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L'École Française de Bristol
Pour faire vivre ton français

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| INFORMATION LETTER 2025-2026..... | 1 |
| ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-2026..... | 5 |
| GOVERNMENT FUNDED SESSIONS POLICY 2025-2026..... | 9 |
| To apply for the <i>Working Families</i> offer..... | 10 |
| To apply for the <i>Universal Entitlement</i> offer | 10 |
| Important Information..... | 10 |

INFORMATION LETTER 2025-2026

The Ecole Française de Bristol

Established in 1980 as a Saturday morning club by three French parents in a community hall, L'École Française de Bristol, has evolved significantly over the decades. Today, we teach over 250 pupils every week and stand as a pillar of support for our regional community of francophones and francophiles. Operating as both a registered charity (Charity Number 900410) and limited company (Company Number 02463900), our school is governed by volunteer Directors, complemented by an advisory board of parents, professionals, the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, and the School Business Manager. Parents play an integral role as members of the school, actively participating in their children's learning, attending community and fundraising events as well as our annual AGM.

A Unique French Preschool Experience

We are a unique preschool offering high-quality childcare in a French-speaking environment. Our experienced team of qualified teachers and practitioners provide excellent learning opportunities through play and structured activities, following the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

We offer a French Maternelle accredited programme, led by a native French qualified teacher, and are part of the AEFÉ network of French schools abroad. Our curriculum, based on the French Maternelle framework (*Petite et Moyenne Sections*), is delivered in full French immersion, making it particularly suited for bilingual children who speak French at home. However, our programme is

open to all children from Monday to Friday, whatever their level of French. We provide a balanced education that promotes multiculturalism while ensuring children develop within the structure of the EYFS framework.

Language Immersion & Bilingualism

Our programme creates an immersive French-language environment where children naturally develop their skills. However, it is important to understand that immersion alone does not guarantee bilingualism. Bilingualism is a personal journey, and each child progresses at their own pace. While we offer a rich language experience—a true "language bath"—achieving bilingualism depends on various factors, including exposure at home and in daily life. Our role is to support this journey by providing an engaging and stimulating French-speaking setting.

At the same time, English remains a natural and important part of our school life. We live in an English-speaking society, and it is essential for children to feel connected to their wider community. This is why English is naturally present at certain times, such as during lunchtime, where children are immersed in an English-speaking environment alongside a native English speaker. These relaxed and social moments provide natural exposure to English, helping children build confidence in both languages.

Attendance & Individual Support

Children can attend 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week, depending on availability. For 2-day registrations, Friday must be included in the choice of days. Please note that there is a very limited number of spaces available for 2-day registrations.

Each child is assigned a key person who supports their learning and well-being, ensuring they feel safe, happy, and engaged in their learning journey.

Premises

Our facilities include a two-part large bright classroom and a sleep room, a playground with amenities, a garden area where children grow vegetables, fruits and plants.

Please note that the Fonthill Centre car park is not accessible to parents, in accordance with our lease conditions with Bristol City Council, but there is ample off-street parking available.

Lunchtime

Pupils are required to bring a cold packed lunch (ice packs are recommended as we do not have refrigeration facilities) or hot food in a flask as well as a water bottle. Lunchtime is an enjoyable shared moment where children develop their social skills and language.

We have children with severe allergies in our school and for their welfare, we aim to keep the school NUT FREE. We ask that parents/carers do not include tree nuts or peanuts in their child's lunchbox. We will advise parents, should additional restrictions need to be introduced, for the welfare of pupils or members of staff.

Snacks

Every morning, children participate in selecting and preparing a nutritious snack provided by the school. Additionally, a wholesome snack is offered in the afternoon. Our goal is to inspire children to discover new flavours and cultivate healthy eating habits.

Supplies & Enrichment Activities

Learning resources and materials are included in the fees. However, we kindly ask parents to provide nappies and wipes if needed.

In addition to our daily activities, we offer a **library service**, allowing children to borrow books and magazines in French to enjoy at home. We also organise **workshops, outings, and special events** throughout the year, such as *Le Goûter de Noël*, *La Nuit des Histoires*, *La Semaine du Goût* and the end-of-year celebrations, where families are warmly invited to join us.

Communication with parents

We use the *Learning Journals* software to share photos, comments, and observations of the children throughout the week. Additionally, we hold individual meetings during the year to discuss each child's progress, fostering a positive and effective partnership with parents and carers.

Children with Additional Needs

Mathilde Monnet is our Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

Please do not hesitate to ask for an appointment with Mathilde if you would like to share information about your child, or if you have any queries, on SENCO@ecolefrancaisedebristol.org

Follow on classes

Once children start Reception, we offer the possibility to attend the Primary "Day Release" Reception/Grande Section class for bilingual pupils, able to follow a native French curriculum (when confirmed by our teacher).

Alternatively, you may apply for your child to join our Saturday French Club for pupils learning French as a Foreign Language.

Inspections

Classes are inspected by OFSTED.

Our OFSTED registration number is **EY486621**.

