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| **POLICY GUIDELINES**Pupil Administration: 1.2 |

**(12th Revision)**

**Admission to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for 3 and 4 year old Children within Schools and Partnership Settings and Deferral to Primary School**

**1.0 Introduction**

These guidelines are intended to assist Head Teachers and Managers of Partnership settings by outlining the principles and procedures for admission to local authority ELC settings, schools,and partnership settings.

The advice given is based on guidance from the Scottish Government relating to the *Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 section 34* which places local authorities under a duty to secure a free, part-time early learning and childcare place for all eligible children, should their parents wish one. Consideration has also been given to the requirements outlined within the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.* One major aspect of this Act is a commitment to improving and increasing high quality, flexible and integrated early learning and childcare which is accessible and affordable for all.

By 2020 all Midlothian ELC settings will be providing 1140 hours flexibly to meet families’ needs, to a high quality, fully accessible and affordable service. Midlothian will phase in the expanded hours in pilot settings. These individual settings will utilise a separate system for allocation of their places.

**2.0 Applications**

Catchment areas and denominational status **do not** apply to ELC settings. Applications may be accepted for children aged two and over.

Attendance at an ELC education setting **does not** guarantee a place in primary one at the same school.

Parents should make an application to their preferred early learning and childcare setting and will also have the opportunity, as part of the application process, to register a second and third choice of setting. Information on alternative early learning and childcare settings across Midlothian will be available from individual settings and on the council website. Should a place be unavailable in their first choice of setting, second or third choice will apply

Parents/carers will need to provide proof of both date of birth (birth certificate or passport) and residency (utility bill, council tax letter) before applications can be completed.

Applications can be submitted to the first choice setting from the child’s 2nd birthday.

Schools/Settings should refer to the NAMS guidance, the management information system used to support nursery registration and enrolment, when processing applications.

**3.0 Eligibility**

Local authorities are required to offer an early learning and childcare place to children in the term following their third birthday. For the majority of children, this will mean they have access

to 600 hours of free part-time early learning and childcare for 4, 5 or 6 school terms, depending on date of birth.

By 2020 all Midlothian ELC settings will be providing 1140 hours flexibly to meet families’ needs, to a high quality, fully accessible and affordable service. Midlothian will phase in the expanded hours in pilot settings. These individual settings will utilise a separate system for allocation of their places.

Appendix 7 sets out details on qualifying dates of birth and the related pattern of admission throughout the year. NAMS will be updated to reflect qualifying dates of birth and related admission dates.

**4.0 Priority**

In the event of an early learning and childcare setting being oversubscribed, priority should be given according to the following criteria:

1. Children with additional support needs **may** be given priority after consultation with the Schools Group Manager (ASN) and the Schools Group Manager (Early Years)
2. Eligible children resident in Midlothian in order of cohort age (Should there be more children in the cohort than there are available places then the cohort should be ranked according to date of birth. Should children have the same DOB then date of application will apply)
3. Eligible children resident out-with Midlothian in order of cohort age (Should there be more children in the cohort than there are available places then the cohort should be ranked according to date of birth. Should children have the same DOB then date of application will apply)

Schools should refer to the NAMS guidance when allocating categories for registration.

**5.0 Offers of places**

All Midlothian schools, classes and partnership settings should issue letters offering places according to the dates on the timetable (Appendix 7). Parents should be asked to reply within the specified time period. Failure to do so will result in the place being offered to the next eligible child.

Parents of eligible children who cannot be offered a place should be informed by letter and a check will be carried out to establish whether a place is available at their second or third choice of setting. Parents will be advised of the outcome within four weeks from contact regarding unavailability of first choice.

**6.0 Phased entry**

It is best practice to transition children into ELC appropriately to best support their emotional well- being and social development. Settings should discuss with parent/carers the

procedure which will best meet individual children’s needs. It is to be recognised that children are entitled to 600 hours of early learning and childcare and parents may request an immediate start for their child.

