



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 Selection 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: Apply via the application form on the website, by the published application deadline.
- Step 2: The Wildwood admissions team assess all the applications against published admissions criteria and, based on the number of places available and each application's suitability in terms of admissions criteria, select certain applications to take forward.
- Step 3: Parents/carers attend an admission meeting with two of Wildwood Nature School's trustees to discuss the community ethos of the school. This is an opportunity to ensure that Wildwood Nature School is the right option for the child.

- Step 4: The Wildwood admissions team review all ongoing applications and shortlist certain applications to take forward, based on admissions criteria..
- Step 5: Child comes in for a taster morning to see if the school is a good fit for them and vice versa. We will also speak to the child's nursery or school provision to ensure that the child will benefit from Wildwood's educational model.
- Step 6: If applying for a free or reduced-fee place, Wildwood Nature School will carry out an affordability check via a third party company to assess your ability to pay fees.
- Step 7: School informs the family of the decision of whether or not to offer a place. Offers of places will include fee level (based on the financial assessment testing if relevant).
- Step 8: 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

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.

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 and families meet the selection criteria.

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 does not currently operate a waiting list. Families need to apply when admissions open for the next academic year.

7. Selection Criteria

School places will be allocated using the following selection criteria.

- Fee level - we need to get the right balance of full-fee, reduced-fee and free places to ensure that we're delivering equality of access whilst at the same time as funding the school

sustainably.

- Children of employed staff (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.
- 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.
- Gender: We are committed to a fully co-educational school and therefore we maintain a balance of genders.
- Age: We are a mixed-age provision but we need to make sure there are a similar number of children in each age group.
- 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.
- Transport: We are committed to protecting our environment so therefore we will not accept families who need to drive to school. We encourage families to walk, cycle or use public transport to commute to school.
- Compatibility: Our admissions process seeks to ensure that Wildwood Nature School is the right environment for each child. We consider the child's needs, interests and learning style alongside our school's ethos, to ensure they can thrive emotionally, socially and academically.

Policy review

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