

Admissions Policy – Bentley, Kingsley & Churt



1. Introduction

At Dottie Tots Nursery School, we believe that every child deserves the very best start in life. We're proud to offer a warm, nurturing, and inclusive environment where children can learn, grow, and thrive from birth until they start school.

Our nurseries welcome families who require private places and government funded places. With the recent expansion of funding to include younger children, we're excited to be able to support even more families through a variety of flexible options tailored to meet individual needs.

This Admissions Policy explains how we offer and allocate places across our settings. It sets out everything families need to know about our private places and government funded places, our application process, and how we ensure everything we do follows the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted. Most importantly, we want to make the journey into nursery as simple, supportive, and transparent as possible for every family.

2. Private Places, Additional Sessions and Combined Hours

Families who are not accessing government-funded childcare, or who wish to book sessions beyond their funded entitlement, may apply for a private childcare place. These are allocated independently from funded-only places and are charged in line with our private fee structure. All private places are subject to availability and must comply with our staffing ratios and operational planning.

Families accessing private hours are referred to as private customers. Private customers can book places for full days or across multiple days during our operational opening hours. Following an agreed quotation provided by our Nursery Administrator, families are issued with a Private Place Agreement, which forms the full terms and conditions of their child's place. This Agreement sets out both our obligations to families and families' obligations to us. It covers matters such as confirmation of the place, booking patterns, payment of fees, policies and permissions, notice requirements, and expectations around attendance, conduct, and safeguarding. The Private Place Agreement also clarifies that a private place does not guarantee progression into a funded place and that all hours and sessions remain subject to availability. Acceptance of a private place constitutes agreement to these terms.

Note: Access to funded hours is not conditional on the purchase of private hours or any other services. We adhere strictly to DfE guidance and CMA requirements and do not require families to pay for additional hours or services in order to access their funded entitlement.

Families may access a funded-only place without any obligation to purchase additional hours. The Private Place Agreement applies only to those who choose to book extra sessions beyond the funded entitlement.

3. Combined use of a Private Place with Funded Hours

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Some families may choose to access a mix of private hours and funded hours to meet their childcare needs.

- Funded hours are delivered strictly within our specified funded session times, as detailed in our funding structure.
- Any hours outside of these funded sessions are classified as private hours and charged in line with our private fee structure.
- Access to funded hours is not dependent on the purchase of private hours or additional services.

Families who access a mix of funded and private hours are classed as private customers for the private element of their booking. They must therefore hold both a Private Place Agreement (for the private hours) and a Funding Declaration Form (for local authority funded hours).

We are committed to delivering funded places in a way that is clear, fair, and fully compliant with DfE and CMA requirements. Funded hours are free at the point of delivery and are not subject to any additional conditions. Families may choose to access only their funded entitlement, only private hours, or a combination of both, subject to availability.

4. Session Availability and Funded Hours Structure

We offer set session times for funded places to enable the delivery of continuous, high-quality early education, while also ensuring our ability to staff appropriately and sustainably.

Bentley, Kingsley & Churt Nurseries (Stretched Offer – 51 Weeks)

- Funded sessions are available from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.
- Each funded session provides 7 hours of continuous care with no artificial breaks.
- 30 Hours/Working Parent Entitlement: Maximum 21 hours per week (3 block sessions), with the balance of hours spread across the year. Subject to availability, additional sessions may be offered to enable families to use their full entitlement.
- 15 Hours/Universal Entitlement: Maximum 7 hours per week (1 block session), with an additional 4 hours bookable from 1pm – 5pm subject to availability.

Only funded hours delivered during these times are free at the point of delivery. Any additional hours outside of funded entitlements require a Private Place Agreement and are chargeable.

Optional extras such as early drop-off (8–10am) and late pick-up (5–6pm) are available as part of our private fee structure.