Our last inspection was on 26.04.2023 and we were rated "good". The inspection highlighted that "Children develop a desire to learn and are keen to get involved in the interesting activities on offer to them. All children develop their language and communication skills to a good standard in both their first language and any additional language they speak".

The Maternelle is also inspected by The Inspector of the French National Education who on his last visit in January 2024, gave very positive feedback about our unique offer and outstanding teaching.

School events & PTA/"Les Amis"

Several events are organised during the year in each class and for the whole school: Coffee morning with the headteacher, “goûters de la Maternelle”, class shows ... Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to the life of our class.

The PTA, “Les Amis”, organises social events during the year to fundraise for the school (Halloween competition, Winter disco, Cheese and Wine Evening, Fête de la musique...)

School office

Open term-time 8.00 am until 4.00 pm. Tel. 0117 969 2410.

For all enquiries, please contact our administrative team on enquiries@ecolefrancaisedebristol.org





ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-2026

“Funded sessions” are sessions for which we receive funding from the UK government.

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Friday, 8.00 am until 5.30 pm
38 weeks per year

TERM DATES

Term 1 (Autumn Term)

- From Monday 8 September to Thursday 23 October 2025
SCHOOL CLOSED all day on INSET days on Tuesday 2, Wednesday 3, Thursday 4, Friday 5 September 2025 and Friday 24 October 2025)
- From Monday 3 November to Friday 19 December 2025
SCHOOL CLOSED from 4:30pm for STAFF TRAINING Evening on Wednesday 3 December 2025

Term 2 (Spring Term)

- From Monday 5 January to Friday 13 February 2026
SCHOOL CLOSED from 4:30pm for STAFF TRAINING Evening on Thursday 5 February 2026
- From Monday 23 February to Thursday 2 April 2026

Term 3 (Summer Term)

- From Monday 20 April to Thursday 21 May 2026
(SCHOOL CLOSED on Bank Holidays Friday 3 April & Monday 4 May 2026; INSET day on Tuesday 5 May 2026)
- From Monday 1 June 2026 to Tuesday 22 July

SESSIONS

We offer up to 24 places per day from Monday to Thursday and up to 21 places per day on Friday.

We offer registration for:

- Children from **2 years and 9 months** starting in the **Autumn Term** (with up to 4 places per day for those under 3).
- Children from **3 years old** starting in the **Spring Term**, subject to availability

ENROLMENT OPTIONS

We offer two types of registration:

1. Full Day Care (8:00 AM – 5:30 PM)

- **Non-funded places** (parents cover the full cost).
- **Part-funded places:** Includes a free session from **9:00 AM to 4:30 PM**, with an additional daily charge for wraparound care (before 9:00 AM and after 4:30 PM).

Children enrolled in Full Day Care can arrive flexibly until **9:00 AM** and be collected flexibly from **4:00 PM**.

2. Government-Funded Sessions (9:00 AM – 4:30 PM only)

- **For 2, 3 & 4-year-olds:** Up to **4 funded sessions per week** (30 hours total).

Important Information:

- *The government funding does not cover the cost of our **French Programme**, which has a separate **activity fee** ("French Programme Premium"). Please refer to our **Preschool Fees and Financial Assistance***

2025-2026 for details.

- We **cannot** accommodate regular arrivals after **9:00 AM** or collections before **4:00 PM**, for neither **Full Day Care** nor **Funded Sessions**.
- **Funded sessions from 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM** are only available if covered by the UK government. Any days not eligible for funding (as confirmed by Bristol City Council later in the term) will be charged at the Full Day Care rate. We will inform you if there are any changes to your expected funding.

ATTENDANCE OPTIONS

- **4 or 5 days per week** (any four days, subject to availability)
- **3 days per week** (any three days, subject to availability)
- **2 days per week** (must include Friday. Please note that these places are only available to a very small number of families)

Please note that we do not offer one-day-per-week registrations.

DEPOSIT & FEES

See “**Preschool Fees and Financial Assistance 2025-2026**” for details.

REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

You will be asked to fill in an online **Registration of interest Form** with your details and wishes.

- Which start date you would like
- Preferred days of attendance
- Funding you are eligible to / wraparound care you require (if any) around funded sessions.

OFFERS AND REGISTRATION

All registrations are subject to availability, with priority given to Term 1 admissions.

We will first process **Registration of Interest Forms** submitted by **25 Avril 2025**:

- **Current preschool pupils**: Guaranteed re-enrolment until **25 Avril 2025**.
- **Priority based on attendance**: Places will be offered in order of the highest number of days per week requested (e.g. **5-day registrations first**, followed by **4 days**, then **3 days**, and finally **2 days**). Within this order of priority we will accommodate siblings first.

"Registration of Interest" forms received after **25 Avril 2025** for **Term 1 admissions**: registration offers will be made subject to availability.

Offers of places will be sent by email **during the week commencing 5th May 2025** and will be **valid for ten days**.

If we can offer a place, we will confirm this in writing and ask you to:

1. Confirm your acceptance of the offer.
2. Complete the Online Registration Form.

Once we receive the completed form, we will issue **an invoice for the deposit**, which must be paid within **15 days**.