**7.0 Parental choice**

To fulfil the Scottish Government’s requirement that each child is entitled to 600 hours of early learning and childcare per annum, settings will have to offer 15 hours 50 minutes of early learning and childcare per week. Within local authority settings, sessions will be organised over five mornings and five afternoons of 3 hours 10 minutes per session. For most settings this will be offered in this pattern of attendance:

Morning session start – 8.30am Morning session finish – 11.40am

Afternoon session start – 12.25pm Afternoon session finish – 3.35pm

**8.0 Allocation of sessions**

Morning and afternoon sessions will be offered equally to ensure that numbers in the sessions are balanced. The allocation of a morning or afternoon session should consider family circumstances, the needs of the child as well as the organisation within the early learning and childcare setting. Parent/carers who require a morning or afternoon session must provide a reason for this preference. There is no guarantee that this will be offered in their first choice setting. An age balance should be maintained within each group in relation to 3 year old and 4 year old children.

Partnership settings may provide an alternative attendance pattern that meets the criteria outlined within the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* and is agreed as part of the contract between Midlothian Council and the Partnership Setting.

It is important to take parental preferences into account when allocating sessions. Some parents may wish their child to attend more than one setting. Other parents prefer reduced attendance for their child in the initial stages. Whenever possible, ELC settings should be flexible in trying to meet the needs of families by allowing children to attend for fewer sessions without unnecessary restrictions. A child attending for a reduced number of sessions would still count as a full place in terms of numbers.

**9.0 Split Placements**

In the best interests of the child’s early learning and childcare, should there be a split placement, children should not attend more than two early learning and childcare settings.

The combination should be either a local authority ELC setting and a setting in partnership to provide ELC or two settings in partnership to provide ELC.

**10.0 Additional sessions**

In exceptional circumstances additional sessions may be offered by the setting if a range of agencies consider that a child has need.

These must be approved on an individual basis by the Schools Group Manager (Early Years).

**11.0 Deferred entry**

Parents of children with birthdays in January or February who wish their child to defer entry to primary school have an entitlement to an additional year of early learning and childcare for their child. Parents must register their child at their catchment school even if they intend to make a placing request. They should, however, meet with early learning and childcare staff to discuss any deferral. If appropriate, the early learning and childcare setting staff will complete the deferral application and support plan, for the additional year in early learning and childcare along with parents. The application, including any supporting evidence, should then be submitted for consideration by Education, Communities and Economy central staff. Children with September to December birthdays, whose parents wish them to defer entry to primary school, may not claim an extra year of early learning and childcare as an entitlement. Parents, who wish to request a further year within an early learning and childcare education setting for their child/children, should meet with early learning and childcare setting education staff to discuss any deferral. (See appendix 9 guidance relating to deferrals).

Children, whose 5th birthday is prior the commencement of the school term in August, cannot legally, (*Education (Scotland) Act 1980),* be granted a deferred year within an early learning and childcare setting as they would become 6 during the additional year. Should an occasion arise where parents wish to make a request for a child, whose birthday falls into this category, schools should contact either the Schools Group Manager (Early Years) or Schools Group Manager (ASN) to discuss possible options.

A parent/carer may be concerned about whether or not their child is ready for school or how their additional support needs will be met. Schools have an obligation to support the needs of all children and to plan for individual’s needs through early learning and childcare/school transition processes. Decisions about deferral are best made as part of the ongoing profiling of a child’s development and learning which will take place in the early learning and childcare setting.

The decision will take account of the parent/carer’s views and the following regarding the child’s:

* Approach & attitude to learning
* Ability to communicate his/her own needs, feelings & ideas
* Levels of independence & self-help
* Emotional & personal development, including self-confidence & esteem
* His/her relationships & friendships with other children & adults
* Additional support needs

For children with significant additional support needs, deferred entry may be considered as an intervention if it is agreed by the parent/carer and the core team around the child that this would be in their best interest. However, it should be noted that in most situations the child will continue to have significant needs, even with a deferred entry to school and so it is most often better to assess the needs of the child and agree an appropriate support package for school rather than deferring school entry. In all cases where the child’s school entry is to be deferred due to their additional support needs, this should be noted as an intervention in the child’s plan, with clear targets to be worked on within this additional year.

