



Balamill Little Learners

Est.2024

Balamill Little Learners Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

Balamill Little Learners is dedicated to providing high-quality early childhood education and care for children in our community. This admissions policy outlines the procedures and criteria for admitting children to our pre-school, ensuring a fair and transparent process for all families.

2. Eligibility

- **Age Requirement:** Children must be of pre-school age, at least 3 years old, and due to start primary one the following year, unless parents have chosen to defer a year.
- **Fully Funded Places:** Balamill Little Learners offers fully funded places for children of pre-school age, ensuring accessibility to all families in our community.
- **Admissions Criteria:**
 1. **Priority to Children from Socially Disadvantaged Circumstances:** Children from socially disadvantaged circumstances born between 2nd July 2021 and 1st July 2022 (both dates inclusive) will be given priority for admission. **Socially disadvantaged circumstances** include children whose parents are in receipt of **Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Universal Credit,** or other qualifying benefits. Parents must provide verification from the Social Security/Jobs and Benefits Office to confirm their qualifying status.
 2. **Other Children:** After children from socially disadvantaged circumstances, other children born between 2nd July 2021 and 1st July 2022 will be considered for admission.
 3. **Pre-Pre School Places:** For **fee-paying pre-pre places**, the admissions criteria do not apply. Parents interested in fee-paying places should contact the pre-school directly.

3. Application Process

- **Application Form:** Parents or guardians must complete an application form, providing relevant information about the child, emergency contacts, and any special requirements or considerations.
- **Visiting the Pre-school:** Families are encouraged to visit Balamill Little Learners to meet the staff, explore the facilities, and ask any questions they may have about our program.



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4. Allocation of Places

- **Availability:** Admission is subject to availability of places in the pre-school, with consideration given to staff-to-child ratios and overall capacity.
- **Priority and Sub-Criteria:** In the event of over-subscription, places will be allocated based on the following sub-criteria in this order:
 - **Children who live closest to Balnamill Little Learners.** Proximity will be determined using a straight-line digital measurement calculated from the postcode address of the child's normal residence to the postcode address of Balnamill Little Learners. The Northern Ireland portal for Geographical Information (GI) decision-making tool, Spatial N.I., will be used to determine distances.
 - Children whose parents have named Balnamill Little Learners as their **first preference** on the application form.
 - Children with siblings who previously attended or are attending the pre-school.
 - Children who attended **fee-paying sessions** at Balnamill Little Learners before 31st January 2025.
 - Children with **special educational needs** supported by written evidence from a relevant professional.
 - In the event of a tie, children will be selected based on the **alphabetical order of surnames** as determined by a randomised system.

5. Transition Process

- **Settling-in Sessions:** Before starting at Balnamill Little Learners, children may participate in settling-in sessions to familiarise themselves with the environment, staff, and routines.
- **Parental Involvement:** Parents or guardians are encouraged to be actively involved in the transition process, providing information about their child's likes, dislikes, and individual needs.

6. Special Considerations

- **Special Educational Needs:** Balnamill Little Learners welcomes children with special educational needs and will work closely with families and external agencies to provide appropriate support and accommodations.
- **Cultural Diversity:** We celebrate cultural diversity and strive to create an inclusive environment where all children feel valued and respected.



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7. Fees and Payments

- **Registration Fee for Admissions:** At Balnamill Little Learners, we are committed to ensuring accessibility to all families in our community. Therefore, we do not charge a registration fee for admission. However, we warmly welcome voluntary donations or contributions from parents who wish to support the enrichment of our pre-school programs and resources. These donations are greatly appreciated and contribute to enhancing the learning experiences and opportunities available to all children in our care.
- **Pre-Pre School Fees:** A fee of £10 per day is applicable for the pre-pre school sessions.

8. Verification and Evidence

The Management Committee reserves the right to request supplementary evidence to support information provided in an application. If such evidence is not provided or if information is found to be false or misleading, the offer of a place may be withdrawn. This ensures fairness and transparency for all families applying.

9. Toilet Training Requirement

All children are expected to be **toilet trained** by the time of admission. If parents have any concerns regarding toilet training, they are encouraged to contact the Pre-School Leader for guidance and support.

10. Review and Appeals

- **Review Process:** This admissions policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains fair, transparent, and in line with the pre-school's values and objectives.
- **Appeals Procedure:** Families have the right to appeal any decisions related to admissions, and an appeals process will be in place to address any concerns or grievances.

11. Acknowledgment

By adhering to this admissions policy, Balnamill Little Learners aims to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment where all children can thrive and reach their full potential. We value the trust placed in us by families and are committed to ensuring a positive experience for every child.

Date: October 2024

Review Date: July 2025