After these steps are completed, we will confirm **a start date in writing**.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Waiting lists

We do not operate waiting lists due to the above priority criteria for registration (which also applies to funded sessions).

In-year admissions

In-year admissions will be subject to availability with priority given to siblings of current pupils for registration 3, 4 or 5 days at the start of term 2. An offer will be made following receipt of the **Registration of Interest Form** by a set deadline each term. Please note that we do not usually accept registrations in Term 3.

Changes to registration

See our **"Terms and Conditions 2025-2026"** covering adding or reducing days of registration, changing the agreed start date, etc. All allowable changes require advance written notice and for Term 1 (Autumn Term, from September 2024) please note that that the deadline for us to receive this notice is **22 June 2025**.

Cancelling a child's place

See our **"Terms and Conditions 2025-2026"** covering not taking up a place after registration or cancelling a child's place from the following term. All changes require advance written notice and for Term 1 (Autumn Term, from September 2024) please note that that the deadline for us to receive this notice is **22 June 2025**.

Medical Needs

If your child has medical needs, we will liaise with you to draft an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) prior to your child's first day in Maternelle.



GOVERNMENT FUNDED SESSIONS POLICY 2025-2026

We offer two types of registrations:

- **Full Day Care (8:00 AM – 5:30 PM)**
- **Government-Funded Sessions (9:00 AM – 4:30 PM only)**

The attendance days for Government-Funded sessions follow the same options as Full-Day Care.

Funded sessions are available through both the **Universal Entitlement Scheme** and the **Working Families Scheme**, strictly from **9:00 AM to 4:30 PM** (a fixed 7.5-hour session per day, with no flexibility on start or end times).

We can offer up to 4 funded sessions per child per week, term-time:

- **2 days per week** → 15 hours (2 funded sessions)
- **3 days per week** → 22.5 hours (3 funded sessions)
- **4 days per week** → 30 hours (4 funded sessions)

From September 2025, children aged 9 months and older from working families may qualify for the *Working Families* Scheme. If eligible, families with children in Maternelle can use these government-funded hours at L'Ecole Française from that date.

For further details and conditions, please see www.childcarechoices.gov.uk and our documents:

Maternelle Preschool Fees and Financial Assistance 2025-2026
Terms and Conditions 2025-2026

To apply for the *Working Families* offer

1. Go to <http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>; it includes links to the government's application portal.
2. Get an eligibility code from HMRC; please note that there may be conditions linked to residence/immigration status (they do not apply if you have Settled Status). You must have obtained a valid code by 31 August 2025 for Term 1, 31 December 2025 for Term 2, 31 March 2026 for Term 3. We recommend that you apply well in advance.
3. Fill in the EYR1 form through the [Funding Loop platform](#)
4. Re-confirm your code with HMRC every 3 months, to remain eligible

Grace periods if you lose eligibility to the *Working Families* offer:

- During the first half of a school term, your child will retain the 30 hours' funding until the end of that term.
- During the second half of a school term, your child will retain the 30 hours' funding until the end of the following term.

To apply for the *Universal Entitlement* offer

1. Fill in the EYR1 form through the [Funding Loop platform](#) (together with your child's birth certificate for your first claim), within our stated deadlines.
2. You do not need a code! All children living in England are eligible.

Important Information

Fees

Any day when a child is not eligible for a free session (as confirmed by Bristol City Council later in the term) will be charged at full day care rate. We will contact you to let you know if we are advised of a variation from what was expected.

Notice Period

Once you have signed the EYR1 form, you enter into a commitment **for a full term**. If you transfer to another provider, funding for “funded sessions” will be directed to your new provider from the start of the following term (January 2026, April 2026, September 2026).

(Please see advance, written notice that must be given for cancelling non-funded hours/wraparound care in our “**Terms and Conditions 2025-2026**”). Please note that for Term 1 (Autumn Term from September 2025, the deadline is **22 June 2025**).

Payment from 3rd Parties

Funded sessions cannot be claimed at the same time that they are paid for by a third party. We will need to receive written confirmation as soon as possible so that we can work out hours that are a) paid by the college / university b) covered as free hours and c) paid for by you. Student parents may not always be eligible for expanded / extended childcare unless they meet the eligibility criteria found here www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

GDPR

See our GDPR policy on the following link

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YufKHDPNZwBP01v1m8kL_-2YCdvnOjvY/edit

Appeals

If you have any complaints about any aspect of delivery of government-funded hours, please contact Bristol City Council to discuss your questions and concerns. Please email the Family Information Service at askcyps@bristol.gov.uk or call 0117 357 4192.

Use of Funding Loop Platform for Funded Hours Claims

To claim the funded hours on behalf of parents, the school uses the Funding Loop platform. It is compulsory for parents to complete the online claims on this platform within the specified timeframe communicated by the school. If online claims are not submitted within the designated period, and the school is unable to claim the funded hours in time, the full cost of the registration will be the responsibility of the parents, charged at the full day care fee. Please note that no appeals can be made in such cases.