

# **EARLY YEARS ADMISSIONS POLICY**

**SCHOOLS WITH NURSERY CLASSES  
& SCHOOLS WITH  
FOUNDATION UNITS**

### INTRODUCTION

All children are entitled to a free early education place the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and Local Authority policy is that they transfer to full-time schooling during the academic year of their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday (see part-time and full-time admission dates) although full time schooling is not compulsory until the term after a child is 5.

This policy sets out the arrangements to be followed for part-time admissions to schools with a nursery class and those with foundation units.

As indicated in the policy, parents may choose to access their early education place with an accredited day nursery, pre-school, independent school or childminder. The focus of this decision should be meeting the needs of the individual child.

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Parents and carers may choose to access a free early education place through a variety of Early Years providers of which schools with nursery classes are one option. A full list of providers can be obtained from the Families' Information Service (FIS) ([www.calderdale.gov.uk](http://www.calderdale.gov.uk)) who can also advise on the code of practice. For nursery places each school and their Governing Body is responsible for admissions (non-statutory schooling). However, each school is required to adhere to this Admissions Policy. This is to ensure schools carry out their duty to admit children on a consistent and fair basis with other schools, and to support the Local Authority to carry out its duty regarding the sufficiency and sustainability of all providers across all sectors.

Admission to full-time schooling is managed by the Admissions Policy for statutory aged pupils. This policy will either be set by the Local Authority for community/voluntary controlled schools, or the Governing Body for voluntary aided/foundation schools.

Below is a brief explanation of the context in which nursery classes and schools with a registered early years provision operate:

- **Schools with a Nursery Class** can admit children from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday until they reach full-time school age. Some schools operate a Foundation Stage Unit where both part-time and full-time children are based together.
- **Schools with a registered early years provision on site:** subject to availability, it is the parent's choice whether to access the early education session through the school or the registered early years provision.
- **Schools offering wraparound care integrated with a nursery class** may utilise unallocated nursery places to offer additional provision beyond the free early years entitlement. Schools should inform parents of the arrangements for allocating additional sessions. Where parents are charged for the provision of wraparound childcare beyond the free entitlement, schools should have a charging policy and inform parents of any charges before they are incurred. (See Charging for Additional Services). Childcare services provided by a school's governing body should be delivered using community facilities powers and comply with relevant sections of Calderdale's Fair Funding Framework.

This policy covers the following:

- Entitlement to an early education place
- Admission dates
- Process for allocating early education places.

- The purpose of a school's designated capacity
- Funding for admissions; charging for additional services
- Compliance with the Statutory Framework For The Early Years Foundation Stage

## **ENTITLEMENT TO AN EARLY EDUCATION PLACE**

The Local Authority guarantees a place for all eligible 3 and 4 year olds within Calderdale.

From September 2010 the introduction of the 15 hours entitlement brings with it a requirement for flexibility. For example the free entitlement could be available flexibly over a minimum of 3 days per week at a maximum of 2 settings.

It should be made clear to parents that admission to a nursery class does not guarantee an automatic place in the same school. A child's attendance at a Local Authority nursery is not taken into consideration in the allocation of places in the reception year. Parents of children in nursery classes must complete a Schools' 'Common Application Form'

(<http://192.168.100.106/education/schools/primaryadmission/common-application.html>) in order to request a full-time place in school.

School must ask parents to sign a statement to say they understand that admission to a nursery class does not guarantee automatic place in school. These forms must be made available for audit.

Parents must be made aware that an offer of a donation of money or in kind to procure a school place is illegal and to ask a school to consider this is to ask them to become involved in fraudulent activity.

## **ADMISSION DATES**

The earliest a child can be admitted to free early years education is the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. (See below)

No child should ever be admitted prior to the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. All children are required by law to start school at the beginning of the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The part-time admission dates are:

<b>Term in which 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> birthday falls</b>	<b>Dates of birth</b>	<b>Term of Part-time admission</b>
<b>Spring</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>Summer</b>
<b>Summer</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> August</b>	<b>Autumn</b>
<b>Autumn</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> September – 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<b>Spring</b>

Children born in April must be admitted in the following September and not after Easter regardless of when Easter falls.

Schools that are eligible to offer early education places on a part-time basis are responsible for administering this. Parents must contact the school directly when applying for an early education place. Each school should then allocate places in accordance with this policy.

Each school should have their own application form for early education places, which all parents must complete and sign. The Local Authority may request copies of these for audit purposes,

Schools must identify a date each term when admissions for the following term will be allocated. Parents should be notified in writing when an early education place will be available. Parents should be requested to confirm that they accept the offer of a place. Following notification that a place is available, a child should be expected to take up the place within 2 weeks of the start of term. If a staggered intake is offered all children must be in school by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> week of term. If the child has not taken up the place after 2 weeks and a satisfactory explanation has not been provided to the Head teacher then the offer of a place can be removed. No funding will be provided until a place is taken up.

