

# Autism Early Support Admissions Policy

**For internal use only**

**Created:**

Head of Children's Services

**Policy Owner:**

HOCS/Teachers

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Autism Early Support Trust Limited

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## 1. Updates from previous version

Inclusion of membership to The Parent's Portal for all parents who have a child in attendance at Circle Centre. Updated to comply with 2024 to 2025 funding changes and early years statutory framework. Revisions have been made to improve the clarity of our admissions criteria.

## 2. Purpose

This policy documents the admissions criteria applied when enrolling a child into our specialist early years setting, The Circle Centre. As an Ofsted registered provider, Circle Centre is legally bound to meet the requirements of the Ofsted regulations and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework published by the Department for Education.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies directly to all parents / carers, who wish to apply for a place at Circle Centre.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policy 'Parent/carer Fees & Funding for Circle Centre' which includes a detailed breakdown of information on Funded Entitlement.

## 4. Terms and definitions

In this policy, the following capitalised words and expressions shall have the meaning ascribed below:

“AES” means Autism Early Support Trust Limited.

“EYFS” means **Early Years Statutory Framework**” is the regulatory framework setting the standards for learning, development, education and care for children from birth to five years old.

## 5. Admission to the Circle Centre Nursery

Our specialist setting welcomes applications from families who have children aged between 2 – 5 years who have a neurodivergent profile that may include differences in communication, interaction and sensory processing. This may or not be inclusive of an autism diagnosis.

- Children will be enrolled with us for a minimum of two full school terms.
- Our admissions procedure includes an individual assessment of each child to ensure we are able to support their unique strengths and needs before we offer a place

As our setting is specialist, typically we always have a waiting list. The extent of this will be advised on application.

Once a completed application form has been received, when a place becomes available, an assessment will be carried out. Following this, if a child's needs can be met, a place will be allocated. This is usually done on a first come first served basis, however, priority is given to children who are considered to be a Child In Need (CIN) or Looked After Child (LAC).

Specialist therapeutic support is delivered to all children at the Circle Centre and is included within our provision. As this is not expected to be provided under EYFS our parental fees therefore include a contribution towards the cost of delivering this.

Our admissions process includes a means test to ensure any families who need financial assistance can receive a further subsidy on their parental fees. As of September 2023, we based our financial assistance threshold on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s ‘A Minimum Income Standard for the United Kingdom in 2022’ report<sup>i</sup> and the online Minimum Income Calculator UK<sup>ii</sup>. Families with a household income of less than £43,400 (based on a calculation for a couple with two children) are eligible to apply for support.

Our Nursery is open for 35 weeks a year. Sessions (2.5 hours) available are:

Monday	Core session 09:45 – 12:15	Enrichment session 12:15 – 14:45 <i>(includes lunch time)</i>
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		Core session 13:15 – 15:30
Friday		Nursery closed

- To gain maximum benefit from our specialist provision, we request children to enrol for a minimum of two ‘Core’ sessions per week, and a maximum of six sessions in total. We consult with each individual family as to the number of sessions your child should attend.
- Parents/ Carers must agree to give 12 weeks notice when their child is to leave Circle Centre Nursery.
- All parents/carers are advised to access the resources information and guidance available on the AES Parent’s Portal as this will greatly enhance your understanding of your child’s development and needs. All Circle Centre families have free access to this service. As part of our admissions process, all parents/carers are asked to confirm the National Funded Entitlement they are eligible for (this is commonly known as 2,3 & 4 year old funding) We will also provide guidance on this, but if you need more detail it can be accessed here <http://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>.

## 6. Nursery Building Access

Our nursery building and gardens are all on the ground floor level. Autism Early Support will always endeavour to make reasonable adjustments and implement supports for children with additional differences that are including but not limited to:

- Physical differences (e.g. Developmental Coordination Disorder or neurodevelopmental differences that impact mobility)
- Visual impairment.

- Hearing impairment.

## 7. Children delaying school starting date

In the UK, most children start primary school in the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. The statutory requirement is for all children to attend school from the term after they turn 5.

In some circumstances however, parents may feel that their child would benefit from starting school later in the academic year (delaying) or deferring this by a year (educating out of cohort).

If parents are considering deferring or delaying and extending their child's early years' experience, in order to enrol at Circle Centre we will consult with you on an individual basis to ensure the statutory laws are known and the potential disadvantages have also been considered. Processes differ between local authorities, but the guidance for Buckinghamshire families can be seen below.

Circle Centre will only admit a child who has deferred or delayed their primary school start date once this has been agreed by the child's local authority.

### Further Reading

- [Circle Centre Fees](#)
- [Guide to delaying a school start date – Buckinghamshire Council.](#)

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/minimum-income-standard-uk-2022>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.minimumincome.org.uk/>