Early Years Admissions Policy

Dean Field Primary School

Approved by:	F Pether	**Date:**	27th September 2023
Last reviewed on:	September 2026		
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INTRODUCTION

All children are entitled to a free early education place the term following their 3rd birthday and Local Authority policy is that they transfer to full-time schooling during the academic year of their 5th 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) 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..

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 3rd 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.

Our school nursery offers funded early education places in line with current government entitlements. We provide the universal 15 hours of free early education per week for all 3- and 4-year-olds, available from the term after a child's third birthday. In addition, we offer the extended 30 hours of funded childcare for eligible working families, subject to availability and confirmation of a valid eligibility

code from HMRC. The school can also take a child the day after their 3rd birthday if the parent is in possession of either the 30 hour working family entitlement or 15 hour disadvantaged entitlement. Where possible, we aim to accommodate flexible attendance patterns to support families' needs, while ensuring high-quality provision. All funded hours are delivered during our core nursery sessions, and any additional hours requested may be charged at our standard hourly rate.

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' details will be given out from the school each year, to enable parents to apply for a full-time Reception 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 3rd birthday. (See below)

OR the day after the child's 3rd birthday if a parent is in receipt of either the working parent 30 hour entitlement or 15 hour disadvantaged funding.

In either case 4 weeks notice has to be given to the child's current setting before admission to Dean Field Nursery.

All children are required by law to start school at the beginning of the term after their 5th birthday. The part-time admission dates are:

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

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 2nd 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) i.e. those who 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 would be further impaired without the provision of services of the Local Authority. 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. www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications or www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs

Briefing note to accompany new admissions policy

1. Until 2010 no formal admissions policy to nursery early years places existed (the previous version at least 10 years old was a very out of date 2 sided A4 document)

2. After consultation with other local authorities a draft document was drawn up in 2009

3. In March 2010 every school and PVI setting was given four opportunities to feedback (three at events and one hand written consultation) The end policy has been altered to reflect this.

Important Operational Issues to Note (not within policy)

4. This document was originally planned to come into operation in September 2011. However changes in Government policy means the single funding formula is now being introduced in April 2011. This policy will be introduced at the same time. It is being circulated 6 months before this to allow schools and settings time to consider staffing and local issues

5. This policy was written, consulted on and finalised during the period of a change of government. If a change of policy nationally affects this document all stakeholders will be notified.

6. During consultation process many issues around sufficiency particularly over sufficiency of places was raised. The Local Authority has a duty to ensure a sufficiency of childcare and early education places but no power to stop new settings opening.

7. Best solutions exist when schools and Private Voluntary and Independent settings network closely and regularly exchange information around transition. It is not necessary for all schools and settings to offer a fully flexible entitlement. The emphasis is on working with parents to find the best local solutions. The Families Information Service 01422 253053 or text 07624 803657 e mail fis@calderdale.gov.uk can offer examples of flexibility and support with it.

8. Lunch can be taken as part of the entitlement but a charge can only be made for food. Parents should be given the option of providing a packed lunch. If staffing changes need to be made schools must consult union and HR providers.

9. Locality Family Support and Health Visitors teams will be briefed to inform parents about changes.

10. When this new policy comes into place in April 2011 the priority places system will no longer be in operation.