

Open Enrolment Procedure

Please note changes to Mossley Nursery School Intake from September 2025 as approved by The Minister for Education.

EXISTING STATUTORY NURSERY PROVISION AT MOSSLEY NURSERY SCHOOL [DE REF 311-6162] WILL BE MODIFIED TO PROVIDE 52 FULL-TIME NURSERY PLACES ONLY WITH EFFECT FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2025

FAQs- Frequently Asked Questions

Each year we have queries from parents regarding the open enrolment procedure. We have included these frequently asked questions.

I don't have my child's name on a waiting list, can I still apply?

Yes. Not all schools compile a waiting list or expression of interest list. All parents apply on an equal basis in January regardless of if you have expressed an interest in a school or not. Some schools choose to keep a list in order to know how many people have an intention to apply. Having a name held on a school list does not give you priority and parents still must apply through the same process. The Education Authority online application process opens at 12 noon on 10th January 2025 and closes at 12 noon on 24th January 2025. All details in relation to applying can be found at www.eani.org.uk

I have not had a child at the nursery before, do I still have a chance of getting a place?

Yes. There are both statutory criteria set by the Dept for Education and individual criteria set by the school. ALL SETTINGS HAVE THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL CRITERIA. Not all settings have the same criteria which is why it is vital that you read the criteria for ALL SETTINGS YOU ARE CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR.

Within Mossley NS, we do include siblings that have previously attended or may be attending currently. We also include priority for any child that may be currently attending, for example, any child that attends in a pre-preschool/underage place. We only have 52 full time places and the criteria is applied strictly.

If I applied for full time and was not successful, will I be offered a part-time place?

From September 2025 Mossley Nursery School does not offer any part-time places.

Is the criteria for all preschools and nursery places the same?

Statutory criteria relating to social disadvantage and preschool age are the same for every setting. Schools then set their own criteria agreed by their management committee or board of governors. These are applied very strictly. You MUST read the criteria for the schools and setting you are applying for. There are no exceptions. Supporting letters from medical professionals, MLAs, ministers, social workers cannot be taken into consideration. Parents working hours and childcare circumstances cannot be taken into consideration. Medical needs and special needs are considered in the same way as any other child and the criteria applied in the same way. One to one support for children with additional needs can only be considered where the Education Authority has had prior involvement and has informed the school of such circumstances.

I have had a child at the nursery before, does this mean I will get a full time place?

No, this is not guaranteed as we only have 52 full time places. These are filled using the DE statutory criteria firstly, followed by our published sub-criteria.

I am not sure if I am socially disadvantaged or not?

Check the EANI website for further details. If you are eligible, it will mean that your application may be further up the criteria and a benefit to your application. Without the required documentation the school cannot apply the socially disadvantaged criteria to your application. The required documentation must include the name and address of the parent making the application with appropriate dates and be uploaded to the portal in support of your application. It could be the difference between securing a place and not securing a place in some circumstances. If incorrect documents are uploaded as evidence, it could result in your child not getting the place that you have applied for. **The documents MUST relate to the date of the application period.**

My child has additional needs, will they get support?

Unfortunately, children cannot be provided with 1:1 support by the nursery school unless the Education Authority has assessed your child, along with medical professionals, prior to attendance. In order to secure 1:1 support, your child **must be** allocated a Statement of Special Educational Needs by the EA. Without this, your child can still be supported in school along with other children in their class, but 1:1 assistance cannot be provided. Where children require a higher level of 1:1 support but no Statement is in place your child's attendance/timings may need to be reduced. The Curricular Guidance for Pre-school states that there can be flexibility for settling-in arrangements and/or in the length of session attended to meet a child's individual needs (outlined on page 15). For some children, transition to nursery can be difficult but for others support alongside their classmates is sufficient. If you are worried about your child's development or have any other worries about their needs, please speak to your Health Visitor or GP prior to coming to nursery. This can help your child to be assessed in advance and be much more proactive in order to assess your child's individual needs in advance of starting nursery. It is really useful to provide details of your child's needs to the schools and preschools as this allows much more thorough planning in advance of meeting your child.