If there is agreement that there are good reasons to proceed with a deferral request, the early learning and childcare setting staff will complete the deferral application, and support plan, for the additional year in early learning and childcare along with parents. The local authority will consider these applications on an individual basis

Early learning and childcare settings should ensure that all deferral applicationsare submitted to the authority by the required date. (Appendix 9, Deferral application and guidance for parents)

**Appendices**

Appendix 2: Data Protection form

Appendix 3: Receipt of Application

Appendix 4: Confirmation of available placement

Appendix 5: Unavailability of place letter

Appendix 6: Confirmation of acceptance

Appendix 7: Qualifying dates of birth and patterns of admission

Appendix 8: List of local authority and partnership for ELC education settings

Appendix 9: Deferral application and guidance for parents/carers

Appendix 10: Retaining your child in Early Learning and ChildcareSetting: Information for Parents & Carers

**Child’s Details**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** |  | **Date of Birth** |  |

**Data Protection**

If you would like to know how Midlothian Council collects, uses and shares your personal information, please visit our website [www.midlothian.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/privacy) to access our online Privacy Notice.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Please tick here if parent or carer is a member or ex-member of the Armed Forces. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Please tick here if you do **not** wish your child’s details to be passed to NHS Lothian. |  |
| **Signed ……………………………………….............................. (***Parent/Carer* **Date ………………….** |

11 December 2018

The Parent/Carer of «First\_Name» «Last\_Name»

«address», «locality»

«posttown»

«postcode»

Dear Parent/Carer

# Application for entry to Early Learning and Childcare Setting

I acknowledge receipt of your application for a place at «School»Early Learning and Childcaresettingand confirm that your child has been placed on the waiting list. Your child has also been placed on the waiting list for your second and third choice Early Learning and Childcaresetting, if applicable.

Children will normally be offered a place in the term after their 3rd birthday, subject to availability. We hope to be able to accommodate your child.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Manager

**Please keep this letter as a receipt of your application.**

**Please inform the Early Learning and Childcare setting if you change address or contact number.**

11 December 2018

The Parent/Carer of «First\_Name» «Last\_Name»

«address», «locality»

«posttown»

«postcode»

Dear Parent/Carer

# Early Learning and Childcare setting – Placement

I am please to advise you that a «session» place is available for your child at «Early Learning and Childcare» for«intake-».

Please return the slip below to inform the Early Learning and Childcare setting whether you wish to accept or reject this offer **no later than «date».**

**If no reply is received by «date», the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.**

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Manager

✂---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I wish to accept the Early Learning and Childcaresetting place for «First\_Name» «Last\_Name» [ ]

I no longer require an Early Learning and Childcaresetting place for «First\_Name» «Last\_Name» [ ]

11 December 2018

The Parent/Carer of «First\_Name» «Last\_Name»

«address», «locality»

«posttown»

«postcode»

Dear Parent/Carer

**Early Learning and Childcare**

Unfortunately a place is not available for your child at «School» Early Learning and Childcaresetting.

A check will be carried out to see if a place is available at your second or third choice of Early Learning and Childcaresetting and you will be advised of the outcome within 4 weeks.

Your child will remain on the waiting list for a place at «School» Early Learning and Childcaresetting until a place becomes available or you advise that you no longer wish your child to remain on the waiting list.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Manager

11 December 2018

The Parent/Carer of «First\_Name» «Last\_Name»

«address», «locality»

«posttown»

«postcode»

Dear Parent/Carer

# Early Learning and Childcare - Placement

I confirm your acceptance of a «session» Early Learning and Childcareplace for «First\_Name».

«First\_Name» will start Early Learning and Childcareeducation on «first-day» at «time».

I enclose a copy of our settling-in procedure for new children starting so that you can make arrangements.

Please note that «First\_Name» will now be removed from all nursery waiting lists.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Manager

Children should be admitted the month after their 3rd birthday where there is capacity to do so. Each setting is expected to plan an effective settling in programme to meet the needs of individual children and families and to ensure seamless transitions.

