Garden City Academy Nursery Policy

2025-2026

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**1. Introduction**

Garden City Academy is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment that complies with Hertfordshire County Council's regulations and the Department for Education’s (DfE) standards. We adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and work to promote the well-being and development of children. This policy document outlines our approach to ensuring high standards across various areas, including safeguarding, health and safety, equal opportunities, staffing, curriculum delivery, and parent/carer engagement.

**2. Admissions**

We are able to offer **15** FTE 30-hour places for 2-3 year olds as a minimum. This will increase if demand is there for places. There will be the option of 5 mornings (9am-12pm) or 5 full day places (9am-3pm)

We also offer 28 30-hour places for 3-4 year olds. There will be the option of 5 mornings (9am-12pm) or 5 full day places (9am-3pm).

Priority is given to families who will be accessing the full 15 Universal hours or 30 hours Extended hours. You can check our eligibility [here](https://www.gov.uk/check-eligible-free-childcare-if-youre-working).

We will only offer a place to families wanting to access less than the 15 hours if we do not fill our vacancies with children who require the full 15 hours. If an offer is made for less than 15 hours, it will only be on a term by term basis as priority will still be for children requiring the full 15 hours each term.

Parents are able to indicate their preferred sessions on the application form and we do our best to accommodate their preferences. However, places are subject to availability and the submission of an application form does not guarantee a place.

When allocating Nursery places the children are rated against the following admissions criteria. This is particularly important if the Nursery is oversubscribed and the allocation of places needs to be fair, consistent and transparent. The criteria are as follows with the children with the highest priority being number 1.

1. Looked after children and children who are previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order.

2. Children with a sibling attending the school; Children who have a sibling in attendance at the school.

3. Children of staff who are employed by the school.

 4. Home-to-school distance

In case of children with the same scores competing for a limited number of places the date of the receipt of their application form will be used as the deciding factor.

Parents and carers who are successful in gaining a place for their child at Garden City Academy will be notified by an official offer offering them a place, with a return slip to accept the offered place. Once we have received the confirmation of acceptance, we will issue a letter confirming your child’s place. We will then send further details of the induction process and information about taster sessions and start dates.

Although attendance at Nursery is not statutory, by accepting a place at Garden City Academy, your agreement with the school is that your child will attend on a regular basis. If your child’s attendance falls below 90% it will trigger an attendance process that may result in your child’s place being withdrawn.

 Parents/Carers should be clear that a place at Garden City Academy Nursery does not impact the child’s chance of receiving a place at Garden City Academy School. This is because Primary School admissions are administered by Hertfordshire County Council, not the school and applications for places need to be made in line with county policy.

**3. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

Our nursery follows Hertfordshire's local safeguarding procedures to ensure that children are protected from harm or abuse. The safety of children is a priority, and our staff is trained to recognise signs of neglect, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.

**Key Safeguarding Procedures:**

* **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**: The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for all safeguarding concerns. Our DSL undergoes regular training in line with Hertfordshire’s safeguarding children procedures.
* **Staff Training**: All staff members complete safeguarding training as part of their induction, and they will also undergo refresher training. This ensures they can identify and respond to concerns appropriately.
* **Reporting and Record-Keeping**: Any safeguarding concerns are recorded on the schools digital safeguarding software application and shared with the DSL and Safeguarding Team. If necessary, the DSL will escalate concerns to external agencies, including Hertfordshire’s Children’s Services.
* **Prevent Duty**: We actively promote British values and support children’s awareness of diversity and inclusion. We also follow Hertfordshire’s Prevent Duty procedures to help safeguard children from radicalization.
* **Safe Recruitment Practices**: All staff and volunteers undergo enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and a thorough recruitment process to ensure their suitability to work with children.

**4. Health and Safety Policy**

Garden City Academy is dedicated to maintaining a safe, clean, and healthy environment in line with Hertfordshire’s health and safety regulations. This policy outlines the practices in place to protect children, staff, and visitors.

**Key Health and Safety Procedures:**

* **Risk Assessments**: Regular risk assessments are conducted for indoor and outdoor spaces, activities, and outings. These assessments identify potential hazards, and steps are taken to minimize risks to children’s safety.
* **Accident and Incident Reporting**: All accidents or incidents are recorded immediately in the accident book which is kept confidential. Parents or carers are informed and provided with a copy of the report. Accidents are also reviewed periodically to identify patterns and implement preventative measures.
* **First Aid**: At least one staff member trained in paediatric first aid is always present during nursery hours. First aid kits are accessible, and all staff know the procedures for dealing with medical emergencies.
* **Food Safety**: We follow Hertfordshire’s food safety guidelines, including safe food storage and handling practices. All meals and snacks are prepared according to health and dietary needs, with appropriate attention to allergies and preferences.
* **Hygiene Standards**: Staff maintain high standards of cleanliness throughout the nursery. Handwashing and personal hygiene and oral hygiene practices are taught to children as part of the daily routine.

