

ADMISSIONS, BEHAVIOUR AND PLACEMENT SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Admissions and Priorities

Places are allocated based on availability and the following priority ranking:

- Siblings of children already attending the setting.
- Children requiring full-time places.
- Children on the waiting list (based on the date of application).

Conditional Admission and Assessing Suitability

Provisional Status: All offers of a place at Eaton Mill Nursery are provisional and subject to a strict 6-week "Assessment of Needs" period. To fully assess the suitability of the setting, the 6-week period does not include absence and is based on 6-weeks of actual attendance in the nursery. Admission is not confirmed as permanent until this period is successfully concluded.

The Safety & Ratio Threshold: As a non-statutory setting, we operate under strict staff-to-child ratios (1:5 or 1:8) as defined by the EYFS Framework.

Whilst we are committed to inclusion and making reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act, we are not a specialist provision and are not funded to provide continuous 1:1 supervision for behavioural regulation. Therefore, we reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a place immediately during the assessment period if a child displays behaviours that:

- **Compromise Safety:** Pose a direct, unmanageable risk of physical harm to staff or other children (e.g. unprovoked violence, biting, throwing objects).
- **Breach Ratios:** Require a level of supervision that prevents staff from maintaining statutory ratios for the rest of the group.
- **A failure to work in partnership which compromises the safety of the setting:** If it becomes apparent during the assessment period that a child has significant behavioural needs or a history of aggression that was not disclosed on the application form, the Nursery reserves the right to terminate the placement with immediate effect on the grounds of contractual misrepresentation.

Refusal of Admission and Placement Termination on Safety Grounds

While Eaton Mill Nursery is committed to inclusive practice, our primary statutory duty is to safeguard the physical well-being of the entire cohort of children and our staff team.

We operate as a mainstream early years setting with statutory ratios (1:5 or 1:8). We are not a specialist therapeutic unit or a secure provision. Therefore, we cannot safely accommodate children who display high-tariff violent behaviours - whether resulting from trauma, SEND or otherwise - that manifest as physical attacks on others.

The Nursery reserves the right to refuse admission or terminate a placement with immediate effect if a child's behaviour presents an "Immediate and Unmitigated Risk." This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Violent Attacks:** Targeted or indiscriminate physical assault (biting, punching, kicking, use of objects as weapons) resulting in injury to staff or peers.
- **Staff Safety:** Behaviours that violate the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, placing staff at risk of physical injury or significant psychological distress.

Trauma Manifestation: We recognise that violence may be a manifestation of trauma. However, if the setting cannot mitigate the risk of violence to an acceptable level within our standard operational ratios, the placement is deemed unsafe and will be terminated to protect the nursery community.

Occupational Health & Safety Override: The right of staff to work in a safe environment and the right of other children to be free from physical harm supersedes the right of an individual child to attend this specific setting.

The Support Process (Reasonable Adjustments)

If a child's behaviour becomes a concern, the Nursery will not take immediate action to withdraw a place unless there is an extreme safety breach as outlined above. Instead, we follow a structured support process:

1. **Observation and Recording:** Staff will use ABC (Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence) logs to identify triggers for the behaviour.
2. **Parental Consultation:** We will meet with parents/carers to discuss findings and align our approach at home and at the Nursery.
3. **Support Plan including Risk Management:** The Nursery will implement a written action plan with specific strategies to support the individual child and family.
4. **External Support / Professional Advice:** The Nursery may consult an external Special Educational Needs Consultant, health professionals or the Local Authority to access further resources and support.

Reducing Hours or Phased Attendance

In some instances, the Nursery may find that a child struggles with a full day or a busy environment. To prevent a total withdrawal of the place, the Nursery Manager may propose:

- **A Phased Timetable:** Temporarily reducing hours (e.g. mornings only) to help the child reset and succeed.
- **Staff-to-Child Ratios:** Adjusting attendance to times when the setting can provide higher levels of supervision for safety.

Immediate Suspension (Safety Breach)

A child may be suspended immediately (usually for 24–48 hours) if their behaviour poses an **immediate and significant risk** to the safety of themselves, other children, or staff.

This includes:

- Physical violence that causes injury.
- Persistent "flight" attempts (running out of the building/grounds) that cannot be managed by standard ratios.

Suspension is a neutral act to allow for a Risk Assessment review.

Withdrawal of a Place

In cases where a child has an identified Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND), the Nursery will make reasonable adjustments and take all reasonable steps to secure additional local authority funding to provide enhanced staffing before a permanent withdrawal is considered, unless the immediate risk to safety is untenable.

The withdrawal of a child's place is a last resort and will only be considered under the following circumstances:

A. Immediate Withdrawal (Gross Misconduct/Extreme Safety)

The Nursery reserves the right to exclude a child immediately and permanently if:

- The child's behaviour poses an unmanageable and life-threatening risk to themselves or others.
- The Nursery cannot legally or safely meet the child's needs within statutory staffing ratios.

B. Notified Withdrawal

The Nursery may provide notice to withdraw a place if:

- **Exhaustion of Support:** Despite documented "reasonable adjustments" and support plans, the behaviour has not improved and safety cannot be guaranteed.
- **Lack of Parental Engagement:** Parents or guardians refuse to participate in support meetings or decline to follow professional advice necessary for the child's safety.
- **Breakdown of Relationship:** Abusive or aggressive behaviour by parents toward nursery staff.

Appeals Process

Parents have the right to appeal a decision to reduce hours or withdraw a place. A written appeal must be submitted to the CEO within **5 working days**. The CEO will review all behavioural logs, support plans, and evidence of adjustments before issuing a final written response.

During the appeal process, the child's suspension may remain in place if the risk to safety is deemed ongoing by the Nursery Manager and CEO.