

Directorate of Children's Services

**Determined Admission
Arrangements for Community and
Voluntary Controlled
Maintained Nursery Schools and
Classes
September 2012**

'Putting children and young people first in Dudley'

Jane Porter
Director of Children's Services

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Directorate of Children's Services
Westox House
1 Trinity Road
Dudley
West Midlands DY1 1JQ

CONTEXT OF POLICY:

Background

Determining the admissions policy for community and voluntary controlled maintained nursery schools and classes is the responsibility of the Local Authority in consultation with individual schools.

The responsibility for determining the admissions policy for foundation and voluntary aided schools including academies and free schools, nursery classes is the responsibility of the individual Governing Body.

Legal Context

- Children Act 1989 (Section 22)
- Education Act 1996 (Section 8)
- Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 (SI 1998: 1607).
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relations (Amendment Act) 2000
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Childcare Act 2006 - Amendment Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/301) Duty to secure early years provision free of charge
- Equalities Act 2010 and (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011
- The School Finance (England) Regulations 2012 (SI2012/335)

And have regard to the School Admission Code Feb 2012

And with reference to the reformed Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2008 (2012) – learning and development and safeguarding and welfare regulations

Desired Outcomes of Admission Policy

- To ensure consistency across all community and voluntary controlled maintained nursery schools and classes in the Dudley Borough with regard to local admission arrangements.
- To ensure that all applicants are treated in a fair and consistent way and that the admissions policy for all maintained nursery schools and classes is clear and transparent.

POLICY FOR ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED MAINTAINED NURSERY SCHOOLS AND CLASSES

It is not a legal requirement that consultation take place on admissions arrangements for community and voluntary controlled maintained nursery schools and classes; however, the LA is required to publish any separate entry requirements and over subscription criteria.

Since September 2010 all eligible children are entitled to access the free nursery entitlement of 15 hours on a part-time basis for two years, from the beginning of the term after their 3rd birthday until they reach compulsory school age, defined at Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 together with the Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 (SI 1998: 1607). A child will reach compulsory school age on or after their 5th birthday.

This table indicates when children become eligible for a free part time maintained nursery place:

A child born between	Will become eligible for a free place from
1 st April and 31 st August	The start of the autumn term following their 3 rd birthday
1 st September and 31 st December	The start of the spring term following their 3 rd birthday
1 st January and 31 st March	The start of the summer term following their 3 rd birthday

These dates are set by the Department for Education and do not take account of variations in the date of Easter

Places in maintained nursery schools and classes can become available throughout the year as children leave for whatever reason. Therefore, each maintained nursery school or school with a nursery class will hold their own waiting list in order to fill these occasional spaces as and when they become available. However, places in general must be offered from the waiting list in line with the admissions criteria given below.

In all cases parents must apply to the individual school to have their child's name added to the maintained nursery waiting list, applications to the school held waiting list will only be taken the term after the child's 2nd birthday. Parents will then be advised of a place in the maintained nursery at least half a term before their child is due to be admitted.

All 3 and 4 year old children who reside within the Borough of Dudley will be given priority for admission to local maintained nursery schools or classes at community and voluntary controlled primary schools. Only where places remain available after children resident in

Dudley have been accommodated within the maintained nursery, will children from outside of the Borough be considered in line with the locally defined maintained nursery admission criteria.

Admissions criteria

The following criteria will be used by the individual school to allocate available places within their maintained nursery school or class where they receive more applications than can be accommodated.

