

Innsworth Preschool Admissions Policy

Last Updated: June 2026

1. Purpose and Aims

1.1 Overview: This policy outlines the structured admissions process and criteria for Innsworth Preschool.

1.2 Assessment: The process is designed as a careful, two-way assessment to ensure a successful and positive placement for the child, the family, and the preschool community.

1.3 Aims: Our aim is to operate a fair, transparent, and legally compliant procedure.

1.4 Conditional Admission: Admission is based on objective criteria to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and staff. Places are offered on the condition that:

- We can meet the child's individual needs safely within our staffing ratios, premises constraints, and reasonable adjustments.
- Parents agree to comply with all safety procedures, policies, and lawful directions while on site.
- Parents provide accurate and complete information regarding medical, dietary, and developmental needs to support safe care planning.

2. Statutory Framework

2.1 Compliance: This policy supports our compliance with relevant UK legislation, specifically:

- The Childcare Act 2006.
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE): Setting the standards for learning, development, and care.
- The Equality Act 2010: Ensuring non-discrimination and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice.
- DfE Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance (regarding optional charges).
- Food Safety Standards: We obtain, record, and act on information about children's dietary needs, allergies, and intolerances, keeping it up to date.

3. Service Packages & Operational Model

3.1 Optional Services: Innsworth Preschool operates optional services alongside core funded and private childcare, including Brunch, Lunch, Farm Experience, Wellbeing Club, and the Nappy and Wipes Service. These are optional services available to families where applicable. Where we provide meals/snacks, these must be healthy, balanced, and nutritious; we have regard to DfE nutrition guidance.

3.2 Government Funding: Government-funded entitlement hours cover the core EYFS care and education offered by the setting. Children accessing funded hours receive the full EYFS curriculum whether or not parents purchase optional extras. Optional charges apply only to clearly additional meals, services, consumables, convenience services, take-home items, enhanced experiences, or non-essential extras selected by parents. The setting will not charge parents for resources, equipment or materials necessary for the effective delivery of funded childcare, and will not require optional services as a condition of accessing funded entitlement hours.

3.3 Opting Out (Parental Provision): Parents accessing funded hours have the right to opt out of additional optional charges. Opting out requires parents to provide their own meals and, where relevant, parent-provided nappies, wipes, creams, nappy sacks, and changing items in line with strict safety standards.

3.4 Safety Standards (The Opt-Out Checklist): Parents providing their own food must adhere to the following safety rules to protect the setting.

Storage Constraints: We do not have refrigeration facilities for individual packed meals and we do not have space to store large bags or backpacks in the building. Parents opting out must provide food in a compact, named, wipe-clean container, with an ice pack where needed.

Temperature Control Capacity: Lunchboxes are placed on arrival into our designated temperature-control storage system (e.g. lidded cool boxes) under staff control. Temperature-control storage capacity is limited. If capacity is reached, we will offer:

- Switching to the meal service for that period (invoiced at the standard rate);
OR
- An alternative attendance pattern where packed provision can be accommodated.

Allergen-Controlled Environment: We care for children with severe, life-threatening allergies (including children prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors). Because staff cannot be isolated from core duties and children cannot be reliably segregated, we operate setting-wide allergen restrictions to reduce the risk of exposure.

Prohibited Items:

- **Restricted Allergens:** Food brought from home must not contain, or be labelled as "may contain", any allergen restricted by the setting. Standing restricted allergens include nuts, peanuts, and sesame. Additional child-specific restrictions may apply where required by an allergy plan, medical need, or adrenaline auto-injector requirement, including but not limited to fish and egg where these are restricted by the setting. Allergen restrictions will be reviewed when the cohort changes, when medical information changes, or when an allergy plan is updated.
- **Homemade/Unlabelled Goods:** No homemade baked goods or foods without full ingredient labelling (original packaging or a complete printed ingredient list).
- **High Risk Items:** No whole grapes, popcorn, hard sweets, or glass containers.
- **Unlabelled Loose Food:** Food not in a named, sealed container with the child's name and date is prohibited.

Choking Prevention: All high-risk foods (e.g. grapes, cherry tomatoes, sausages, blueberries) must be cut lengthways and into small pieces at home. Staff will not

routinely cut or modify home-provided food beyond reasonable supervision; parents must prepare food safely at home.

Handover Protocol: Food from home must be brought to the handover point in the required compact, named, wipe-clean container and handed directly to staff at drop-off. Containers must not be left unattended and must be suitable for safe storage, easy checking, and daily handover.

