also be eligible if:

- You and your partner are employed, but one or both of you is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity, adoption leave, or on statutory sick pay.
- You are employed, but your partner either has substantial caring responsibilities, or is disabled or incapacitated, or vice versa (in other words, your partner is employed but you have caring responsibilities or are disabled or incapacitated) - this is dependent on you or your partner being entitled to specific disability or caring benefits.

For further information and to apply, visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/childcare-and-early-education/ and the Governments childcare choices website; <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

*Please check up to date information and income figures on gov.uk - <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs>
Or ask the school office for access to this information.

3 and 4 year olds Universal Free Entitlement

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours free childcare each week for 38 weeks of the year (5 sessions of 3 hours' length). You can start claiming free childcare once your child turns 3. The date you can claim will depend on their date of birth:

If your child is born between:	They are eligible for a free place from:
1 April and 31 August	The beginning of the September Term following their third birthday until statutory school age
1 September and 31 December	The beginning of the January Term following their third birthday until statutory school age
1 January and 31 March	The beginning of the April Term following their third birthday until statutory school age

3 and 4 year olds Extended Free Entitlement

Many working parents of 3 to 4 year olds will be eligible for 30 hours of free childcare for 38 weeks of the year (10 sessions of 3 hours' length). Eligibility rules for the additional 15 hours are as follows **:

- You (and your partner, if you have one) are in work – or getting parental leave, sick leave or annual leave.
- Each is earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week.
- This earnings limit does not apply if you're self-employed and started your business less than 12 months ago.

**Please check up to date information and income figures on gov.uk - <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs>
Or ask the school office for access to this information

You're not eligible if:

- your child does not usually live with you
- either you or your partner has a taxable income over £100,000
- you're from outside the EEA and your UK residence card says you cannot access public funds

You can get 30 hours free childcare at the same time as claiming Universal Credit, tax credits, childcare vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare.

If you cannot work you may still be eligible if your partner is working, and you get Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.

Cost of sessions

For those children who do not receive funding, the cost of sessions is £18.50 per session. Fees are payable in advance and the school reserves the right to withdraw sessions if fees are not paid. An invoice will be sent to you on a termly basis if one of the following circumstances apply:

- If your child is eligible for free childcare, and you wish to have more than your free entitlement, we will invoice you for the additional sessions.
- If your child is not yet eligible for free childcare we will invoice you per session attended.

Start Dates

Children can start at the beginning of the Autumn, Spring or Summer terms subject to availability.

Session times

The nursery sessions operate from Monday to Friday 8.50am to 11.50am and from 12.00pm to 3.00pm. If your child attends both morning and afternoon sessions on the same day the two sessions will run continuously from 8.50am to 3.00pm. Please also see the information below about our Little Octopus and Little Starfish Clubs.

Number of sessions

We strongly recommend children to apply for a minimum of 5 sessions per week to ensure that sufficient time is available to assess each child's progress and to plan effectively for their development.

Applications

Nursery tours are available for prospective parents please contact the school office to arrange. The nursery prospectus can be found on the website: www.stnicolasmarty.wsussex.sch.uk. Parents who would like their child to attend Little Fishes Nursery should complete the application form, indicating their preferred sessions, and return it to the office by the application deadlines shown below.

Application Deadline

1st May 2026
2nd October 2026
22nd January 2027

Notification Date

22nd May 2026
23rd October 2026
12th February 2027

Start Date

September 2026 start
January 2027 start
April 2027 start

The school will advise you of the sessions your child has been offered, by letter, by the notification date. We will endeavour to meet your session preferences but regret that this will not always be possible. Please complete and return the reply slip by the deadline indicated to secure your child's sessions. If we are unable to offer your child a place we will advise you by the notification date and put your child's name on the waiting list.

Applications received after each deadline will be added to the waiting list.

Admissions and Oversubscription Criteria

In the event of oversubscription, places are allocated according to our oversubscription criteria.

1. Children who already attend the nursery who wish to increase or change their sessions.
2. Children who wish to start at the nursery in September 2026 and are due to start school in September 2027.
3. Children who wish to start at the nursery in January 2027 and are due to start school in September 2027.
4. Children who wish to start at the nursery in April 2027 and are due to start school in September 2027.
5. Children who wish to start at the nursery in September 2026 and are due to start school in September 2028.
6. Children who wish to start at the nursery in January 2027 and are due to start school in September 2027.
7. Children who wish to start at the nursery in April 2027 and are due to start school in September 2028.

Oversubscription in any of the categories (in the order above) will be settled by applying the following sub-categories. Within each sub category, applications will be dealt with according to the date that the application was received.

- a) Children Looked After and/or children whose statement of special educational needs and disability (SEND) or Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) names Little Fishes Nursery or St Nicolas and St Mary Primary School, and those with parental responsibility reside or work in the Adur District.
- b) Children who will have a sibling attending the Nursery/Primary School at the time of admission.
- c) Children whose carer with parental responsibility reside or work within the Adur District.
- d) Any other children.

Governors will use the school's address for Children of UK Service Personnel and Crown Servants whose application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date.

Appeals

Appeals will not be available for nursery places.

Waiting List

Applications for children who are on the waiting list will be considered according to the date that the application was received.

Changing sessions

You can apply to increase/change/reduce your child's sessions once your child has started at the nursery. Sessions can be changed on a termly basis subject to availability. Parents should make a request in writing e.g. by email, by the application deadlines given above. However, please note that there is no guarantee that we will be able to increase or change the number of sessions for your child. We require at least 28 days prior written notice if you are reducing the number of sessions. The nursery will accept a shorter notice period if the 28 days' notice would extend past the last day of the Autumn, Spring or Summer terms.

Leaving the nursery

We require at least 28 days prior written notice if you are withdrawing your child from the nursery. The nursery will accept a shorter notice period if the 28 days' notice would extend past the last day of the Autumn, Spring or Summer terms.

Applying to join the school for the reception year

In accordance with admission regulations and guidance, parents should note that:

- Admissions to Little Fishes Nursery does not allow for automatic admission to St Nicolas & St Mary CE Primary School.
- Parents of children who attend Little Fishes Nursery must still apply to join the reception year of St Nicolas & St Mary in the same way as parents who do not have children attending Little Fishes Nursery.
- No preference will be given to children who attend Little Fishes Nursery.
- There is a separate admissions policy with different criteria for school admissions, which can be obtained from the school website.
- Parents and carers are reminded that:
 - ❖ Help is available to fill in admission forms – please ask!
 - ❖ Advice can be given on all aspects of admissions – please ask!
 - ❖ Parents with children in the school must not assume younger siblings will automatically gain a place.

In the event the school is oversubscribed, parents and carers are advised to look carefully at the admissions arrangements and seek advice to ensure that forms are correctly and fully completed.

Little Octopus and Little Starfish Clubs

Please note these clubs will only run if demand is high enough and staffing is available.

Children who have turned 3 will be able to join our Little Octopus Club from 8.00am in the morning until the start of the morning nursery session at 8.50am and our Little Starfish Club **on Monday to Thursday** from 3.25 pm until 5.30pm. The charge is currently £6.50 per session for Little Octopus Club and £15.00 per session for Little Starfish Club.

Little Fishes Interim Supervision

If your child is attending Little Fishes Starfish after-school club there is a £1 charge to cover the extra supervision needed for the gap between when the nursery ends and when Little Starfish starts.

More information about the Little Octopus and Little Starfish Clubs, including days of operation, can be found on our website.