First priority shall be given to children who are:

- 1) In the care of the Local Authority (Looked after Child/en) or provided with accommodation by them under section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In addition, priority is also given to children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. (See notes below).
- 2) Known by the LA to have additional educational needs/disability as defined by the Children Act 1989 or the Education Act 1996 and whose needs can be best met at the preferred maintained nursery – (applications made under this criterion would need to be supported by a recommendation from DMBC Specialist Early Years, Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired or Physical Impairment and Medical Inclusion Services). Or is a child that is currently subject to a child protection plan or child in need process or has a CAF in place.
- 3) A child with a long-term physical or mental impairment or who has a life limiting progressive condition, where the Directorate of Children's Services is satisfied that attendance at the preferred maintained nursery will meet the needs of the child's condition rather than any other maintained nursery, after reasonable adjustments have been implemented (Parents must provide supportive information from their child's Paediatrician or specialist Consultant (medical), at the time of application in order to be considered under this criteria). This supportive information should include information about the needs of the child and should detail the difficulties the child would experience if they had to attend another maintained nursery. Parents should also indicate why the preferred maintained nursery is the most appropriate to meet their child's condition rather than any other maintained nursery. (The School will not seek to obtain this evidence on behalf of parents.)

- 4) Children who will have an elder brother/sister, half brother/sister or step brother/sister attending the school/nursery at the requested time of entry. Children must reside at the same home address during the school week. (The definition of brother or sister also relates to adopted or fostered children living at the same home address).
- 5) Any remaining places will be filled according to those children who live closest to the preferred maintained nursery. Distances will be calculated in a straight-line from the home address to the main entrance of the schools nursery class.

In all cases priority will be given to children who will enter primary school in the following academic year (2013/2014), over children who will enter primary school in the next academic year (2014/2015).

Looked After Children

“Looked after children” means children who are looked after by a local authority in accordance with section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 and who is (a) in care of a Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions.

An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoptions and Children Act 2002. A residence order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a special guardianship order as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian (or special guardians).

Specialist Early Years Provision

There is a range of provision for children with special needs: Bromley Specialist Nursery, Phoenix NEF Group, Leapfrog Group, Enhanced Nurseries and outreach support. Places are allocated via the Specialist Early Years Service. There is an open referral system to this service following which educational needs will be assessed to determine the most appropriate placement. Places are allocated each term depending on the number of places available. Places are reviewed termly with the aim of reducing the level of support as the child makes progress.

Application Process

An application from a parent for a nursery place should be made directly to the individual school who will allocate places in accordance with the admissions criteria (page 4) above, where over subscription has occurred.

Unsuccessful application

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the school held maintained nursery admission waiting list in accordance with the criteria given above (page 4); applicants may also request in writing that their unsuccessful application be re-considered by the **Lead Member for Children's Services**, giving detailed reasons for the request. Maintained nurseries will only be able to admit up to their agreed number based on the required staff: child ratios (1:13) and space: child ratios (2.3sq meters per child) as per the EYFS.

Oversubscription

In the event of oversubscription in any category priority will be given to children who will enter primary school in the following academic year (2013/2014), over children who will enter primary school in the next academic year (2014/2015). The distance (straight line) between the home address and the main entrance of the school will be with priority being given to those living the closest. The home address is considered to be the child's (along with their parents') genuine principal place of residence at the time of the allocation of places i.e. where they are normally and regularly living. If a child is resident with friends or relatives (for reasons other than guardianship), the friends or relative's address will not be considered for allocation purposes.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the school week then the home address will be determined as the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week (i.e. 3 out of 5 days available). Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes. At least one item of proof must demonstrate where the child lives.

Multiple birth children

Special conditions will apply in the event that one child from a set of twins or triplets does not gain admission to their preferred maintained nursery through the locally defined maintained nursery admission criteria, in that the school governors will in consultation with the local authority, exceed the admission number for the maintained nursery class concerned to prevent separation of twins / triplets. However, the maintained nursery must adhere to the appropriate staff: child ratios and space: child ratios as per the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Admissions to Reception Class

Attendance at a maintained nursery class attached to a school **will not** guarantee a child admission to the Reception Class of that school, or give any advantage to the child's application for Reception Class. A separate application for admission to Reception Class **will always** have to be made to the LA as places in Reception class will only be allocated by the LA and not the School.

Equality of access

Dudley Council has an inclusive education policy and children will not be discriminated against as laid down by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, The Human Rights Act 1998, The Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act 2001 and The Equalities Act 2010. This includes reasons such as:

- Developmental delays, e.g. a child's self-help skills are delayed affecting activities such as dressing, feeding or toilet training.
- Additional educational needs, including emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- Physical or sensory impairment.

