



Hingham Playgroup



ADMISSIONS POLICY

We aim to make the group accessible to all families from the local community.

- We welcome the child's parents, other relatives and carers from all cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups.
- We operate a waiting list and places may be offered to older children before younger ones and to families who have a special need for a placement.
- Wherever possible, and if financially viable, places may be kept vacant to provide for emergency admissions.
- We are flexible about attendance patterns in order to accommodate the needs of individual children and families.
- We do not offer places to children who receive nursery funding in preference to those who do not. Nor do we require children in receipt of nursery funding to attend extra days, unless the parents choose to do so.
- In order to accommodate children on our waiting list, we reserve the right to limit the number of sessions any child may attend.
- Children are able to start playgroup a month after their second birthday.
- We recommend that children start on two sessions a week, as seven days between sessions is a very long time for a young child. Children who choose to attend for one session only, will not be discriminated against, and staff will ensure the child is fully supported during the settling process. Staff will ensure the parent is aware that settling may take longer in these situations.
- Full days are not recommended to children under the age of 2½ years, unless they have had prior experience before attending playgroup. These would only be offered after discussions between parent/carer's and staff, who will establish whether this is

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appropriate for the child in question, and providing sessions are available and the requirements set out in the criteria are met.

- We like children to attend playgroup for at least half a term when they are 2 years old before staying for lunch, this is to give them a chance to settle into the group and gain confidence. If staff/ parents feel that the child is not coping well with attending lunches, discussions between all parties will take place to ascertain what is in the best interests of the child.

Funded children

Children who receive government funding are entitled to 5, 2½ hours sessions per week, subject to availability. Should a parent/carer decide they do not wish to initially take up all 5 sessions, we can offer no guarantees that spaces will be available when they wish to increase. In a case of over subscription for limited spaces those who are on the waiting list are given priority, we then follow the criteria set out.

Children on the waiting list

Children, who place their names on our waiting list, are given no guarantees of spaces. We can hold a space for only a month for children who are 2 and wishing to start playgroup. In the case of over subscription to spaces we follow our criteria laid out in this policy.

Admissions criteria

- If a place is available on request, and there is no children waiting, then that place may be taken, by children within the parish of Hingham.
- If a place is available on request, and there is no children waiting, then a child outside the parish of Hingham may take that place.
- Children nearest the top of the waiting list who are eligible for spaces, and are resident of the parish of Hingham.
- Children whose space can be held for a month, and are next on the waiting list and are residents of Hingham.

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- Children with the least amount of funded sessions and are residents of the parish of Hingham.
- Children with social/special need who live inside or outside the parish of Hingham.
- Children outside the catchments area.

In the case of a query about a child attending playgroup and allocation of spaces, discussion will take place between the parents/carers, staff and committee to ascertain what is in the best interests of the child. If a decision cannot be agreed then the committee, who will review the wishes of all parties and decide what is best and appropriate for the child, makes the final decision. Should a parent/carer wish to make representations to the committee in regard to our admissions policy/criteria, arrangements will be made to hold a meeting. Representatives of the management committee, staff and parents/carers concerned, will attend this.

Hingham playgroup reserves the right to review the admissions policy and criteria at any time, should this be deemed necessary by the management committee.

SETTLING-IN POLICY

Children must feel happy and secure without their parents, before they can play and learn successfully. They need to be confident that their parents or carers will return at the end of the session.

In order to achieve this, our policy is:

- For prospective parents and children to be invited to 'Open Day' sessions.
- To arrange for parents to visit with their child for part of a session before they start.
- Admission to the pre-school is staggered so we do not have too many new children starting at the same time.
- To recognise that parents know their child best and to work with them to make the child feel welcome and secure.
- We encourage parents to separate from their child for brief periods at first, which can be built up to longer absences until the child is ready to be left for a whole session.

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- We recognise that at some stage the child may need to be left even though distressed. In such cases the child will be given the continual support of one member of staff. If the child continues to be unduly distressed and is unable to settle, then the parent will be contacted and asked to return.
- If a child is upset when left, parents are welcome to telephone the group at any time to enquire about them.
- Children will be allowed to bring in items of comfort, but we encourage that they are left in their trays to give reassurance, but to discourage dependence.
- We aim to give each child adequate time and support to settle into the setting. Parent's worries and concerns will be taken seriously.
- Parents who are anxious about their child will be given reassurance and information about their child's activities and welfare during the session.
- We recommend that parents/carers of children new to the group return early so the child does not become distressed when other children are collected and they are left waiting. (Young children have little concept of time and may not understand that you will *"be here soon"*.)
- Children develop at different rates and parents should not be discouraged if their child does not settle in as quickly as another. We will offer reassurance and support.

Signed :.....(Chairperson)

Date Reviewed: August 2008.

Review: August 2009