



Admissions Policy

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out the admissions process and criteria for Wildwood Nature School. All applications comply with the processes set out below and Wildwood Nature School will do their utmost to guarantee an inclusive, objective, fair and equal opportunity process.

Introduction

Wildwood Nature School is a new model for education that operates as a charity. We are a fee-paying independent primary school in North London for children aged 4 – 11 years, with a high proportion of free and reduced-fee places.

Aims

- To ensure our innovative model of education is open to as many children as possible, regardless of their background
- To ensure the admissions process is easily understood by applicants
- To ensure procedures are fair, objective, and transparent based on the democratic principles that are part of the culture of Wildwood Nature School
- To promote diversity through an inclusive admissions process
- To avoid discrimination and/or unlawful or unfair exclusion
- To ensure diversity and equal access to education
- To enable an even representation of children within the local area.

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1. Free and reduced-fee places

Wildwood Nature School is committed to creating a more equitable society. To deliver on this part of our ethos, we have a very high proportion of supported places to enable access for those who cannot afford the fees. At least 20% of the places we deliver are completely free and a further 30% places have significantly reduced fees. Because we are so small, the actual rates of supported places offered each year will vary, but we ensure that we deliver on this commitment.

Offers for supported places will be based upon each applicant's overall ability to pay as well as the range of applications we receive (please see the criteria that will be used to determine places within each band below *6.1 Oversubscription criteria*). The details of our school fees are available on our [website](#).

Once an admissions application has been successful, families will need to submit financial details to a third party organisation to confirm eligibility for either a free place or one of the bands on the sliding scale. Overall affordability based on circumstances, as well as household income, will be taken into consideration. Our hope is that those families who are able to pay more do so as part of Wildwood Nature School's goal of creating more equity in our society and enlarging access to alternative education for children from all economic backgrounds.

2. The direct admissions process for school starters

- Step 1: Families fill in the application form on the school [website](#).
- Step 2:
 - a. If relevant, Wildwood Nature School will carry out an affordability check via a third party company to assess your ability to pay fees. This will cost £50-100, or;
 - b. Receive a waiting list offer if the school is oversubscribed. Please note that Wildwood Nature School will not be able to discuss why a waiting list place has been offered. All *Oversubscription criteria* (see section 6.1 below) will be used to make

admissions decisions.

- Step 3: Receive an offer for a parent conversation.
- Step 4: Parents/carers attend an informal meeting with 2 of Wildwood Nature School's trustees to discuss the community ethos of the school. This is not an interview but an opportunity for parents to ensure that Wildwood Nature School is the right option for their child.
- Step 5: Child comes in for a taster morning/day to see if the school is a good fit for them and vice versa.
- Step 6:
 - a. Receive an offer of a school place with fees set based upon the affordability testing, or;
 - b. Receive a waiting list offer.
- Step 7: Families accept the school place offer by paying the enrolment fee within the stated time limit, signing the parent contract, and paying a non-refundable deposit of half a term's fees (if you're eligible to pay fees). This deposit will be returned to you when your child leaves Wildwood Nature School.

Wildwood Nature School follows a typical school year that runs from September to July, split into three terms (Autumn term, Spring term, Summer term - see our website for [term dates](#)). Usually, the school admits children who turn 4 before the 31st August to start school in September of the Autumn term, however there may be an option for a deferred start until the term when the child reaches their 5th birthday. Such a request must be put in writing by emailing the school on apply@wildwoodnatureschool.org.uk

2.1 Open days

Wildwood Nature School usually arranges one open day in November, dates of which will be published on the school's website. Please get in touch via email or phone if you are interested to know more about the school before (or after) applying.

2.2 Applications

The application form to register children can be found on Wildwood Nature School's [website](#). Parents/carers are asked to fill in all required fields before they submit it to the school. Incomplete application forms will not be accepted. Please get in touch if help is needed to fill out the form.

A notification confirming submission of the application form should appear once the form has completed. Should parents/carers not receive such confirmation, please contact the school on apply@wildwoodnatureschool.org.uk

3. Offer of a place

All successful applicants will receive an email confirming an offer for your child's school place or a waiting list place.

3.1 Accept the offer for a school place

To accept the offer, parents/carers must read the relevant policies and complete and return the signed parent contract and enrolment form along with supporting documentation if relevant, on or before the date stipulated in our offer email, after which the offer will be withdrawn. Once the offer has been accepted parents/carers will receive a confirmation email for their child's school place. Should they not receive a confirmation email, it is important to contact the school by emailing apply@wildwoodnatureschool.org.uk as Wildwood Nature School doesn't take any responsibility for lost emails.

