

ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY SCHOOLS & CLASSES: 2014 – 2015

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to all Cambridgeshire County Council maintained nursery schools and classes.
- 1.2 This policy is a revision of the policy agreed last year in consultation with the headteachers and governing bodies of the 7 nursery schools and with the 22 headteachers of infant and primary schools that have nursery classes. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure changes affecting Nursery Education are considered.
- 1.3 The legal definition of a nursery-aged child contained in the 1944 Education Act is any child who has not yet reached statutory school age, i.e. five years. In Cambridgeshire, a child is deemed to be of nursery age from the beginning of the term following their 3rd birthday until 31st August following their fourth birthday. For this purpose, the terms are as follows (these are in line with the Early Years Education Funding term dates):

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| Autumn term – | 1 st September to 31 st December; |
| Spring term – | 1 st January to 31 st March; |
| Summer term – | 1 st April to 31 st August. |
- 1.4 The current School Admissions Code, published in February 2012, which relates only to statutory education, does not apply to this Policy.
- 1.5 Places offered under this policy will be available to the child from the date the place is offered until 31st August following their fourth birthday.
- 1.6 The Local Authority (LA) has a responsibility for determining the admission arrangements for nursery education provision in community and voluntary controlled schools and in nursery schools in consultation with the governing bodies.
- 1.7 Each nursery school, or class, has an agreed annual admissions limit and offers part-time education places only. A nursery will be full and thus a pupil should be refused admission if the admissions limit has been reached.
- 1.8 A child may only hold one nursery place at a time, although parents may divide their entitlement between a maintained school and a setting which is offering the flexible free entitlement, subject to the availability of appropriate places.

- 1.9 Once a place has been allocated to a child, and the child has started at that setting, any request to transfer to an alternative nursery class or school elsewhere, will not be encouraged, unless there are valid, exceptional reasons for the transfer, eg. house move.

2. Application Timetable

- 2.1 Parents may register their interest in a place at a nursery school or class at any time, but must formally apply for a place, using the LA nursery admission form, as follows:

- **By 15 April 2013 for places in Autumn Term 2013.**
- **By 8 November 2013 for places in Spring Term 2014;**
- **By 14 February 2014 for places in Summer Term 2014;**
- **By 28 March 2014 for places in Autumn Term 2014.**

Information and application forms are available from each nursery class and school, the County Council website and from the LA Admissions Team.

- 2.2.1 Letters to families, either offering or refusing places for their children will be sent out as follows:

- **On 1 May 2013 for places in Autumn term 2013;**
- **On 22 November 2013 for places in Spring Term 2014;**
- **On 28 February 2014 for places in Summer Term 2014;**
- **By 16 April 2014 for places in Autumn Term 2014.**

- 2.3 Where places are remaining, later admissions will be possible up to the agreed admission limit. However, places cannot be reserved for children who may move into the area later in the year.

3. Admission Criteria for education places at schools with nursery classes, schools within Children's Centres and maintained Nursery Schools

- 3.1 These admission criteria apply to the following nurseries:

1. Bottisham Community Primary School
2. Brunswick Nursery School, Cambridge
3. Cherry Hinton CE Infant School
4. Clarkson Infant School, Wisbech
5. Colleges Nursery School and Family Centre, Cambridge
6. Colville Primary School, Cherry Hinton
7. Eastfield Infant and Nursery School, St. Ives
8. Eynesbury CE Primary School, St. Neots
9. Fawcett Primary School, Trumpington
10. The Fields Children's Centre, Cambridge

11. Histon Early Years Centre
12. Homerton Children's Centre, Cambridge
13. Huntingdon Town Children's Centre
14. Kings Hedges Nursery School, Cambridge
15. Nene Infant and Nursery School, Wisbech
16. Orchards Primary School, Wisbech
17. Park Lane Primary School, Whittlesey
18. Queen Edith Community Primary School, Cambridge
19. Ridgefield Primary School, Cambridge
20. Shirley Primary School, Cambridge
21. Spring Meadow Infant & Nursery School, Ely
22. St Andrew's CE Primary School, Soham
23. St Mary's CE Primary School, St. Neots
24. St Matthew's Primary School, Cambridge
25. St Philip's CE Primary School, Cambridge
26. Swaffham Bulbeck CE Primary School
27. Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School (Oxmoor EYC),
Huntingdon
28. Weatheralls Primary School, Soham
29. Winhills Primary School, St. Neots

- 3.2 For applications received for a child seeking admission in the term after their third birthday, where more applications are received than places are available, places will be allocated in accordance with the following over-subscription criteria:

Children who have a statement of special educational needs that names the school will be admitted before the over-subscription criteria are applied.

