



# **Excalibur Academies Trust**

## **Nursery/Preschool Information/ Guidance Document**

# Introduction

Excalibur Academies Trust ('Excalibur') is an all-through Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) that places high emphasis on developing a coherent and continuous learning journey from 2-19. This is achieved by Excalibur Nurseries/Pre-schools and Primary Academies working in close harmony with linked Excalibur Secondary Academies.

When new children join the nursery/preschool **it is important that parents are made aware that the process of applying for place at a primary school for the reception year is separate to that of applying for a place in a nursery class or school.**

Parents whose children attend the nursery class, particularly from outside the catchment area of the primary school, should be reminded that their child is **not guaranteed** a place at the school when s/he reaches the normal school starting age (i.e. the September of the academic year in which the child will be five). They must apply through the normal County Council school admissions procedures.

Parents/carers are entitled to a full time reception place for the whole of the academic year in which their child becomes 5 . Schools will need to consider this carefully in planning the organisation of the foundation stage, both for admissions to their nursery, and for children who may defer entry to reception.

If there are more children than places, any child who is not offered a place can only be reconsidered and admitted at a later point if the parents have put the child's name on the school's waiting list.

Once a child is admitted to the nursery, the child is entitled to remain in a universal part time place in the nursery class until the term after he/she becomes five\* **However this may not be the most appropriate place for the child if all his/her peers have taken up their reception place in a separate class within the school or another primary school.**

\*N.B. In the case of a summer born child, parents must either take up the school reception place by the April before the child's fifth birthday; or else need to re-apply through the next admission round for a place to start in the September, usually as a year one child. See the Primary School admissions policy for more detail on deferring entry.

Where a family ceases to be eligible for the extended entitlement, the place should return to the universal entitlement level when the grace period expires, unless the parent/carer is prepared and able to pay for the extended hours. Schools offering the extended entitlement should explain this possibility in writing when offering the extended entitlement place. **Parents/Carers must be allowed to keep the child in their universal entitlement place even if they cease to be eligible for the extended entitlement.**

A universal entitlement nursery place should cease no later than the term after the child's fifth birthday, that is, when they are of statutory school age.

## Eligibility Terms

**Universal Early Education Funding entitlement starts from the term after the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.**

The universal entitlement for three and four olds is for 570 free hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks and up to 52 weeks per year. Children will be eligible at the start of the funding period following their third birthday, and continue to be eligible until they reach compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday).

### **A child born in the period**

1 January to 31 March (inclusive)

1 April to 31 August (inclusive)

1 September to 31 December (inclusive)

### **Eligibility starts**

Funding from 1 April

Funding from 1 September

Funding from 1 January

### **30 Hours Extended Childcare Entitlement**

Families meeting certain eligibility criteria are legally entitled to a funded early years place of 30 hours a week or 1,140 hours a year. Information on this entitlement is available at [www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/overview](http://www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/overview)

Parents cannot insist on accessing their child's extended entitlement at any particular provision. Schools must decide whether they will offer only 15 hour nursery places or whether they are able to include some 30 hour extended entitlement places. Schools should make clear to parents what options are available in regard to either the universal or extended entitlement.

Children may become ineligible for the extended entitlement. Where this happens there is a **grace period** during which the child may still attend free of charge. When the grace period expires, the place should revert to a universal 15 hour place unless the parent/carer is prepared and able to pay for the extended hours.

### **Funded 2 Year Olds**

Not all two year olds are eligible to access Free Entitlement funding. It is the provider's responsibility to check that a two year old child has been approved to receive funding. Where the parent meets the eligibility criteria for the free entitlement, the funding will start from the beginning of the term following the child's second birthday.

#### **A child born in the period**

1 January to 31 March (inclusive)

1 April to 31 August (inclusive)

1 September to 31 December (inclusive)

#### **Eligibility starts**

Funding from 1 April

Funding from 1 September

Funding from 1 January

Providers should offer places to eligible two year olds on the understanding that the child remains eligible until they become eligible for the universal entitlement for three and four year olds, regardless of whether their circumstances change.