5. Application Process

1. **Initial Enquiry** – Families contact the nursery or administrator to enquire about a place.
2. **Discussion of Requirements** – The Nursery Administrator discusses requirements and shares fee and/or funding structures. A quotation for private places is provided if applicable.
3. **Nursery Visit** – A tour is arranged and carried out for the parent(s) and child.
4. **Offer** – A pattern of attendance is agreed, and a place is offered subject to availability and admissions criteria.
5. **T&Cs** – Families are issued with either a Private Place Agreement or a Funded Place Agreement.
6. **Registration** – Registration Form completed. A registration fee (private customers) or refundable deposit (funded-only places) will be invoiced. Deposits for funded-only places are fully refundable once the child starts, in line with local authority guidance.
7. **Child Starts** – Settling-in sessions are arranged. For funded places, a parent declaration form is completed.

Important: When an agreement for a private or funded place ends (for example, when a family requests a change to a different booking pattern or entitlement type), the family will be treated as making a new application. The child will be placed on the waiting list and offered a place according to our Admissions Criteria and availability. A private place does not guarantee progression into a funded place, and a funded-only place does not entitle families to purchase additional hours unless a separate private place agreement is offered and accepted.

All admissions data is handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

7. Admissions Criteria

Places will be offered in the following order of priority, subject to availability:

1. Children currently attending who are increasing sessions or transferring between settings.
2. Full-time places (five full days per week).
3. Full-day places (part-time, but full-day attendance).
4. Children eligible for government-funded hours who can attend within our set funded session times.
5. Part-time or reduced-day attendance, including fewer than full-day sessions within set times.

Additional considerations include:

- Sibling priority (where another child already attends).
- Children referred by external agencies or identified as having specific educational or welfare needs.
- Operational capacity, staffing ratios, and sustainability of provision.

Private and funded places are offered and managed separately. Families moving from one type of place to another are subject to availability and our admissions priorities. Accessing a private place does not guarantee that a funded place will later be available, and children with funded-only places are not able to purchase extra hours unless a private place agreement is separately agreed and available.

Where demand exceeds capacity, places will be allocated according to the above criteria. Families may be offered a place at an alternative Dottie Tots setting if their preferred nursery is full.

All families, whether accessing private or funded places are expected to adhere to agreed booking patterns, operational terms, and required documentation.

We do not seek to mislead parents regarding their funded childcare options. All information about costs, availability, and booking patterns is provided transparently in advance, in line with CMA expectations.

8. Additional Information

Waiting List: Where places are not immediately available, children will be added to a waiting list. This list is reviewed regularly and prioritised in line with the admissions criteria. Families are kept informed of their status on the waiting list.

Inclusion and Additional Needs: We welcome children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and work closely with families and professionals to ensure inclusive practice. Children referred by external agencies or identified as vulnerable may be prioritised in line with local authority and safeguarding guidance.

Appeals or Concerns: Families can raise questions with the nursery manager. Formal complaints can be made using our Complaints Policy, available on request or via our website.

Review: This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if there are significant changes to DfE, CMA, or local authority guidance. Admissions priorities may also be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with local needs and nursery sustainability.

Key Terms

- **Private Customer:** A family accessing childcare on a paid basis beyond government-funded hours. Private customers are issued with a quotation and a Private Place Agreement.
- **Private Place Agreement:** Terms and conditions of a private place issued following an agreed quotation provided by the Nursery Administrator. This Agreement sets out the obligations of both the nursery and the family, including booking, fees, policies, notice requirements, and expectations.
- **Funded Place Agreement:** Terms and conditions issued to families accessing a funded-only place. This sits alongside the Funding Declaration Form.
- **Funding Declaration Form:** Local authority form confirming eligibility for government-funded hours.
- **Registration Fee / Deposit:** A one-off charge payable at the point of registration (non-refundable for private customers, refundable for funded-only customers once the child starts).
- **Waiting List:** A list of children waiting for a place, prioritised according to the Admissions Criteria and subject to availability.
- **Notice Period:** The required period of notice to reduce hours or withdraw a child, as detailed in the relevant Agreement.
- **Stretched Offer:** Distribution of funded hours across the year instead of term time only.
- **Private Hours:** Additional hours booked and paid for beyond funded entitlement.
- **Funded Hours:** Government-funded childcare hours provided free at the point of delivery.