



Placement policy

Version Control

Date	Version	Notes	Created/amended by
24/03/21	1.0	First created.	Shaun Tulloch ELC Manager
08/06/21	1.1	Amended 5.2 after meeting with Service Manager and Programme Manager and added 5.3	Shaun Tulloch ELC Manager

1.0 Scope of policy

This policy will be consulted when allocating any places at Willow Tree Nursery. It covers registration procedures, allocation of places and the management of waiting lists for use of the service.

2.0 Policy statement

We are committed to ensuring that Willow Tree Nursery has a fair and transparent placement policy. All requests for places in the service will be assigned in accordance with the policy. The policy will be managed and reviewed by the ELC Manager, Willow Tree Nursery, in consultation with the Orkney Islands Council Early Years Service.

3.0 Registration

3.1

Registration for a place at Willow Tree nursery will be available at all times on the Orkney Islands Council website as part of the MyOrkney system. See [Early Learning and Childcare Orkney](#) for more information.

3.2

Families can access information about registering for a place on the Willow Tree Nursery website: www.willowtreeorkney.co.uk.

3.3

The setting caters for children aged 6 months to 3 years. Children are no longer eligible for a place from the term after their third Birthday. This is when they will become eligible for 1140 hours of free Early Learning and Childcare at their local setting. See [Orkney settings and childminders](#) for more information.

3.4

Families can apply to register for a place up to one year before they intend to start using the place. Families will be contacted in writing not later than two months before this date to confirm whether a space is available to them. If it looks like a space will not be available by their requested date, they will have the option to remain on the waiting list until a space is available.

3.5

On completion of a registration form, parents will be contacted by a member of the Willow Tree team to discuss their request. This will normally be within 10 working days of the request. Parents will, at this point, receive any information about the current waiting list.

If parents have submitted a registration form but no longer require a childcare space, they are asked to contact willow.tree@orkney.gov.uk as soon as possible to withdraw their request.

4.0 Allocation of places

4.1

Willow Tree Nursery has a daily capacity for twelve children aged from 6 months – 2 years and twenty children aged 2-3 years. Each of these groups of children have a different staffing ratio, stipulated by the Care Inspectorate. The ratio for under twos is 1:3, one member of staff to every three children. For children aged 2-3 the ratio is 1:5, one member of staff to every five children. Therefore, the twelve places in the 'Explorers' room and the twenty places in the 'Adventurers' room will be considered separately when allocating spaces.

4.2

When parents have secured a place for their child aged 0-2, they will automatically retain this space and their child will transfer to the 2-3 provision when a space becomes available to meet their needs. Until then, they would hold a 0-2 space but may 'move up' to the next playroom.

4.3

In general, places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis (see exception at 6.0). When initial registrations are received, these will be catalogued in the order they come in and worked through in date order.

4.5

A place will be defined by the number of hours allocated to each child. For example, a place may be full time (0800-1730 Monday to Friday) or part time (0800-1730 Monday-Tuesday and 0800-1300 Wednesday). The overall number of places at any one time is determined by how many hours each child takes up.

4.6

Any issues that arise in the application of this policy will be referred to the Service Manager for Early Years, Orkney Islands Council.

5.0 Waiting List

5.1

The registered manager of the setting will hold a waiting list for all families wishing to use the service. They will apply this policy in determining how places are allocated. The waiting list will be regularly reviewed and updated. Data will be stored in accordance with relevant legislation and families will be informed as to how Orkney Islands Council and Willow Tree Nursery will manage this data at the point of registration.

5.2

Requests from existing families to increase hours should be made as far in advance as possible. These requests will be subject to the waiting list and not guaranteed. Requests for a second child from the same family will be subject to the waiting list and each child will be considered individually depending on when the application was submitted.

5.3

The waiting list will operate on a first refusal basis. For example if a family are at the top of the waiting list for a full time space and a part time space becomes available, they will be offered the

part time space in the first instance. They will then remain at the top of the waiting list until all the hours they requested become available.

6.0 Places for Vulnerable Children

6.1

Orkney Islands Council reserves the right to allocate places to support its duty to meet statutory obligations. For example, a place may be required to support a child in need of care or protection. These requests will be agreed by the Service Manager for Early Learning and Childcare in consultation with the Head of Education, Orkney Islands Council. These requests may be short notice and will be accommodated wherever possible.