Temperature Disclaimer: We cannot guarantee packed food temperature once provided by parents. Parents must choose foods suitable for being kept cool and must use frozen ice packs. Staff may refuse to serve food if it presents a safety concern.

Emergency Provision (Consequences): At enrolment, parents opting out must select one of two protocols for when packed provision is deemed unsafe or unavailable:

- **Option A (Emergency Food Authorisation):** If packed provision is unsafe/unavailable, we may provide a basic safe alternative and invoice at the published emergency provision rate.
- **Option B (No Emergency Food):** If packed provision is unsafe/unavailable, the parent must provide a safe replacement within 30 minutes or the child may need to be collected for welfare reasons.

Breach of Safety: Repeated breaches of the Opt-Out Checklist are treated as serious safety breaches and may trigger the staged responses in this policy, including suspension/termination in serious cases.

3.5 Farm Experience: Farm Experience refers to farming-themed, nature-based and practical learning activities such as planting, growing, gardening, flowers, food preparation, cooking, seasonal produce, outdoor learning and related activities. It does not involve animal care unless a separate risk assessment and written parent information confirm otherwise. Children will still access appropriate outdoor learning, growing, gardening, nature-based and practical EYFS experiences as part of the core curriculum. The optional Farm Experience charge applies only to additional enhanced items, consumables, take-home produce, or optional extras outside the funded entitlement.

4. Eligibility, Readiness & Parental Conduct

4.1 Age Range: Innsworth Preschool provides care for children from the age of two until they reach statutory school age. Admission is not automatic.

4.2 Multicultural Ethos: Innsworth Preschool is a diverse, multicultural setting. We actively promote Fundamental British Values.

4.3 Parent Conduct Standards: We maintain a safe and respectful environment for all. Parents must communicate respectfully, use agreed channels, and follow reasonable and lawful staff instructions, policies, procedures, safety expectations and operational decisions. We do not tolerate "Repeated Unreasonable Conduct".

- **Definition:** This includes refusal to use the designated complaints channel, sending repeated abusive or aggressive messages, refusing to engage with investigations, or excessive contact volume that materially disrupts operations.
- **Escalation Ladder:** Breaches will be managed through a staged response:
 1. Written Warning.
 2. Restricted Communication Channel (e.g. email only).
 3. Appointment-Only Access.
 4. Suspension or Termination of the child's place (for serious or repeated breaches).
- **Immediate Risk:** In cases of serious abuse, threats, or violence, we reserve the right to suspend or terminate immediately without prior steps.

4.4 Suitability for Farm Experience: Farm Experience is farming-themed, nature-based and practical learning involving activities such as planting, growing, gardening, flowers, food preparation, cooking, seasonal produce and outdoor learning. It is not animal care unless a separate risk assessment and written parent information confirm otherwise. Any relevant allergy, medical, SEND or safety needs will be considered through risk assessment and reasonable-adjustment planning.

4.5 Medical Safety Assessment: We will conduct a risk assessment for children with known allergies or medical needs.

- **Evidence:** We may request relevant medical evidence (e.g. an Allergy Action Plan or clinician letter) to complete this assessment.
- **Review:** If admission is refused due to unmanageable risk, we may reconsider the decision if circumstances change (e.g. a new medical management plan or reduced risk profile).

4.6 Toileting & Nappies: We support children who are not yet toilet trained.

- **External Support:** We may ask parents to engage with health visiting, continence support, or SEN support services, and we will coordinate with them where consent is provided.
- **Delayed Start Triggers:** We reserve the right to agree a delayed start date if the child's needs present specific risks, such as: repeated staff injury risk (e.g. manual handling), inability to maintain legal supervision ratios while meeting care needs, or safeguarding risks.
- **Review:** Delay decisions are time-limited and reviewed every 4 weeks.

4.7 Information Accuracy and Agreed Care: Parents must provide accurate and complete information regarding medical, dietary, developmental, safeguarding and support needs. Parents must not make unilateral decisions about care, attendance, food, medication, clothing, collection, toileting, nappies, wipes, safety arrangements or support needs without prior agreement from preschool management. Doorstep requests or parent preferences do not override agreed procedures, risk assessments, policies, staffing arrangements or the setting's professional judgement. Withholding or misrepresenting material information, or refusing reasonable and lawful requirements where safety is affected, may result in a delayed start, review, restriction, suspension pending assessment, or termination in serious cases.

