



Falkirk Council
Education Services

**NURSERY EDUCATION
ADMISSION POLICY**

November 2009



This policy supersedes all previous statements on Early Years Admission

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NURSERY EDUCATION ADMISSION POLICY

PURPOSE

To provide an effective framework for educational establishments to allocate nursery education places.

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

The underpinning principles of this policy will:

- ensure a fair and equal allocation of nursery places
- ensure that all children with additional support needs will be provided with a suitable nursery place
- ensure that all nursery places will be allocated using the same criteria.

COURSE OF ACTION TO BE FOLLOWED

All education establishments must implement this policy in the allocation of nursery education places.

All establishments must follow the timetable to ensure that parents are informed timeously of the allocation of places.

WHO SHOULD IMPLEMENT THE POLICY

The policy will be implemented by headteachers and managers in all education establishments providing nursery education.

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed by Falkirk Council Education Services during session 2012-13.

GENESIS OF THE POLICY

This policy was developed by a working group established by Falkirk Council Education Services after consultation with appropriate stakeholders. It was approved by Falkirk Council Education Committee and Policy and Resources Committee in November 2009.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Admission Policy provides guidelines for all staff who implement the authority's policy in the provision of Early Years Education and Care.
- 1.2 The policy reflects the goals and values of Falkirk Council. The Council is committed to improving the quality of life for local people by working with all communities, sectors and groups to deliver high quality services which are accessible, accountable, responsive and provide value for money.
- 1.3 Early years establishments work within the principles of Curriculum for Excellence
- an inclusive approach that ensures equality, dignity and privacy for all
 - a safe and stimulating environment where children and adults learn together
 - a planned curriculum, based on prior learning and play experiences, that develops the whole child
 - appropriate challenges through which all children will realise their own potential.
- 1.4 We seek to provide learning experiences which will enable all young people to achieve their potential and participate in the development of a fair and caring society.
- 1.5 The policy takes into account changes necessitated by the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act, 1995, the Childcare Strategy, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000, Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004..
- 1.6 The provision of a flexible integrated Early Years service to young children and their families where care and education are inter-dependent is a priority of Falkirk Council.
- 1.7 The terms "pre-school child", "child in pre-school year" and "ante-pre-school child" are used throughout this document and each has a precise meaning:

Pre-School Child means

- (a) a child who is under school age and has not commenced attendance at primary school (other than a nursery class in such a school); and
- (b) a child who has attained school age but has not commenced attendance at such a school.

Child in pre-school year means that it is expected that the child will commence at primary school (other than a nursery class in such a school) at the following August.

Child in ante-pre-school year means that it is expected that the child will commence at primary school (other than nursery class in such a school) not in the following August, but in August one year later.

2.0 ADMISSION POLICY

- 2.1 The policy of Falkirk Council is to secure a nursery place for all children in their ante-pre-school year, their pre-school year and to provide for children with additional support needs. Falkirk Council will secure these places in a variety of settings to include nursery class, day nurseries and nursery schools, commissioned partner nurseries or playgroups.
- 2.2 Places will be allocated with consideration of parental choice. Wherever possible, places will be provided in response to these preferences.
- 2.3 A child in his/her ante-pre-school year will be eligible for entry to nursery education after the child's third birthday on three agreed dates. These dates have been set by the Scottish Government and are:
- for entry in the autumn term (August), children born from 1 March to 31 August;
 - for entry in the spring term (January), children born from 1 September to 31 December;
 - for entry in the summer term (April), children born from 1 January to 28 February.
- 2.4 All nursery provision is non-denominational.

3.0 APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR NURSERY EDUCATION

- 3.1 Headteachers and managers will ensure that information about applying for places and the date for the receipt of completed application forms are fully advertised in the community through posters and newsletters.

Education Services will ensure that information is made available in a variety of ways including Childcare Information Services, council website, and will also ensure that information is made available in local newspapers.

- 3.2 Parents can apply for a place in a nursery for their child at any time after the child's second birthday.

Parents should be encouraged to indicate a second and third choice of nursery. If the first choice nursery is unable to provide a place, a copy of the application should be sent to second choice.

- 3.3 Application forms must be received by the nursery of first choice by the last working day in February. This allows places to be allocated during the last week of April for children who are of the age to start in Autumn term.

Application forms must be received by the nursery of first choice by the last working day in September for places to be allocated for children who will start in the spring term. Places for children who will be of an age to start in January should be allocated during the first week in November.

Application forms must be received by the nursery of first choice by the last working day in December for places to be allocated for children who will start in the summer term. Places for children who will be of an age to start in April should be allocated places during the first week in February.

- 3.4 Parents will be asked to provide proof of birth date. Parents may be asked to provide valid proof that the address given for the child is the address at which they are ordinarily resident.
- 3.5 The choice of nursery provision can have an influence on the availability of the parent's preferred primary school. Parents should be made aware of the Primary Admissions Policy.
- 3.6 All heads of nursery establishments are required to make all staff aware of the council's processes regarding deferred entry to primary school.
- 3.7 Parents are entitled to nationally agreed hours of pre-school education. For most children this will be taken as a regular session on five days of the week. Other patterns of attendance may be agreed to suit the parent and their childcare needs.