It is not practical to admit children to a local authority Early Learning and Childcare setting in December or June.

The following would apply:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Birth month  | Start month  |
| September  | After the October break  |
| October  | November  |
| November  | January  |
| December  | January  |
| January  | February  |
| February  | March  |
| March  | April  |
| April  | May  |
| May  | August  |
| June  | August  |
| July  | August  |
| August  | September  |

Dates for offer letters for 2019/20 school year

1st Offer letter issue dates

Issue Date Period covered

Week commencing 13th May 2019 19th August to 29th November 2019

Week commencing 7th October 2019 7th January to 3rd April 2020

Week commencing 3rd February 2020 20th April to 26th May 2020

2nd Offer letter issue dates

Issue Date Period covered

Week commencing 3rd June 2019 19th August to 29th November 2019

Week commencing 28th October 2019 7th January to 3rd April 2020

Week commencing 24th February 2020 20th April to 26th May 2020

3rd Offer letter issue dates

Issue Date Period covered

Week commencing 17th June 2019 19th August to 29th November 2019

 Week commencing 11th November 2019 7th January to 3rd April 2020

Week commencing 10th March 2020 20th April to 26th May 2020

Local Authority ELC Settings

Mayfield Nursery School, Mayfield 0131 660 2485

Mount Esk Nursery School, Bonnyrigg 0131 271 4725

Primary Schools with ELC Classes

Bilston Primary School, Bilston 0131 444 9021

Bonnyrigg Primary School, Bonnyrigg 0131 271 4570

Burnbrae Primary School, Bonnyrigg 0131 271 4605

Cornbank St James Primary School, Penicuik 0131 271 4575

Cuiken Primary School, Penicuik 0131 271 4580

Danderhall Primary School, Danderhall 0131 271 4585

Gore Glen Primary School, Gorebridge 0131 444 9026

Gorebridge Primary School, Gorebridge 0131 271 4595

King’s Park Primary School, Dalkeith 0131 271 4610

Lasswade Primary School, Bonnyrigg 0131 271 4615

Lawfield Primary School, Mayfield 0131 271 4620

Loanhead Primary School, Loanhead 0131 271 4625

Mauricewood Primary School, Penicuik 0131 271 4630

Moorfoot Primary School, North Middleton 0131 271 4640

Newtongrange Primary School, Newtongrange 0131 271 4645

Paradykes Primary School, Loanhead 0131 271 4650

Rosewell Primary School, Rosewell 0131 271 4655

Roslin, Roslin and Bilston Annexe, Bilston 0131 271 4660

Sacred Heart Primary School, Bilston 0131 271 4665

St Andrew’s Primary School, Gorebridge 0131 271 4670

St Mary’s Primary School, Bonnyrigg 0131 271 4690

Stobhill Primary School, Gorebridge 0131 271 4700

Strathesk Primary School, Penicuik 0131 271 4705

Tynewater Primary School, Pathhead 0131 271 4710

Woodburn Primary School, Dalkeith 0131 271 4715

**Partnership Settings**

Abacus Nursery, Eskbank 0131 660 4567

Arcadia Nursery, Roslin 0131 650 8855

Arce Wood Nursery, Bilston, Roslin 0131 445 2841

Chapter One, Shawfair 0131 654 0186

Clover Country Nursery, Pathhead 01875 833375

Cranston Country Nursery 01875 321370

Happy Days Nursery, Dalkeith 0131 663 4280

Hawthorn Children and Families Centre, Mayfield 0131 271 3116

Little Hawthorn Nursery, Bonnyrigg 0131 261 6260

Little Hawthorn Nursery, Loanhead 0131 440 3057

Milton Bridge Nursery, Penicuik 01968 679285

Newbattle ELC Setting, Newtongrange 0131 663 6055

Pinocchio’s Children’s Nursery, Eskbank 0131 654 0070

Pinocchio’s Children’s Nursery, Lasswade 0131 654 2914

Pinocchio’s Children’s Nursery, Penicuik 01968 679007

Start Bright Nursery, Bonnyrigg 0131 629 1060

Temple Nursery and Playgroup, Temple 01875 830560

Wizkidz Nursery, Newtongrange 0131 660 0077

**Midlothian Council**

**Education, Communities and Economy**

**Deferring Your Child’s Entry to School: Information for Parents & Carers**

Children who reach the age of five years old in either January or February 2020 can start school before they are 5, in August 2019, or can defer their start until August 2020.