**6. Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities for all children and families, ensuring every child is valued and supported to reach their full potential. This policy adheres to Hertfordshire's diversity and inclusion standards.

**Key Practices:**

* **Non-Discrimination**: We provide a setting where all children, regardless of race, religion, gender, ability, or background, are treated equally. Discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated.
* **Inclusion**: We ensure that children with additional needs, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), are fully included in all activities. We work closely with external professionals, such as speech therapists, educational psychologists, and other specialists, to support children's development.
* **Cultural Awareness**: We actively encourage awareness of different cultures, traditions, and languages within the setting through activities, resources, and celebrations.

**5. Curriculum and Learning**

The curriculum at Garden City Academy is designed to meet the developmental needs of each child in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. We offer a rich and varied curriculum to promote learning in all areas of development.

**Key Curriculum Areas:**

* **Personal, Social, and Emotional Development (PSED)**: We encourage children to develop positive relationships with their peers and staff, manage emotions, and engage in social activities. Children are encouraged to express themselves and develop resilience.
* **Communication and Language (CL)**: We support language development through activities such as storytelling, singing, and open-ended questions. Staff model language, listen actively, and engage children in meaningful conversations.
* **Physical Development (PD)**: Children participate in activities that promote physical health, motor skills, and coordination, such as outdoor play, fine motor tasks, and movement activities.
* **Literacy:** Our activities are designed to foster an early interest in literacy including opportunities for reading, writing
* **Numeracy**: Our activities are designed to foster an early interest in numeracy and mathematical thinking.
* **Understanding the World (UW)**: We help children understand their environment and the wider world through exploration and activities that focus on science, technology, nature, and community.
* **Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)**: Children engage in creative activities that develop their imagination and artistic skills, including art, music, dance, and role-play.

**7. Parent and Carer Engagement**

We believe in fostering strong partnerships with parents and carers to support children's learning and well-being.

**Key Engagement Practices:**

* **Communication**: We provide regular updates to parents through meetings, reports, and informal communication (e.g., daily chats and Class Dojo). Parents are also invited to share their child’s progress and concerns with staff.
* **Parent Meetings**: We hold termly parent consultations to discuss each child's progress and development. We also offer workshops to help parents support their child’s learning at home.
* **Involvement in Activities**: Parents are encouraged to participate in nursery events and activities, such as special celebrations, fundraising, and volunteering.
* **Parent Feedback**: We seek parents' feedback through surveys and informal

**8. Staffing and Recruitment**

Garden City Academy follows Hertfordshire’s safer recruitment guidelines to ensure that all staff members are qualified, suitable, and fully trained to work with children.

**Key Staffing Procedures:**

* **Recruitment**: All staff members undergo a thorough recruitment process, including interviews, reference checks, and enhanced DBS checks. We also verify qualifications and relevant professional experience.
* **Induction**: New staff complete an induction period, where they are introduced to our policies, safeguarding procedures, and their roles and responsibilities.
* **Ongoing Training**: We provide continuous professional development for our staff, ensuring they stay up-to-date with best practices and regulatory requirements.
* **Staff-Child Ratios**: We adhere to EYFS staffing ratios and ensure that children are supported in a safe, nurturing environment at all times.

**9. Complaints and Grievance Procedure**

We value feedback from parents and carers. If a concern arises, we encourage open communication to resolve issues promptly. If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, parents can follow the formal complaints procedure.

**Key Complaints Procedure:**

* **Informal Resolution**: Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the headteacher, who will aim to resolve the matter promptly.
* **Formal Complaints**: If the issue is not resolved informally, parents can submit a formal written complaint and this will be dealt with as per [Reach2 Academy Trusts complaints Policy.](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CGCA_Leannda.Best%5CDownloads%5CComplaints-Policy-September-2022-Final-Uploaded-Oct-22-1.pdf)

**10. Data Protection and Confidentiality**

We adhere to Hertfordshire's data protection regulations and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to ensure that all personal data is handled securely and confidentially.

**Key Data Protection Practices:**

* **Confidentiality**: We respect the confidentiality of children’s personal and sensitive information and ensure it is only shared with those who need to know for the purposes of their care.
* **Data Storage**: All personal records are securely stored, either digitally with password protection or in locked files.

**11. Conclusion**

Garden City Academy aims to create a positive, nurturing, and compliant environment for children in line with Hertfordshire’s regulations. By following these policies, we ensure that children’s safety, well-being, and development are at the forefront of everything we do.

**Signed:**

*Mrs Samantha Ruck*

Headteacher

17.01.25