Safeguarding statement

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and its partners recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Whether their interest is in all children and young people 'staying safe' in all aspects of our services, or whether they are working in more targeted services with vulnerable children and young people. All staff have appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident to carry them out. Schools, settings, children, young people and their parents and carers, or any member of the community should feel safe and secure and that they can raise any issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of their children and young people and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously. This will be maintained by promoting an ethos of commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people.

Funding the free entitlement

Maintained nurseries who take children before they become 3 years old or in the term in which they become 3 years old will not receive funding for that child until the term **after** the child's 3rd birthday. If a child is not recorded on the termly headcount census date (Third Thursday at the beginning of new term) the maintained nursery will not receive funding for that child for that term.

Free Full Time places

Free full time maintained nursery places, beyond the free 15hrs entitlement, can only be offered in very exceptional circumstances and on a short time limited basis. If a maintained nursery school or class is considering offering a full-time place they should consult their own governing body outlining the reasons given by the parents and in liaison with other appropriate agencies that support the child.

Children transferring during the term

Should a child transfer from one nursery to another or indeed into a private, voluntary or independent provider during the term, the funding will remain with the original provider until the end of that term; this also applies to children transferring in to nursery classes mid term. Should a child transfer prior to 'head count' day, then the funding will go to the provider in which the child is recorded as taking up a place on 'head count' day.

Deferred admission to school

Local authorities must have regard to the School Admissions Code which came in to force in February 2012 and applies to admissions from September 2013 in all maintained schools in England, and where the local authority must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the year or until the term in which their child reaches compulsory school age. This includes children currently accessing a free part time place in a maintained nursery. However, should a parent defer their child's entry to school then the child would only be entitled to access up to 15 hours of free nursery education.

Free school meals (FSM)

Nursery age children are only eligible for a Free School Meal if they receive their free entitlement in a maintained school, academy or a free school and receive education before and after lunch break. Under current criteria* the child's parents must be in receipt of income support; income-based job seekers allowance; income-related employment and support allowance; support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or the guarantee element of State Pensions Credit; or be entitled to Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit and have an income not exceeding £16,190 (as of April 2012).

* In March 2012 the Welfare Reform Act 2012 received Royal Assent. The Act introduces Universal Credit, which will replace current benefits with a single payment. The plan is to introduce Universal Credit from 2013.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Access to flexible nursery provision

The 15 hours of free entitlement to early education can be made available flexibly; so that parents may access, but only if the nursery has capacity to do so, more than 3 hours per day to a total of 15 hours per week as follows;

- No session shorter than 3 hours (a parent/carer can request 2.5 hrs as a minimum)
- No session longer than 10 hours
- No session offer before 7.00am and after 7.00pm
- The full 15 hours over no fewer than 2 days

Charges for early education/childcare in nursery schools and classes

The Department for Education has legislated within the Education Act to permit a school to charge for early education provision offered beyond the 15 free hours in their maintained nursery if it wishes to do so. It will remain entirely a matter for individual schools as to whether they wish to offer and charge for any additional hours. Schools will not be able to charge for children younger than the age at which they receive the free entitlement (the term after the child's third birthday) or once they have entered reception class. Schools may not make a profit on any hours paid for over and above the free entitlement but they may use any income generated to support staff costs or to provide additional resources.

NB: Parents do not have to take up additional hours and this should not affect the offer of a funded maintained nursery place

Schools charging a fee for any extra hours beyond the free entitlement need to ensure that full consideration has been given to the local market rate and to both the reformed learning and development and safeguarding welfare regulations of the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012) and in particular the potential impact on other providers of early education in their area. As this decision will affect the LA childcare sufficiency assessment and nursery place planning; it would be appropriate and helpful for Schools to consult with the Local Authority Childcare Strategy Manager on 01384 814373 or email donna.fanell@dudley.gov.uk

This document will be reviewed annually.