**Most parents choose to send their child to school as soon as s/he is eligible to start.**

**Reasons for Deferral**

Midlothian Council is sympathetic to parents who wish to defer their child’s entry to school and we aim to help you make the best decision for your child. You may wish to defer your child’s entry for a number of reasons. The most common reasons given are:

* Your child may have additional support needs affecting their development
* You may feel that your child is not ‘ready’ for school

**January/ February Birth dates**

Children who reach the age of five years old in January or February 2020, who choose to defer entry will have a funded ELC place for an additional year.

**September/ December Birth dates**

Children who reach the age of five years old from September to December 2019 can request a deferred year but the allocation of a funded ELC place is not automatic; and is at the discretion of Midlothian Council.

**Children deferring entry to P1**

By the time they reach the age of 4 or 5 years old, there are already differences in each child’s development, learning and levels of independence. If you are concerned about whether or not your child is ready for school or how their additional support needs will be met, you should speak directly to the staff who care for your child and/or to the Head or Manager of the nursery or group your child attends. Schools have an obligation to support the needs of all children and your child’s needs’ will be planned for through nursery/ school transition processes.

Decisions about deferral are best made as part of the ongoing profiling of your child’s development and learning which will take place in the nursery or group your child attends. In considering the best decision for your child, we will take account of your views and your child’s:

• Approach & attitude to learning

• Ability to communicate his/her own needs, feelings & ideas

• Levels of independence & self-help

• Emotional & personal development, including self-confidence & esteem

• His/her relationships & friendships with other children & adults

• Additional support needs

For children with significant additional support needs, deferred entry may be considered as an intervention if it is agreed by you and the core team around your child that this would be in their best interests. However it should be noted that in most situations the child will continue to have significant needs, even with a deferred entry to school and so it is most often better to assess the needs of the child and agree an appropriate support package for school rather than deferring school entry. In ALL cases where the child’s school entry is to be deferred due to their additional support needs, this should be noted as an intervention on your child’s plan, with clear targets to be worked on within this additional year.

There may be some exceptional situations in which deferred entry could be considered an intervention. For example:

* Your child may have additional support needs affecting their development (educational, social and emotional)
* You have only recently arrived into the UK and your child has not experienced nursery education and needs time to adjust to school life
* Your child may have missed a lot of school through illness
* Your child has a summer birthday and was born very prematurely

**Who will make the decision?**

All applications for deferred entry are considered by a **panel of early years professionals**. This panel includes a Service Manager from Education, School Group Manager and representatives from the Educational Psychology Service. The Head or Manager of the nursery or group your child attends will submit information with regard to your child as part of the application process. ELC education settings should submit paperwork to the Council, not later than **9 February 2019.** Decisions regarding the outcome of the referral will be communicated by letter to the parents and the ELC setting by **23 February 2019**.

Where the council has agreed to an additional publicly-funded ELC year and you wish this to be in the private or voluntary sector, the Council can only make appropriate arrangements for payment to a Setting in Partnership for ELC Education. Should you request a place in a neighbouring authority, Midlothian Council will commission a place. Where the Council has refused an additional publicly funded ELC year, the parent may appeal through normal council procedures but there is no legal right to an appeal.