When applying for a full time place, is it a problem that my child is a fussy eater?

Full time places involve a child being developmentally able to cope with a much longer day. Eating is one part of this. If your child is fussy and will reluctantly only eat a few foods, this could be a problem. Attending for a longer day means your child will get hungry. Snack is provided each day with a range of fruits, breads, crackers and other healthy break options. If your child is fussy it can be difficult to encourage them to eat. At Mossley Nursery School, school dinners consist of a cooked school dinner with a varied menu. For children who find eating difficult, it can be a very daunting time and can often unsettle them staying for the longer session.

In addition to eating, toileting and independence is another aspect of a longer full time day. Children will need to be able to access and take care of their needs for toileting, hand washing and personal hygiene. We only have 2 staff to 26 children in a class and 1:1 support is not a reality. Dinner involves all 26 children sitting together for a social lunch experience. The children use real cutlery, plates and open cups for drinking. They are sitting for 2 courses and must be able to cope with sitting at the table for this 45-50 minute period.

If my child is not fully toilet trained will they be able to secure a place?

If your child is not yet toilet trained, they can still attend nursery, but they may need an individual settling-in plan. In a class of 26 children there are only 2 staff. As you can imagine, it is not possible for staff to attend to each child as they are by their parents at home. Where a child needs 1:1 for toileting this leaves the other adult with 25 children. It is much easier where children are independent in taking care of all elements of using the toilet but regular help to take a child or repeatedly change them is not possible.

In situations where children are wetting or soiling, timings may be reduced in order for progress to be made. Parents need to be on hand to change where staff are unable. Pull-ups/nappies will not be changed apart from where a child has a Statement of Special Needs and 1:1 staffing is already in place. Where a child is regularly wetting or soiling, attendance times may be reduced until a toileting plan is showing progress and these episodes decrease. Staff will not be able to regularly leave the classroom to change children who have soiled due to the staff ratio of the class. In certain circumstances it can help if parents keep children at home for a short period in order to focus on toilet skills. This can sometimes be really beneficial.

If my child attends the nursery, does this mean they get priority to Mossley Primary School for P1. NO.

Mossley Nursery School is a stand alone school. It is not attached, linked or affiliated to Mossley Primary School. Attendance at the nursery school is NOT any way advantageous when applying for the primary school. The children attending Mossley NS move on to a wide range of primary schools in the local and wider Newtownabbey area and further.

Do you save spaces for underage, pre-preschool children and can my child apply when they are 2yrs and 10mths?

We do not save or reserve any places for underage children. No preschool setting reserves places. The application process must give priority to children in their full preschool year before they attend Primary 1 the following year. Pre-preschool, underage children, penultimate preschool are children who are in the year before their preschool year. They still have a preschool year the following year. It is true that you are able to apply for places BUT your child can only secure a place if there are places remaining after all full preschool children have been processed. Underage children must not be placed before full age children. Only where there are no more applications for full age children can underage children be considered. This is also on a strictly eldest first (chronological) basis. We only allocate places once per year so no additional children are admitted during the school year. If your underage child is allocated a place, the settling-in arrangements will be commenced after full-age children have been settled into their session. The ratio of staff to children in nursery settings is less. Regardless of the children's age, we only have 2 staff for 26 children so sometimes penultimate preschool children can find this more difficult than playgroup where there is an adult for every 8 children. This is worth considering for your child if applying. It can particularly affect children who require a lot of assistance with self help of toileting skills.

Deferral of Preschool

As you may be aware, in certain circumstances, parents are able to defer their child from starting preschool. All information regarding this is available from the Department of Education on the link below. <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Pre-school%20Deferral%20Leaflet%202023.pdf>