Schools must record evidence to verify a child's date of birth and identity. Examples are: a birth certificate or passport. Parents should also be asked to provide valid proof that the address given for the child is the address at which they are ordinarily resident (by providing evidence of benefit payments). Parents should be asked to sign the application form stating all the information provided is correct and that they are aware all information given is audited regularly

The home address for each child is the permanent address of the parents/carers and their child. That is taken to be the address of the parent/carer who receives child benefit for the child, and is assumed to be the address where the child spends the majority of the time, even if he or she lives at a different address for some days of the week.

If a child is refused an early education place then the parent/carer may appeal to a committee of governors. Governors should adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and they cannot admit children over their designated capacity. Therefore, the only grounds for upholding an appeal should be where a parent demonstrates that an error has been made by the school when processing an application that may have resulted in a place being offered to another child.

## **EARLY EDUCATION ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

Where a school receives more applications than places available then children should be admitted in the following order:

- 1 Children under Special Educational Needs statutory assessment or with a statement of Special Educational Needs (which names the school);
- 2 Children in Public Care (Looked After Children);

- 3 Children in need, as defined by the Children Act 1989 section 2 as children who, unless services where appropriate are provided are unlikely to achieve or maintain or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development or a child/children whose health or development are likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired, or a child/children who is/are disabled. Applications under this criterion would need to be supported by an appropriate professional stating that attendance at a particular school is essential;
- 4 Children who live in the school's catchment area or parish area, who have siblings attending the school at the time of admission;
- 5 Other children who live in the school's catchment area;
- 6 Children who live outside the school's catchment area but have siblings in attendance at the school;
- 7 Other children by age order (admitting eldest first);
- 8 Children who live outside the Authority;

Siblings are defined as children with brothers or sisters (including step-brothers or sisters) living at the same address, in attendance at the same school or a school on the same site, on the date of admission.

Schools must advise parents that it is their responsibility to inform them immediately of any change of circumstances that may affect their application: for example, a change of address.

Where any category is over subscribed then children within that category should be admitted in an age order basis (eldest first).

A child of a family taking up residence in Calderdale who has already been accessing an early year education place in another Authority should, subject to any constraints and supervision, be offered immediate admission.

Schools must make clear to parents their closing date for applications for nursery places and how late applications will be dealt with.

A parent must not be expected to purchase additional services, for example wrap around care, in order to gain a place at the school.

Where required, the Local Authority will provide support to a school in applying the part-time admissions criteria.

## **NURSERY CAPACITY**

A school's nursery capacity must be agreed by the Local Authority and meet standards as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. The capacity is based on available space and facilities. Requests for a change to a school's designated capacity will be considered by the Local

Authority, which will take into account issues relating to the Local Authority's duty to manage the sufficiency and sustainability of the childcare market.

Where a school exceeds this limit they are in breach of Health and Safety and Ofsted Regulations.

Most schools' nursery numbers are based on multiples of 13 in line with the staffing ratios. Therefore, if a school has a nursery number of 26 fte (full-time equivalent) then a school can admit a maximum of 52 children. This could be offered as 26 mornings and 26 afternoon sessions, or as described earlier, a more flexible offer over fewer days.

Once a designated capacity has been reached, only a child that has a Statement of Special Educational Needs that names the school or, is under statutory assessment can be admitted - thus exceeding the schools' nursery size. Where this occurs the school must contact the Local Authority immediately to discuss ways to resolve issues relating to Ofsted Regulations and compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

## **FUNDING FOR EARLY EDUCATION PLACES**

Funding for children to access their free nursery entitlement (prior to reaching statutory school age) is based on the factors and criteria set out in the Calderdale Single Funding Formula. This is reviewed on an annual basis prior to the April of each year.

Where a pupil is attending a reception class for 15 hours per week or more this will be deemed to be their entitlement to early year's education. Therefore, they will not be able to access additional Nursery Education Funding (NEF) in the private, voluntary or independent sector. If they attend a reception class for fewer hours than their entitlement they will be able to access NEF funding to claim the balance of their entitlement in another registered setting.

## **CHARGING FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

Schools must not require parents/carers to pay any fee for their child's free entitlement to early year's provision nor expect them to take up or pay for any additional services as a condition of a pupil attending a free nursery education place. Additional services include registration fees, uniforms, childcare etc

Schools must provide parents/carers with clear written information about any fees or charges for optional additional services and obtain signed permission – where appropriate from parents for example for outings.

Legislation regarding what schools can charge for and what they cannot particularly regarding early years provision, is very complex. Guidance can change regularly and schools can seek advice from CYPS Finance Team. (Contact Martyn Sharples on 01422 392719.)

## **STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

Under the requirements of the Childcare Act (2006) each school and their Governing Body must adhere to the Government's Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and The Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which came into effect from 1 September 2008.

This Statutory Framework sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. Refer to [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications) or [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs) .