

ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY SCHOOLS & CLASSES: 2009-2010

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy is a revision of the policy agreed last year in consultation with the headteachers and governing bodies of the 6 nursery schools and with the 23 headteachers of infant and primary schools that have nursery classes. This policy will apply from November 2008, but does not take into consideration the imminent changes to the provision of Nursery Education through these settings. This policy will be reviewed in early 2009 to accommodate these.

1.2 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. For this purpose, the terms are as follows (these are in line with the Early Years Education Funding term dates):

Autumn term – 1st September to 31st December;
Spring term – 1st January to 31st March;
Summer term – 1st April to 31st August.

For details of eligibility, see Appendix 1.

1.3 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.

1.4 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.

1.5 A child may only hold one nursery place at a time, except where one of these places is within a setting which is part of the flexible extended free entitlement from September 2009.

1.6 Once a place has been allocated to a child, any request to transfer to a nursery class or school elsewhere, as a result of the child's name having been placed on a reserve list, will be strongly discouraged.

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 24 April 2009 for places in Autumn term 2009;**
- **By 20 November 2009 for places in Spring term 2010;**
- **By 26 February 2010 for places in Summer term 2010;**

Information and application forms are available from each nursery class and school 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 5 May 2009 for places in Autumn term 2009;**
- **On 27 November 2009 for places in Spring term 2010;**
- **On 5 March 2010 for places in Summer term 2010;**

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 nursery classes and schools within Children's Centres

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 Primary 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 Applications may be accepted from all children seeking admission in the term after their third birthday until the term before they transfer to reception class. In priority order, places will be allocated to:

1. Children who are Looked After;
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 taking their full entitlement in a single setting;
4. Children living in the catchment area for the nursery, or already attending daycare at the nursery who had their 3rd birthday before 1st September in the year of admission²;
5. Children not living in the catchment area who had their 3rd birthday before 1st September in the year of admission;
6. Children living in the catchment area who had their 3rd birthday before the term of admission;
7. Children not living in the catchment area who had their 3rd birthday before the term of admission.

In cases of equal merit, 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 priority**⁴.

3.3 Applications will be accepted from all children seeking admission in their pre-school year, prior to transfer to Reception class. In priority order, places will be allocated to:-

1. Children who are Looked After;
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 taking their full entitlement in a single setting;
4. Children living in the catchment area for the nursery who had their 3rd birthday before 1st September in the year of admission;
5. Children not living in the catchment area who had their 3rd birthday before 1st September in the year of admission;
6. Children living in the catchment area who had their 3rd birthday before the term of admission;
7. Children not living in the catchment area who had their 3rd birthday before the term of admission.

In cases of equal merit, 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 priority**³.

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

² The Fields Children's Centre, will give priority in this instance to those children already attending day care.

³ If a further tie-break is needed, priority will be given to those living nearest the Centre, as measured by a straight line.

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 a 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 A pupil may be refused admission only if the nursery is full to the admissions limit or if the child is not of the appropriate age. There is no right of appeal against the admission authority's refusal to award a place at a nursery, since there are statutory criteria governing adult: pupil ratios that cannot be over-ridden. The Department of Children, Schools & Families' School Admissions Code does not apply to nursery admissions, as it is not a matter relating to compulsory schooling.
- 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 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 week-day nights. In cases where a child spends equal time living in two different homes, 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 places⁴.
- 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

⁴ 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

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 kilometres 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 education⁵. 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. Deferring Admission to Reception

- 7.1. In Cambridgeshire a child becomes eligible for a Reception place in the September following their 4th birthday. Attendance at an LA nursery will therefore cease at the end of the summer term preceding the September Reception admission. However, if the LA deems there to be exceptional circumstances which warrant an extension of the child's nursery education, in which case their place will remain available to them.
- 7.2. Parents may choose to defer their child's application to primary school by a year. When considering this the Parent should be aware that in doing this, their child will be admitted to Year 1, and not Reception the following year. Any request by a parent for deferred admission to Reception should be made in writing to the LA Admissions Team, supported by recommendation by at least one, preferably two, relevant education professionals. The Admissions Team will then seek the views of specialists. Requests should be submitted as early as possible 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.

8. Sickness Absence

- 8.1 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.

9. Staggered Entry

⁵ Depending on provider this entitlement will be for 12.5 hours or 15 hours)

- 9.1 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.

10. Contacts

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

Appendix 1

Appendix 1: Eligible dates of birth for nursery schools and classes⁵

Date of birth	April 2009	September 2009	January 2010	April 2010	September 2010	January 2011	April 2011
1 September 2004 – 31 st December 2004	yes	yes – but expected to start reception	no – must be in school	no	no	no	no
1 January 2005 – 31 March 2005	yes	yes – but expected to start reception	yes - but expected to be in reception	no – must be in school	no	no	no
1 April 2005 – 31 st August 2005	yes	yes – but expected to start reception	yes - but expected to be in reception	yes - but expected to be in reception	no – must be in school	no	no
1 September 2005 – 31 st December 2005	yes	Yes	yes	yes	yes - but expected to start reception	no – must be in school	no
1 January 2006 – 31 March 2006	yes	Yes	yes	yes	yes - but expected to start reception	yes - but expected to be in reception	no – must be in school
1 April 2006 – 31 st August 2006	no	Yes	yes	yes	yes - but expected to start reception	yes - but expected to be in reception	yes - but expected to be in reception
1 September 2006 – 31 st December 2006	no	No	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
1 January 2007 – 31 March 2007	no	No	no	yes	yes	yes	yes

⁵ Children have six terms between their third birthday and when they must be in full-time education, but are eligible for a maximum of five terms of nursery provision.
