

# Islington Early Years Admissions Policy - May 2026

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sits alongside the [charging policy](#) in outlining the terms and conditions of childcare places in Islington; please refer to both for full details.
- 1.2 This admissions policy applies when parents/carers express a preference to receive provision for their children in Islington community primary schools, nursery schools and Islington early years centres and children's centres.
- 1.3 Islington Council subsidises childcare for children aged 6 months and above, in all its children's and early years centres and in a number of voluntary sector community nurseries. This supports the council to ensure that local, affordable high-quality childcare is made available to parents and carers who are both in employment or studying towards a qualification.

## 2. How does the council decide who should be offered places in its children's centres, early years centres, nursery schools and nursery classes in community primary schools?

### Admissions criteria for all ages

If there are not enough places available for the number of applications, the places will be allocated to Islington residents as follows:

- 2.1 a number of places are allocated for children approved through the Priority Early Learning panel please click this link [eligibility criteria](#) for further reference.
- 2.2 community and marketed places can be given where both parents are working/studying (employed or self-employed including zero hours contracts) or the sole parent is working/studying in a lone parent family
  - 2.2.1 places are allocated based on the days worked or studying – in-line with the delivery model
  - 2.2.2 for parents who accept a band 11 or a marketed place - proof of employment and the number of days worked will be required; for students evidence of course details.
- 2.3 where no Islington resident wishes to take up a marketed place then the place can be offered to a non-Islington resident. When a child in a community place moves out of borough they will be moved to a marketed place.

### 3. Places for all ages are allocated in this order

- 3.1 to children already attending the school or children's centre on the internal waiting list for a change of days/hours
- 3.2 to Islington children of an appropriate age to fill the vacancy to ensure a balance of places across the age range
- 3.3 to children with a sibling attending in the same school or children's centre
- 3.4 to Islington children living nearest the school or children's centre decided by a straight-line measurement
- 3.5 if there are still vacancies, places can be allocated to non-Islington residents living nearest the school or children's centre, using a straight-line measurement for children of an appropriate age to fill the vacancy to ensure a balance of places across the age range
- 3.6 for the free early education and childcare places, all of the above considerations apply, and in addition, where places are available, priority is given to:
  - 3.6.1 two-year-olds where parents are in receipt of additional government support
  - 3.6.2 three- and four-year-olds, a universal entitlement place (15 hours)

### 4. Eligibility criteria for free early education and childcare entitlements for children nine months to school age

- 4.1 children of eligible working families can receive 1140 hours of free early education and childcare entitlements from nine months to four years, from the term after they turn the relevant age.
- 4.2 each parent must be working and earning at least the National Minimum Wage for 16 hours a week on average and earn under £100,000 adjusted net income annually. For details see [www.beststartinlife.gov.uk](http://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk)
- 4.3 some two-year-old children of parents receiving additional government support, either working or unemployed, can receive 570 hours a year free early education and childcare from the term after their second birthday. This equates to 15 hours a week, term time only. Eligibility criteria applies. [Find out if you are eligible on the Islington Council website.](#)
- 4.4 if you meet both the working parent entitlement and the additional government support entitlement for your child/ren aged two and a term, you must apply for 15 hours through each scheme.
- 4.5 all three- and four-year-olds are entitled to 570 hours a year from the term after their third birthday. This equates to 15 hours a week during term time. This universal entitlement can be taken in primary and nursery schools, children's centres, other early years settings and with childminders.

- 4.5.1 Three- and four-year-olds of eligible working parents are entitled to apply for an additional 15 free hours, making a total of up to 30 hours per week for 38 weeks per year.

## 5. Marketed places

- 5.1 About 150 places in nursery schools, children's and early years centres, including a very few primary schools, are allocated through a marketed places scheme. The scheme enables parents where both parents are working or studying and are able to pay the full marketed charge to apply for a place. Places within this scheme are allocated first to those who live in Islington, second to those who work in Islington, and third to those who live and work out of borough.

## 6. Keyworkers

- 6.1 Keyworkers, who are not resident in Islington but are employed in Islington, may be considered for places in children's centres and early years centres, which no Islington resident wishes to take up. For this purpose, keyworkers are defined as teachers, NHS clinical staff, police and community support officers, staff employed in schools and children's centres, and social care workers. Keyworkers must have a permanent contract of employment for at least 17.5 hours per week and a family income of less than the maximum income in line with Islington charging schedules.

## 7. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 7.1 All schools and centres must provide for children with SEND. In addition, there are 36 specialist places in children's centres. View the [Islington SEND local offer](#) for more information.

## 8. Parental Responsibility

- 8.1 Parents/carers have a duty to inform the local authority if the child is fostered through a private arrangement with the child's birth family. Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as stepparents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

## Priority Early Learning – Eligibility criteria

Islington Council and partners consider the following children to be most in need of the services (which may include day care and early education) they provide or commission.

An early years multi-agency panel allocates places in priority order as per the list below, with 'A' being the highest.

These children are assessed by the relevant professionals as requiring additional services in order to reach or keep up a reasonable standard of health and/or development and who are:

- A - Children who are "Looked After", adopted, subject to a special guardianship order or residence order
- A - Children subject to Court Orders or Police Powers of Protection
- A - Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan
- B - Children who are likely to become 'Looked After'
- B - Children whose parents [or primary carers] are experiencing difficulty as a result of drug or alcohol related problems (this could include the child if appropriate)
- B - Children living with domestic violence
- B - Children whose parents [or primary carers] have a significant mental health illness
- B - Children whose parent/s / carer/s are known to the criminal justice system/ in prison or recently released from prison
- C - Children of parents who are teenagers
- C - Children who have suffered abuse in the past
- C - Children who are privately fostered
- C - Children who are unaccompanied refugees or asylum seekers
- C - Children of parents who are or were previously looked after
- D - Children who are homeless and/or are temporarily housed in bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation
- D - Children living in overcrowded housing
- D - Children whose parents [or primary carers] have a significant physical illness or physical or learning disability that impacts on the wellbeing of the child
- D - Children whose parent/carer has caring responsibilities for someone else (e.g. disabled parent/partner)
- E - Cognitive and learning (SEND)
- E - Social, emotional and behavioural (SEND)
- E - Communication and interaction (SEND)
- E - Sensory (SEND)
- E - Physical (SEND)
- E - Medical condition or syndrome (SEND)
- F - Children who are siblings of disabled children