5. The Admissions Process

5.1 Format: Our admissions process is a structured, multi-stage assessment.

Before a child joins Innsworth Preschool, the setting must meet the child and family and every child is normally required to complete two pre-admission visits: a first

visit and a stay-and-play visit. In exceptional circumstances, the Manager may agree a reasonable adjustment to the format, timing, length, or structure of the visits, provided the setting can still complete a safe and fair assessment before any place is confirmed. Enrolment forms are issued only after the setting has completed both required visits, subject to any agreed reasonable adjustment, and has decided that it is appropriate to proceed.

Step 1: Parent Enquiry: A parent makes an enquiry. The setting may provide general information about sessions, fees, current indicative availability, and the admissions process. Any availability information given before the admissions process is complete is indicative only and does not mean a place is available, reserved, offered or guaranteed.

Step 2: First Visit: The first visit is a short visit or show around for the parent and child. The parent remains responsible for supervising and caring for the child during the first visit.

Step 3: Stay and Play Assessment: The second visit is a stay and play. During the stay and play, the child joins a short session with the group so staff can assess whether the setting can meet the child's needs, how the child copes in group care, and whether additional support, SEND support, medical arrangements, safeguarding review, staffing review, ratio planning, or reasonable adjustments may be needed.

Step 4: Enrolment Forms and Written Confirmation: Enrolment forms are issued only after the child has completed the first visit and stay-and-play visit, subject to any agreed reasonable adjustment, and only where the setting decides it is appropriate to proceed. No place is confirmed until all required forms and information are completed in full and returned, the setting has reviewed them, confirmed that it can meet the child's needs safely and appropriately, checked availability, and issued written confirmation. A place is not available, held, reserved, offered or guaranteed before those steps are complete.

5.2 Capacity & Staffing Pause: We reserve the right to pause admissions or defer start dates where staffing levels, ratios, or premises constraints mean we cannot safely admit new children at that time.

5.3 Emergency Operational Changes: An accepted place does not prevent the setting from closing in advance, closing during the day, reducing hours, restricting attendance or activities, or requiring early collection where management reasonably decides that weather, heat, premises conditions, staffing, ratios, child wellbeing, staff wellbeing or another safety concern prevents safe or appropriate operation. Fees and funded sessions will be managed under the Fees, Funding and Charges Policy and current local authority rules.

6. The 6-Week Settling/Probation Period

6.1 Applicability: All new places are subject to a 6-week settling/probation period. This period is used to assess whether the child is settling into group care, whether the setting can meet the child's needs, whether the child can safely and appropriately manage the group-care environment, and whether any SEND, disability, medical, developmental, safeguarding, staffing, ratio, or reasonable-adjustment matters need further review.

6.2 Operational Probation: During this period, the child is subject to increased monitoring and settling reviews. The 6-week period is not a guarantee that the place will continue if the setting cannot meet the child's needs safely or if the placement is not workable within group care.

6.3 Setting Discretion During Settling/Probation:

- **Immediate Suspension:** In cases of serious safety risk, violence, or safeguarding concerns, we may suspend the place immediately pending an investigation.
- **Action During Settling/Probation:** Normal notice may apply where appropriate. However, the setting may use shorter notice, immediate review, reduced sessions, suspension, or termination where necessary due to safeguarding, safety, serious behaviour concerns, staffing or ratio concerns, unmet needs, non-payment, failure to disclose important information, breakdown in the working relationship with parents, or the setting being unable to meet the child's needs in group care.
- **Standard Early Termination:** For issues regarding settling or suitability that do not pose an immediate risk, we may terminate the placement with a

shortened notice period (e.g. 1 week), following documented support attempts (e.g. a settling plan and review meeting).

6.4 Sessions and Financial Arrangements During Settling/Probation: Ordinary absence and unused booked sessions are managed under the Fees, Funding and Charges Policy and are not normally refunded, moved, replaced, swapped, or exchanged. Any adjustment arising from a provider-directed suspension, restriction, or early termination will be considered under the Parent-Provider Agreement, Fees, Funding and Charges Policy, Local Authority funding rules, and the circumstances of the case.

7. Settling-In & Parental Communication

7.1 Settling Guidance: We provide guidance to parents on the settling-in process. We expect parents to work with us to support their child.

7.2 Managing Concerns: If parents raise concerns, we will investigate and respond professionally. However, we do not tolerate unreasonable conduct.

