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Beatle Woods Flexi-Ed, Home-Ed and Reception year

In January 2019 we decided to gain some advice about the potential for offering flexi-ed, home-ed and reception year places at Beatle Woods. We asked Dandelion Education Ltd to come to our site and consult with us about how this might work. We committed to a development plan and started to work on developing this offer further.

At Beatle Woods we have developed a unique way of working with all of our families; we believe that offering Flexi-Schooling is a natural way to develop our truly child-centred approach further.

Essentially this means facilitating sessions so that children attend BW for 2/3 days and attend a mainstream setting or are home schooled for 2/3 days per week.

This approach works extremely well for:

- Children who may not be ready to be in mainstream school and would benefit from a slower phasing into school. This gives them more 'time' to develop at a pace that suits them, and they can enter school when they are actually ready.
- Some children who may need a little more support and could struggle to cope with being in a classroom full-time.
- Children who prefer an alternative, more active, outdoor based, child-led approach to learning, for a little longer.
- Children who are going to be home educated and would like to spend time outdoors with other children and facilitators.

As part of this consultation we decided that gaining our first Ofsted grading and ensuring our nursery was sustainable were essential factors that needed to be in place first. We know that our inspection is imminent and, in any event, will be before December 2019 and feel that we have taken on board the advice needed to offer some flexible alternatives to our families. We believe that this is a good opportunity to outline how this may look as we plan to offer our flexi-ed and home-ed from September 2020. We are already offering children the opportunity to spend their Reception year with us and several children are doing this presently.

From September 2020 we will have very limited spaces for children to attend BW for a maximum of 18 hours per week up to the age of 8 years. Below are examples of how this might work:

1. Children who are in mainstream school will be able to spend 2/3 days a week with us, (with the remaining days in school) in a small group of 6-8 children, led by a qualified teacher with a Forest School qualification.
2. Children who are home educated will be able to spend 2/3 days a week with us whilst spending the rest of their week being home-educated.
3. We already provide care for families who chose to defer their child's entry to school. This can be in several instances; they are summarised below, but for more information, see our separate leaflet 'Options for deferring entry to Reception and School 2020'.
 - If your child is summer born (after 31st March), you can defer their start into school, and they can enter Reception in the September after they turn 5. Your child will remain eligible for 3 and 4 year old funding until they enter school.
 - If your child is not summer born (born in the academic year before 31st of March) you can still opt to defer entry into year one or choose to home school. The funding will cease in the term following your child's 5th birthday.

We are currently working on the infrastructure and practicalities of offering this to children up to the age of 8 years and remain committed to ensuring children have open ended, self-chosen opportunities, scaffolded by skilled facilitators in our outdoor space. The focus will firmly be exploring the benefits of being outdoors and working alongside children in their own interests. We are hoping to also offer some 'wrap around' provision at the beginning and end of each day for these children only.

Our Flexi-Ed and Home-Ed group places will be allocated by giving priority to existing children at BW. We have yet to finalise how sessions will be charged but anticipate these will be broadly similar to the fees received from funding and our nursery additional charge. We will confirm this as soon as possible.

If you would like your child to remain at BW nursery for their reception year, this is possible now and we would recommend you advise us as soon as possible so that we can ensure we save their sessions.

We understand the requirements of our families and have carefully considered how these options may work for all children. Our work with Dandelion highlighted areas for consideration and provided us with a clear vision for the future of Beatle Woods.