



Admissions Policy

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Introduction

This policy outlines our admissions process from point of enquiry through to attendance, as well as to explain how we adhere to statutory requirements in order to receive Early Years Entitlement.

Steiner Waldorf schools are founded on respect and care for the development & individuality of human beings in the context of their cultural & natural environment. The educational approach seeks to be hospitable to the ethnicity, family background or other traditions of the children & to provide them with insight & understanding for the diversity of human beings as a whole.

In keeping with these aims, Steiner Waldorf schools aim to create places of support for the development of children in which appropriate human rights & responsibilities are incorporated in their policies & procedures. Equality of opportunity and the respectful valuing of every contribution to the school community are integral to the provision of Steiner Waldorf education.

Provision

Staff: child ratios

As outlined in the EYFS Framework 2021, we are restricted to the number and ages of children that we may care for at any one time. As part of our Ofsted registration, Laurel Farm Kindergarten is registered to care for 16 children per day and we have between two to three members of staff employed to work during Kindergarten hours. However, the number we admit can change depending on the age of the children we have in our care and the qualification of our staff.

Laurel Farm Kindergarten receives children aged 2.5 years – 6 years.

For children aged two:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every four children
- At least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification

For children aged three and over in independent schools, where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, is working directly with children:

- there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
- at least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification

For children aged three and over in independent schools, where there is no person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, working directly with the children:

- there must be at least one member of staff for every eight children
- at least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification
- at least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification

Staff: Our child ratio for over 3's is 1:8 and for over 2's is 1:4. Therefore, at times our maximum number is 12 children per day when we have a number of 2 year old's on our enrollment.

Childcare and early education entitlements

15 Hours Universal Funding

Laurel Farm Kindergarten is Ofsted registered and can therefore receive the Universal 15 hours Early Years Entitlement from the local authority. The kindergarten will apply for this funding on your behalf.

30 hours universal funding

We can also offer the 30 hour funding scheme. Parents and carers will need to apply for this themselves via the GOV.UK website and then provide the Kindergarten Operations Manager with the code that is given to them. To meet the eligibility criteria for the offer, all parents in the household must be working the equivalent of 16 hours a week at the national minimum or living wage up to a maximum salary of £100,000 a year per individual. Parents do not necessarily need to actually work 16 hours a week, but their earnings must reflect at least 16 hours of work at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage; this includes those on zero-hour contracts who meet the criteria. This scheme is different to the current 15 hour free childcare scheme which is open to everyone.

85% refund on fees through Universal Credit

You may be able to claim back up to 85% of your childcare costs if you're eligible for Universal Credit. We can provide the required receipts each month. You (and your partner if you live with them) will usually need to either:

- be working –(1 hour minimum of work per week)
- have a job offer

HMRC 20% top up on Fees

Laurel Farm Kindergarten are currently registered with gov.uk which means you can set up a HMRC Tax Free childcare account and receive 20% top up from the government towards fees. (Subject to eligibility).

Early Years Pupil Premium

Laurel Farm Kindergarten actively seeks to claim Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) for families that meet the criteria, for example, who receive universal credit or who are on low income. Early Years Pupil Premium is given directly to us so that we can make the setting accessible to the aforementioned families. Laurel Farm Kindergarten will use the EYPP in three ways:

1. Provide free lunches
2. Reduction in additional fees
3. Provide high quality resources and play equipment.

Families that are entitled to EYPP therefore receive 80% of the extra funding directly in their termly invoice, whilst 20% is retained by the Kindergarten to fund high quality resources.

Fee Structure

You can fund your child's Kindergarten place using the government funded hours or pay for your child's place. We do not have any restrictions on when or how you can use your funded hours. We do ask for a daily Sustainability Donation if using the funded hours.

Sustainability Donation (Funded hours only: Children aged 2-5)

We ask that parents/carers contribute towards the delivery of our provision at the cost of £3 Sustainability Donation per funded hour.

The following is taken from our local provider agreement with the council:

"Government funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, consumables, additional hours or additional services."

It is, therefore, necessary that we apply a charge for lunch, consumables and additional services.

The elective donation goes towards the following and more:

- Daily Forest School opportunities
- Qualified Steiner teachers working directly with the children
- Qualified Forest School leaders working directly with the children
- A range of enrichment activities
- Specialist resources
- High quality toys
- Organic lunch and light snacks

Without this additional income from a Sustainability Donation, and if we were to rely solely on the funding from the Government, our provision wouldn't be able to operate according to our vision and values.

This Sustainability donation is only applied to those using government-funded hours. It does not apply to those paying unfunded hours.

Any hours above the 15 hours Early Years Entitlement (EYE) or 30 hours entitlement will be charged at **£8.63** per hour

For Children aged 5-6 years

The cost is £34 per day.

Enquiries about what this may look like in real terms for your family can be made to admin@laurelfarmkindergarten.org

Open Days

Potential families are required to attend an open day, or at least visit the Kindergarten and meet the Teachers, before an application form can be accepted. This is to safeguard the Kindergarten from allocating spaces to families who are not fully committed and/or knowledgeable of the Kindergarten and its curriculum.

