

Stepgates Community School



Sunbeams at Stepgates Admissions Policy for 2026-2027

This policy is based on our Mission Statement and Aims for our school.

Our Mission Statement

At Stepgates Community School everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow together, as independent, enthusiastic and confident learners, in a creative, healthy and safe environment.

Our Vision

Stepgates Community School is a school of the community for the community consistently providing ...

- an outstanding curriculum that challenges all children;
- a safe, happy, caring environment;
- inclusive opportunities for all.

This vision will be achieved through all school policies and schemes of work. It is realised through strong partnerships between staff, children, parents/carers, governors, other schools, the Local Authority and the wider community.

Admissions Arrangements

A child will be eligible for admission to the nursery class, Sunbeams at Stepgates, from the term after they turn two years old. Admission will be subject to an application being made and places available.

The admission arrangements for 2026-27 for Sunbeams at Stepgates Community School are as follows:

Sunbeams at Stepgates Community School offers 32 places, every morning and afternoon, including 4 places for two year olds.

For two year olds we propose to offer up to five three hour sessions per week.

Places for two year olds will be allocated as follows:

- Children who are eligible for Early Learning for two year olds (previously known as FEET), with the oldest by term having priority**
- Looked after and previously looked after children**
- Exceptional social/medical need**
- Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the main school at the time of admission**
- Any other children who are two years old, with the oldest by term having priority and subject to availability**

Where any category is over-subscribed, children will be ranked according to the straight line distance that they live from the school with priority being given to children who live closest to the school.

Information about Early Learning for two year olds can be obtained from

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/families/childcare/help-with-childcare-costs/qualify/feet>

Once children with funding are placed on roll at nursery, they will be automatically entitled to take up a three year old place in our nursery and the number of places available for three year olds will reduce.

For three and four year olds we propose to operate:

- five three hour sessions on two and a half days per week 9:00am - 3:00pm (including half an hour after school option until 3:30pm) on Mondays and Tuesdays and 9:00am - 12 noon on Wednesdays OR 12:30pm - 3:30pm on Wednesdays and 9:00am - 3:00pm (including half an hour after school option until 3:30pm), on Thursdays and Fridays, offering fifteen hours funded Free Early Education plus two/three optional half hour after school sessions, funded by the parent/carer;
- Places offering five full days 9:00am - 3:00pm Monday - Friday (including half an hour after school option until 3:30pm), thirty hours funded Working Parents Entitlement;
- *five full days 9:00am - 3:00pm Monday - Friday (including half an hour after school option until 3:30pm) offering fifteen hours funded Free Early Education and fifteen hours funded by the parent/carer plus five optional half hour after school sessions, funded by the parent/carer. (see below)

It may be possible to make alternative arrangements on an individual basis depending on family circumstances and availability of places.

The Local Authority has delegated the admission of nursery children to the Governing Body of community and voluntary controlled schools, therefore parents wishing to apply for a place at Sunbeams at Stepgates must complete the application form and submit it directly to Sunbeams at Stepgates.

When Sunbeams at Stepgates provision for three and four year olds is over-subscribed, applications for entry in 2026/2027 will be ranked according to the following criteria:

i) First priority: Looked after and previously looked after children.

Looked after and previously looked after children will be considered to be:

- children who are registered as being in the care of a Local Authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989(a), e.g. fostered or

living in a children's home, at the time an application for a school is made;

and

- children who have previously been in the care of a local authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989(a) and who have left that care through adoption, a child arrangements order (in accordance with Section 8 of the Children's Act 1989 and as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014) or special guardianship order (in accordance with Section 14A of the Children's Act 1989).

ii) Second priority: Exceptional social or medical need for a place at the nursery including those with Special Educational Needs.

Occasionally there may be a child or children for whom exceptional social or medical circumstances will apply which will warrant a placement at Sunbeams. The exceptional social or medical circumstances might relate to either the child or the parent/carer. Supporting evidence from a professional is required such as a doctor and/or consultant for medical cases or a social worker, health visitor, housing officer, the police or probation officer for other social circumstances. This evidence must confirm the circumstances of the case and must set out why the child/children should attend Sunbeams and why no other nursery could meet their needs.

Providing evidence does not guarantee that a child will be given a priority place and in each case a decision will be made based on the merits of the case and whether the evidence demonstrates that a placement should be made at Sunbeams above any other. Routine child minding arrangements would not normally be considered to be an exceptional social reason for placement at a particular school.

We reserve the right to refer medical evidence to our designated medical officer, where necessary, to assist us in making a decision about medical priority for a school place.

iii) Third priority: Children who will have a sibling attending the nursery or the school at the time of the child's admission.

A sibling will be considered to be a brother or sister (that is, another child of the same parents, whether living at the same address or not), a half-brother or half-sister or a step-brother or step-sister or an adoptive or foster sibling, living at the same address.

A child will be given sibling priority if they have a sibling at Stepgates Community School at the time of the child's admission (September 2026).

If within this category there are more applicants than places available, any remaining places will be offered to applicants who meet this criterion on the

basis of proximity of the child's home address to the school (see paragraph v).

- iv) **Fourth priority: Children who will turn 4 years old between 1st September 2026 and 31st August 2027.**

This is to give priority to older children who will be due to transfer to Reception in the next academic year and hence have only one year left to attend nursery

- v) **Fifth priority: Children who will be 3 years old between 1st September 2026 and 31st August 2027.**

Where these children already attend Sunbeams Nursery they will be able to stay on in nursery for another year in 2026/27 and will be due to start in Reception in September 2027.

- vi) **Sixth priority: Children for whom the school is the nearest to their home address**

Applicants will be ranked according to the straight line distance that they live from the school with priority being given to those children who live closest to the school.

Sunbeams Nursery will endeavour to inform parents of the outcome of their application by letter by the end of May preceding their start date. If a parent is offered a place they must confirm acceptance directly with the school by the date stipulated in their offer letter. The final decision with regard to admission and the allocation of sessions will rest with the Governing Body of Stepgates Community School and Nursery.

Waiting lists

Where there are more children than places available, a waiting list will operate for each year group according to the oversubscription criteria without regard to the date the application was received or when a child's name was added to the waiting list.

Admission to Sunbeams Nursery does not guarantee admission to the Reception Class at Stepgates Community School. Applications for Reception must be made on a separate application through Surrey County Council and be submitted by the statutory deadline in order to be considered.

*Sunbeams may allow parents to pay for extra nursery provision beyond their free entitlement. However, such requests will only be considered once all applications for the free early years' entitlement have been processed.

How can I apply for a place?

Generally, you should register your child for a nursery place well before their third birthday. We take applications from when children are born. All applications for the September intake should be received by Sunbeams Nursery by the end of preceding January. You will need to complete an Admission Forms are available on the school website www.stepgatesschool.co.uk or from the school office.

Review due: Autumn 2027