Those children with a statement of special educational needs that does not name the school will be referred to Student Assessment to determine an appropriate place. For more information on obtaining a nursery place for a child with SEN please see the section 9.0 below.

1. Children in Care, also known as Looked After Children (LAC), and children who were looked after but ceased to be so by reason of adoption, a resident order or special guardianship order;
2. Children with a high level of need who have been referred by a Social Worker, Health professional, Pre-School Specialist Support Teacher, Special Needs Officer or the Traveller Referral Team;
3. Children living in the catchment area for the nursery school, who have had their 3rd birthday before 1st September in the year of admission¹.
4. Children not living in the catchment area who have had their 3rd birthday before 1st September in the year of admission;

¹ The Fields and Homerton Children's Centre, will give priority in this instance to those children already attending day care in the nursery.

5. Children living in the catchment area who have had their 3rd birthday before the term of admission
6. Children not living in the catchment area who have had their 3rd birthday before the term of admission.
7. Children living in the catchment area who have had their 4th birthday before 1st September 2012.
8. Children not living in the catchment area who have had their 4th birthday before 1st September 2012.

Where a tie-break is necessary within a category priority will be given firstly to children who have a sibling attending the School/Centre at the time of admission and **then by date of birth with older children having priority²**.

Applications will be accepted from all children seeking admission in their pre-school year, prior to transfer to Reception class.

- 3.3 Some nurseries may provide wrap around and/or daycare sessions for children under the age of 3. Please check the current situation regarding the availability of these places and how they are allocated by contacting the Headteacher of the Nursery direct.

4. Reserve Lists

- 4.1 Where more applications are received than places available, the oversubscription criteria will be applied and those children who are not offered places will have their details added to a reserve list. This list will be held until such time as the child is expected to transfer to Reception.
- 4.2 Children's names are placed on reserve lists **in strict order of the criteria, not according to the date of application**. If a place becomes available, the nursery will contact the parents of the child whose name is first on the reserve list. Reserve lists are not waiting lists; a new request from another parent for a child's name to be placed on a reserve list can result in other children being moved further down the list if this child has a higher priority for a place according to the admission criteria.

5. Definitions & Additional Information

- 5.1 The catchment area for nursery classes which are located at schools, as described in the list at 3.1, will be as the same as is published for the school itself. Please contact the school itself for full details of the catchment areas for Nursery Schools within Children's Centres and maintained Nursery Schools.

² If a further tie-break is needed, priority will be given to those living nearest the nursery, as measured by a straight line.

- 5.2 Siblings are defined as children living in the same family unit, whether or not they are blood-related. This does not include blood-related brothers or sisters who live in separate homes.
- 5.3 Parents are required to provide proof of the child's date of birth and home address. Evidence may be submitted in the form of the child's short form birth certificate or passport and the child benefit letter or a utility bill (showing the parent's name). Where a family is expecting to move house, confirmation of the new address will be required before the application can be considered. Confirmation should be by way of a copy of the signed lease agreement or a letter confirming contracts have been exchanged.
- 5.4 A child's home address is defined as the address where he or she resides with an adult with parental responsibility for the majority of their school nights. In cases where a child spends equal time living at two different homes over the course year, the address that is most favourable to the application will be considered as the home address.
- 5.5 Parents are obliged to inform the nursery of any change of address following an application, as this may affect the allocation of a place. Failure to do this could result in an offered place being withdrawn.
- 5.6 A child can have up to a maximum of five terms in a nursery class or school, depending on his or her age and subject to the availability of place³
- 5.7 For the purpose of determining admissions, distances between home and School/Centre will be measured using a straight line between the main entrance door of the School/Centre to the front gate of the child's home. Taking into account the scale of the map used, the distance will be measured in miles to 3 decimal places.