### **Oversubscription Criteria**

The Criteria are listed below in the priority order applied to Applications when there are more Applications than available places.

Applications will be considered by category as listed below. Within each category, applications will be ranked according to the straight line distance (distances supplied by the Local Authority will be used) from a defined point at the Academy to a defined point at the home address (all points defined by the Local Authority), using the relevant LA system. Priority in each category will be given to the shortest distance. In case of the distance being the same a Tie Breaker will be used (see below).

**Children with Special Education Needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan** - All children whose Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health Care Plan names a school must be admitted.

1. **Looked After Children** 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.
2. **Children who have exceptional social or medical needs**, supported by a written recommendation from the child's paediatrician/consultant, general practitioner or specialist to show that it would be detrimental to the child not to be admitted to the preferred Academy. The letter must explain why the school is the only suitable school to meet the child's needs and why no other school could provide the appropriate support for the child. All supporting evidence should accompany the original application or submitted by the deadline for exceptional circumstances supporting evidence.
3. **Children living in the catchment area.** Where necessary, priority will be given to siblings.
4. **Children who have taken up, or are eligible for, a funded 2 year old place** at the time of application.
5. **Children of Excalibur employees employed at the academy** on a permanent, minimum 40% Full Time Equivalent contract with the Trust for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made or who have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
6. **All other Applications**, where necessary, priority will be given to siblings.

## Glossary and Definition of Terms

**Adopted** - This includes children who were adopted 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).

**Catchment Area** - The address which determines whether a child lives in the Catchment Area of the Academy, is the place where he or she is ordinarily resident at the deadline for applications and will continue to do so when the child is admitted. The Catchment Area is defined below.

**Extended Entitlement** – 30 hours per week, term time only or 1,140 hours a year, for 3 and 4 year olds from working families, according to specific eligibility criteria.

### Early Education for eligible children aged 2

A targeted offer of 570 hours per year for the most vulnerable 2 year old children, from the term after their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, with the aim of reducing the pre-school educational gap that can start to occur from this age. Once a funded 2 year old child starts a funded place eligibility continues even if the families circumstances change.

**Grace period** – when a child's eligibility for the extended entitlement ceases, the government allows the funded place to continue for a specified time period.

**Final Year** - The Final Year of a nursery/preschool is when a child reaches statutory school age (the academic year in which the child will be five). Transfer to a primary school can be delayed until the term after the child is five but no later.

**Home Address** - The home address given for the child should be the child's normal place of residence at the time of the application deadline. If the address given is not the same as that of the applicant, please attach details of the child's residential arrangements to the application form. If you have shared custody of your child such that he or she has two addresses, the address given on the child benefit notification letter will be taken as the child's home address. Where schools are oversubscribed, you may be asked to provide proof that your family were living at the address given on the application form at the time of the deadline. The Local Authority reserves the right to check details held on the Council Tax database to confirm residency at an address.

**Looked After Children** - 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) at the time of making an application to a school.

**Reception** - the year children become 5

**Sibling** - Siblings are defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters who are on the roll of the Academy as at the Application Deadline and continue to do so when the child is admitted. Note there is no guarantee that a younger Sibling will obtain a future place in the same school as his or her brother or sister.

**Tie Breaker** - When two or more children with the same priority for admission live exactly the same distance from the preferred School, the available places will be decided by random allocation (casting lots) by the Trust's Admissions Officer or locally delegated member of staff, except when the children are twins or from the same multiple birth, in which case their applications will be treated as a single application and the twin or other children of the same multiple birth will be admitted as supernumerary (above PAN without in effect increasing PAN).

**Year** – refers to the academic year (September to August)

**Universal Entitlement** – 15 hours per week, term time only or 570 hours a year, to which every child is entitled from the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday

## Catchment Area

The Catchment Area for the Academy as detailed in the relevant catchment map which can be found [here](#).