**Midlothian Council Application for Deferred Entry to Primary School**

**Education, Communities and Economy**

**Please note that children whose birth date is prior to September can not defer**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Current ELC Establishment**  | **Morning** | **Afternoon** |
|  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Child’s Details** | **Male** |  |  | **Female** |  | **(Please tick box)** |

**Surname………………………………………………………….. First name………………………………………………………**

**Middle Initials……………………………………………………. Date of Birth ……………………………………………………**

**Home address**

**………………………………………………………………………………………………..………………………………………………….**

**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

**Postcode …………………………… Telephone (Home) …………………………………… (Mobile) ………………………………**

**Record of meeting with parent/carer and staff.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Date -**. **Location –** **Attendees –****Summary of Discussion, including the views of professionals and parents –****Agreed actions –**  |

**Proposed Plan for Additional Year**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Additional Support Needs/Areas Of Concern** | **Strategies & Interventions** | **Impact** |
|  |  |  |

**Please return this form and attach as full a range of evidence as possible which may include:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Copy of most recent IEP** | **Record of most recent planning meeting(s) with parents** | **Learning stories and/or written observations of child in nursery** | **ELC****Transition Information****i.e. Early Level Steps** | **Report from any other agency list** | **Speech and language report** | **any other relevant documentation,** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**by 9February 2019 to: Pupil Placement, Midlothian Council Education, Communities and Economy, Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, DALKEITH EH22 3ZG** **pupil.placement@midlothian.gov.uk**

**Signature of Parent/Carer**

**…………………………………………………………………………………. Date ……..………………………………………….......**

**Signature of Head Teacher/Manager**

**…………..……………………………………………………….. Date …………………………………………………….**

**Data Protection**

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**Midlothian Council**

**Education, Communities and Economy**

Retaining your child in Early Learning and ChildcareSetting: Information for Parents & Carers

**Prior to September Birth dates**

Children who reach the age of five years old before September 2019 are unable to request a deferred year, however in exceptional circumstances a retained year at Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting may be considered.

**Children being considered for retention**

By the time they reach the age of 4 or 5 years old, there are already differences in each child’s development, learning and levels of independence. If you are concerned about whether or not your child is ready for school or how their additional support needs will be met, you should speak directly to the staff who care for your child and/or to the Head or Manager of the ELCsetting or group your child attends. Schools have an obligation to support the needs of all children and your child’s needs’ will be planned for through nursery/ school transition processes.

Decisions about a retention are best made as part of the ongoing profiling of your child’s development and learning which will take place in the ELCsetting or group your child attends. In considering the best decision for your child, we will take account of your views and your child’s:

* Approach & attitude to learning
* Ability to communicate his/her own needs, feelings & ideas
* Levels of independence & self-help
* Emotional & personal development, including self-confidence & esteem
* His/her relationships & friendships with other children & adults
* Additional support needs

For children with significant additional support needs, an additional year at ELC setting may be considered as an intervention if it is agreed by you and the core team around your child that this would be in their best interests. However it should be noted that in most situations the child will continue to have significant needs. In all cases where the child is to be retained due to their additional support needs, this should be noted as an intervention on your child’s plan, with clear targets to be worked on within this additional year.

Only in exceptional situations will a retained year at nursery be considered an intervention. For example:

* Your child may have additional support needs affecting their development (educational, social and emotional)
* You have only recently arrived into the UK and your child has not experienced nursery education and needs time to adjust to school life
* Your child may have missed a lot of school through illness
* Your child has a summer birthday and was born very prematurely

**Who will make the decision?**

All applications are considered by a **panel of early years professionals**. This panel includes a Service Manager from Education, School Group Manager and representatives from the Educational Psychology Service. The Head or Manager of the nursery or group your child attends will submit information with regard to your child as part of the application process. ELC education settings should submit paperwork to the Council, not later than **9 February 2019.**

**Consideration of the application may include requests for additional information from the team around the child. It may be appropriate for a member of the panel to visit the setting that the child is attending to further assess their needs.** Decisions regarding the outcome of the application will be communicated by letter to the parents and the **ELC setting** by **mid March 2019**. If you do not agree with this decision please contact **Maria Lloyd Acting Head of Education** by end of March 2019.

Where the council has agreed to an additional publicly-funded ELC year and you wish this to be in the private or voluntary sector, the Council can only make appropriate arrangements for payment to a Setting in Partnership for ELC Education. Should you request a place in a neighbouring authority, Midlothian Council will commission a place. Where the Council has refused an additional publicly funded ELC year, the parent may appeal through normal council procedures but there is no legal right to an appeal.