6. Withdrawing Offers of Nursery Places

- 6.1. Once a place has been offered in writing there are limited circumstances in which the nursery can consider withdrawing the offer. If a place is offered on the basis of a fraudulent, or intentionally misleading application, or a parent has not responded to an offer within a reasonable time, the nursery may withdraw the place. These serious situations can only be considered with the full involvement and agreement of the LA Admissions Team.
- 6.2 LA monitoring of the government nursery education scheme requires the LA to ensure that no child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education.

³ In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority may determine that due to the particular needs of that child that up to a maximum of 3 additional terms may be allocated.

- 6.3 Families knowingly registering their child at two LA settings, of which one is not part of the flexible extended free entitlement from September 2009, may have both places withdrawn. For further information regarding Cambridgeshire's Nursery Education Funding Scheme, please contact the Early Years & Childcare Service.

7. Admission to Reception

- 7.1. All parents have the choice of how and when their child starts school, until such time as their child reaches statutory school age.
- 7.2. Before a child reaches statutory school age, a parent can choose whether to take up the place offered in Reception on a full-time or part-time basis, or choose up to 15 hours of free early learning a week in an early learning or nursery setting.
- 7.3. If your choice is for your child is to access 15 hours of early learning at a setting other than a school, until they reach statutory school age, you will need to do the following:
- Complete a Reception Application Form for your child by 15th January 2014, to ensure your child has an offer of a place in Reception from September 2014.
 - Discuss your choice with your child's nursery in the first instance.
 - Complete a Nursery Re-admission application form and return it to your preferred Early Years Setting by 31st March 2014.
 - If you are able to secure a place in the Early Years Setting, please ensure you notify the school that your child is due to attend in September of your arrangements, and discuss with them the future arrangements for the admission of your child.

Please note: Completion of a Nursery Re-admission application form does not guarantee your child a place at the nursery.

8. Deferring Admission to Primary School

- 8.1. Parents may choose to defer their child's application to primary school by a full academic year from the term after their child's 4th birthday as the law only requires children to receive full-time education in the term after their 5th birthday. When considering this the parent should be aware that in doing this, their child will **not** be admitted to Reception the following September, but will be placed in Year 1.
- 8.2. Any request by a parent for deferred admission to Primary School should be made in writing to the LA Admissions Team, supported by the recommendation of at least one, preferably two, relevant education professionals. The Admissions Team will then seek the views of specialists.

- 8.3. Requests should be submitted as early as possible, but no later than 1st December 2013, in order for a decision to be made before the expected offer date. Parents should be aware that it may not always be possible to retain a place at their current nursery in these circumstances, and that if they are considering this they should discuss the availability of a place for their child before places are allocated for the next Autumn Term, which takes place in the second half of the Spring Term.

9. Refusal of admission and right of appeal

- 9.1 A pupil may be refused admission only if
- the nursery has reached the admissions limit, or;
 - the child is not of the appropriate age.
- 9.2 The strict statutory criteria governing adult: pupil ratios mean that it is not possible to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to award a place at a nursery provision.
- 9.3 There is no right to appeal the Admission Team's *decision not to award a place* where the provision in question is not named in the Statement and the Student Assessment team has determined that other provision is suitable. Parents can however, appeal to the SEND Tribunal against the provision named by the Authority in the Statement.

10. Sickness Absence

- 10.1 Where a child experiences long-term sickness (of less than a half term's duration) the nursery may keep open the place and retain nursery education grant for the child. If the illness continues but the parent and nursery intend the child to return subsequently then Early Years Education Funding may be claimed in good faith.

11. Staggered Entry

- 11.1 Staggered entry to nursery provision is acceptable when it is necessary to allow settling in. However, this should be completed by the end of the first half-term. If children who are eligible for the Early Years Education Funding Scheme join the school in the spring or summer terms, staggered entry should be completed by the relevant half term.

12. Contacts

- 12.1 For matters relating to this admissions policy, please contact the headteacher of the School/Centre in the first instance.