3.2 Deferrals

Should parents/carers seek to defer their child's school start until after their fifth birthday, please email info@wildwoodnatureschool.org.uk.

4. The admissions process for older children or in-year starters

The admissions process for older children or in-year starters is the same as outlined above. Once we have received your application form with the desired phase group, we will consider the request depending on vacancies available. All children who are applying in-year will be asked for an informal meeting with the parents/carers and the child. This is a chance for the head of school to get to know your family a little better, to discuss any questions you may have about the school in greater detail, and for everyone to decide whether this school is the right environment for the child.

5. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

It is Wildwood Nature School's responsibility to ensure every child's needs are met, and the school commits to do so wherever possible, with the resources that we have available to us. Please note that as an independent school, we do not have the same access to local authority resources.

The admissions process for children with SEND is the same as outlined above but includes an informal meeting with the SEND lead to establish a thorough needs assessment. Once Wildwood Nature School has received the application form, we will consider the request depending on vacancies available.

5.1 Additional adult support

If there is a need for an additional adult to support the child and they don't already have an EHCP in place to fund this additional adult, we will only be able to consider allocating a place if the family is able to pay for the costs of hiring an additional adult. More information can be found in the school's [SEND Policy](#).

5.2 Informal meeting

Wildwood Nature School will only arrange a meeting provided there is a vacancy in the appropriate phase group, or for the parents/carers and child next on the waiting list according to oversubscription criteria if a place opens.

Once the application form has been received and where the parents/carers have self-disclosed all identified SEND for their child, Wildwood Nature School will arrange a meeting between the family, the child and the SEND lead.

Once a meeting is arranged, Wildwood Nature School will email to ask for any additional information to bring on the day. This might include copies of any special educational needs documentation that previous nurseries or childcare providers have about the child.

Parents/carers need to know that this meeting is not an exam and their child does not need to 'perform'. Instead, it is a chance for the SEND lead to get to know the child a little better, to discuss any questions the family may have about the school in greater detail, and for everyone to decide whether this school is the right environment for this child.

6. Waiting list

Wildwood Nature School holds an up-to-date waiting list and places will be offered according to the oversubscription criteria as defined below.

New applicants should apply through the school's admissions process and if the school is oversubscribed, they will be added to the waiting list.

Once a vacancy becomes available, Wildwood Nature School will email the parents/carers of the child next on the waiting list as determined by our oversubscription criteria (please note the waiting list is not ranked until a place becomes available so we will not be able to tell you where your child is on this list). We will try to call once if a telephone number has been provided. The relevant forms and prospective school start date, which is usually the first day of the next term, will be included in the email. Parents/carers are asked to respond within one school week and to return the signed forms, the parent contract, and any supporting documentation to secure the place.

If there is no response within three days, the school will allocate the place to the next child on the waiting list and the non-responding applicant will be removed from the waiting list.

Wildwood Nature School can at any time confirm that a child is on the waiting list but unfortunately, they will be unable to give any indication as to how long children could be on our waiting list or when a place may become available.

If a place does not become available within an academic year, parents/carers with children on the waiting list will be emailed to ask if they would like to remain on the waiting list for the following academic year.

6.1 Oversubscription Criteria

School places will be allocated using the following oversubscription criteria.

- Free places for those who are eligible and a balance of reduced-fee places.
- Children of employed staff or long-term team members (over 1 calendar year engaged 1 day per week or more).
- Sibling/Current family association: This means a brother or sister of a child who has qualified for a place at Wildwood Nature School already. In this context brother or sister means children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers and sisters, adopted siblings, step/half brothers and sisters, foster brothers and sisters.
- Looked after children or previously looked after children: A looked after child is a child who is either in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in

the exercise of their social services function. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order).

- **Positive action:** In the admissions application process, taking positive action allows Wildwood Nature School to achieve diversity when faced with two or more applicants of equal eligibility. In such a case, the school may select the applicant from a group that faces disadvantage or is under-represented in the school community over an applicant who isn't from that group. Wildwood Nature School resorts to positive action selection after a thorough assessment of all applications and when they are satisfied that their decision is proportionate. This is a voluntary action Wildwood Nature School undertakes to encourage diversity and guarantee inclusion within our community.
- **Location:** As part of our community ethos, we encourage admissions from families who live locally to the school. We do not have a strict catchment area but proximity to the school's address (St Mary Brookfield Hall, London, NW5 1SB) and our Queens Wood campus (Muswell Hill Rd, London N10 3JP) will be a contributory factor when deciding on admissions. We are also committed to protecting our environment and encourage families to walk, cycle or use public transport to commute to school. This is more likely when families live closer to the school.

Policy review

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