Application Process

1. All potential parents are emailed a copy of the Kindergarten's application form (which contains the parental contract) and admission information.
2. Once the Operations Manager receives a fully completed application form, they process the information and then forward the application form to the Kindergarten Teachers.
3. The Teachers will review the application and if necessary arrange a 1:1 session to get to know the family.
4. Once a decision has been made on a place, the Operations Manager will send an offer letter indicating the next steps. This includes the request of a Sustainable Joining donation of £100.

*Places are offered based on the Kindergarten's ratios and availability at the time of receiving the application form and/or on the staff's capacity to meet the needs of the individual child. This includes carefully managing our ratio of children under and over 5 years of age.

Retaining a Space

Families are welcome to apply for a future space for their child and Laurel Farm Kindergarten will bear that space in mind for your child. However, a space can only be held if fully paid for.

Families that are attending but who wish to take their child out for a number of weeks or months (on holiday or to work), will also need to pay to keep their space held.

Parental Contract

We require parents to sign a contract before their child starts attending Laurel Farm Kindergarten. This is to provide clarity around our terms and conditions when enrolling a child into our setting and to prevent confusion or conflict.

- **Joining Donation-** To secure a place for their child, parents are invited to pay a £100 Sustainable Admin Donation to cover the costs of processing applications. As a small setting, these donations allow us to continue to provide a high level of care and enriching setting for our children.
- **Payment** - Strictly using a standing order system, on the 1st of each month (one month in advance e.g. September sessions must be paid for by 1st August). Late payments will be charged at £25.00 per month. 'Bounced' payments will also be charged at £25.
- **Sessions** - Places at Laurel Farm Kindergarten are offered on the basis of a minimum of 3 sessions of attendance per week and a minimum of two consecutive terms' attendance.
- **Attendance** – Parents are required to give 12 weeks notice if they would like to reduce their child's hours. We can offer the occasional ad hoc change in sessions but children are required to attend on consistent days each week.
- **Absence** – If a child can't attend a session due to illness or holidays, for example, the parents will still be charged for the session. If Laurel Farm Kindergarten cancels a session due to staff illness then parents will not be charged for these sessions. In the event of forced closure, for example due to extreme weather or a pandemic, then parents will be required to pay 50% of their fees.
- **Notice** - A minimum notice of one term is required if parents wish to leave Laurel Farm Kindergarten. If less than one term's notice (12 weeks) is given then the parents must continue to pay fees for one full term due to their place having been held for them. This 12 week notice does not count once we close for the summer holidays. For example, if you hand your notice in on the 20th July 2024, the 12 week notice period would not begin until the 2nd September when we open. Other times of the year it begins immediately. This is because the kindergarten is closed over the summer and we can do nothing to find new families in this time.

NB. If parents experience difficulties meeting the cost of Sustainability donation they are recommended to discuss this with the Operations manager in advance of the due payment

Settling In:

We are keen that children and parents feel comfortable bringing and leaving their children at Laurel Farm Kindergarten and have an extensive settling in policy that we encourage you to read thoroughly before confirming your attendance.

We also strongly encourage you to take advantage of our nurturing parent and child sessions on a Friday, Greensprouts. This group is similar to a Kindergarten session, during the winter, whereby they do a Steiner – based activity, eat a snack, sing songs and walk around the farm. We strongly suggest to families whose children may need more time and nurturing to get settled into the Kindergarten, to attend this group for a few weeks before their child starts.

We also suggest that families arrange play dates with each other so that the children have familiar faces, and even friends, when they start Kindergarten. This would be handled by the Kindergarten Operations Manager in conjunction with our GDPR policy.

And lastly, we suggest parents read pedagogical stories for transitions and separation to their child for a few weeks before they start Kindergarten. These will be provided to them by the Kindergarten Teacher.

A detailed letter with suggestions of what and how to prepare the families before the child starts settling is sent prior to the beginning of the school year or starting date if this is different.

Termination of Contract

Laurel Farm Kindergarten reserves the right to terminate a parents' contract and to withdraw their child's space at the Kindergarten under these circumstances:

- **Outstanding fees** – the parent hasn't paid fees for two consecutive months.
- **Lateness in paying fees** – the parent persistently pays fees after the 1st of each month, despite being reminded to do so.
- **Disrespectful behavior** – the parents display a lack of respect for the Kindergarten staff, their fellow parents and/or for the Kindergarten's processes (such as time-keeping, parent meetings etc).
- **Threatening behavior** – the parents threaten members of staff, parents and/or children from the setting. We have zero-tolerance of this and will call the police if such behavior occurred.

Under these circumstances the Kindergarten reserves the right to terminate a parent's contract with immediate effect.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in May 2026.

Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-la-and-early-years-provider-guide>

[EYFS staff:child ratios - DfE approved qualifications - GOV.UK](#)