- **Unreasonable Conduct:** Includes abusive messages, threatening staff, filming without permission, repeated breaches of confidentiality, or harassment.
- **Action:** Such behaviour triggers the Escalation Ladder (see Clause 4.3).

8. Confidentiality & Data

8.1 Policy: We operate a strict confidentiality policy to protect all children and families.

8.2 Availability Information: Innsworth Preschool does not keep a waiting list. We may provide general information about current availability, but places are offered only when they become available and only where the setting can meet the child's needs safely and appropriately.

8.3 Operational Information: We share information necessary for the child's care and safeguarding (e.g. the name of their Key Person). We do not disclose detailed staff rotas or staff personal data.

9. Admissions Allocation Criteria

9.1 Allocation: Innsworth Preschool does not reserve places and does not keep a waiting list. Places are offered on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to availability and the setting being able to meet the child's needs safely within staffing, ratios, operational capacity, safeguarding, SEND, disability, medical needs, reasonable adjustments, and group-care suitability.

1. Place Confirmation: A place is not guaranteed until confirmed in writing by the setting.
2. SEND/EHCP: Where an EHCP or statutory SEND process applies, the setting will engage with the Local Authority as required and assess whether the specified provision can be delivered safely and appropriately.
3. No Waiting List: Families may make a fresh enquiry when they need a place. The setting may share general availability information, but does not hold waiting-list positions.
4. Availability: If no suitable place is available, the setting will not guarantee a future place.
5. Decision Records: Allocation decisions will be recorded where needed, particularly where needs, safety, SEND, disability, medical, safeguarding, staffing, ratio, or reasonable-adjustment matters are considered.

10. Fees, Funding & Liability

10.1 Parental Responsibility: Parents are solely responsible for providing valid government funding eligibility codes (e.g. 30 Hours) by the published local authority deadline. We require evidence of code reconfirmation each term.

10.2 Funding Code Validation: If a code is not provided by the deadline, or later becomes invalid:

- We will invoice the parent at the Standard Private Rate for the affected period; OR
- We may adjust the sessions from the next practicable date to match what can be self-funded.

10.3 Late Payment: We operate a staged payment escalation process: Reminder -> Final Notice -> Suspension of optional services -> Suspension of attendance (as a last resort).

11. Annual Nature of Places & Attendance Patterns

11.1 Annual Allocation: Places are offered for one academic year only. Re-application is required annually.

- **Prioritisation:** Existing children seeking to continue their current attendance pattern are prioritised before new applicants, subject to capacity and staffing.
- **Guarantee:** A place is not guaranteed if capacity or staffing levels change.

11.2 Session Allocation: We allocate sessions based on operational viability. If a requested pattern is not viable, we reserve the right to offer an alternative pattern.

11.3 Reserved Booking Pattern: Once a place is accepted, the child's regular funded and/or privately paid sessions are planned and reserved for the school year. This is different from an enquiry or unconfirmed place, which does not reserve a session.

11.4 Session Changes and Additional Sessions: Parents may request changes to regular sessions, normally limited to one change per term. Parents may also request additional privately paid sessions. All requests are subject to availability, staffing, ratios, funding rules, and the operational needs of the preschool.

12. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND)

12.1 Commitment: We are committed to inclusive practice.

12.2 Information Sharing: Parents must share all known information relevant to safe care. We may request an initial meeting and care plan before the start date.

- **Consent:** We may ask parents to consent to us liaising with external professionals (e.g. Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists) to support the admission.

12.3 Assessment: We will assess if we can safely meet the child's needs. If a child requires intensive support (e.g. 1:1) that cannot be safely provided within our

ratios and reasonable adjustments, we will document our assessment and discuss options.

13. Decision Recording & Review

13.1 Decision Note: Any decision to refuse admission, delay a start date, or terminate a place will be recorded in a Decision Note. This will include:

- The decision type (Refusal/Delay/Termination).
- The objective criteria relied upon (citing specific clauses).
- A summary of evidence (e.g. risk assessment, incident logs).
- Equality Act reasonable adjustments considered and the rationale for the decision.
- SEND considerations and engagement with professionals (where relevant).

13.2 Internal Review: Parents who disagree with an admissions decision may request a formal internal review in writing within 14 days.

13.3 Outcome: The review will be conducted by a senior member of staff not involved in the original decision. A written response will be provided within 21 days. Parents may also use our Complaints Procedure if they believe this policy has not been applied fairly.