For pre-school year children the entitlement will be offered from August to June.

For ante-pre-school year children the entitlement will be offered pro rata depending on the entry date.

In some council pre-five centres there will be an allocation of places which are available to parents to buy. Priority for extended or full-time places will be given to accommodate the childcare needs of parents who are working or studying. The procedures for applying for extended or full day places in nursery school, nursery class or day nursery are as above at 3.3.

The rates charged per place by Falkirk Council nurseries will be decided annually at the time of finalising the Council's budget.

- 3.8 There may be occasions when, in the best interest of the child and family, an extension to the child's normal entitlement is provided at no extra charge.

These are likely to be for families where a child:

- has additional support needs
- is living in a situation where the child's development is impacted upon by the health of the parent or of the child
- is living in a social situation which indicates actual or possibility of danger to life, or health, or of emotional damage which will impact on the child's development and progress
- is in need of extra support because of family crisis
- is looked after children as specified in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

Places will be allocated at the discretion of the headteacher/manager and are normally at no extra cost.

- 3.9 The headteacher or manager may admit a child prior to his eligible entry date who has attained the age of 3 years where some or all of the criteria listed at 3.8 may apply.

4.0 DEFERRAL TO PRIMARY EDUCATION : ENTITLEMENT PROVISION PROCEDURES

4.1 Information regarding deferred entry can be found in Service Circular 47.

5.0 ALLOCATION PROCEDURE

5.1 Nursery education entitlement for all pre-school children is normally 5 morning sessions or 5 afternoon sessions or a pattern agreed between nursery and parent totalling 15 hours per week.

Parents' preferences for allocation of 5 morning places or 5 afternoon places or another agreed pattern should be taken into account wherever possible.

Consideration should be given to requests for fewer than 5 sessions particularly in the case of an ante-pre-school year child. Headteachers/managers may wish to consider applications for the younger groups of children for 3 or 2 day patterns of attendance in order to accommodate developmental stages of individual children.

5.2 When allocating places, headteachers and managers should ensure that both morning and afternoon sessions have pre-school and ante pre-school children within each session.

To facilitate allocation of places, where demand exceeds availability, Area Allocations Groups comprising headteachers and managers will meet to ensure that places are allocated efficiently and fairly.

5.3 Headteachers and managers will inform parents by letter, indicating that a place has been allocated for their child, during the last week of April.

Where a place is not available, a letter stating this will be sent to the parent during the last week of April. This letter will include the following information:

- regret that a place is not available, however a copy of your application form has been passed to your 2nd/3rd choice.

6.0 ADMISSION PROCEDURE

6.1 Headteachers and managers should inform parents of the arrangements for induction of children eligible to start in the Autumn term.

Parents of younger children should be advised as in 3.3.

6.2 Entry for new children to nursery is phased to benefit the children and families. Children with additional support needs as specified in 6.3 will be admitted before other new children.

All children returning should start on the first day of term. Children new to the nursery should be phased in as soon as possible but no later than the end of the third week of term.

6.3 It is expected that all pre-school children with additional support needs will be offered a place. This includes:

- Any child who has been referred by the Psychological Service or Health Service advising of Special Educational Needs. This will be supported by the appropriate documentation outlining the child's needs for support in nursery.
- Children who are referred by Social Work Services, that is to say any child who has been specifically referred by Social Work Services (usually the family Social Worker), though the child may not necessarily be on the Child Protection Register. Children who are looked after either temporarily or long term as specified in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 are also in this category. Also see 3.8.
- Children who are disabled or affected by disability, that is to say any child who is disabled or who is a member of a family with a disabled person where this disability has an effect on the child's normal life. Such claims should be verified by the headteacher/manager in consultation with health professionals if necessary.
- Children who are affected by parental illness, that is to say any child who is affected short term by the emergency admission to hospital of the parent or affected long term by a parent's ill health. Such claims must be verified and catered for within current staffing allocations and may be time-limited.
- Children already attending the nursery, who are granted funded deferred entry places by Falkirk Council, retain a place although, not necessarily in the same facility. NB Children with September-December birthdays who have not been granted a funded deferred place are allocated a place as outlined in 6.5.
- Children who come from a non-English speaking home, that is to say any child whose use of English is minimal or non-existent.

6.4 Priority System for All Other Children

After places have been allocated for special circumstances as outlined in 6.3, in order to allocate places appropriately and because local demand for a specific facility can exceed supply, then the following system of criteria for allocating places should be taken into account.

Priority is given in the following order:

- Children who are in their pre-school year and who live within the designated area of the Area Allocations Group.
- Children who are in their pre-school year and who live within Falkirk Council boundaries but outwith the designated area of the Area Allocations Group.

- Children who are in their ante-pre-school year and who live within the designated area of the Area Allocations Group.
- Children who are in their ante-pre-school year and who live within Falkirk Council boundaries but outwith the designated area of the Area Allocations Group.
- Children with September-December birthdays who have not been granted a funded deferred place but are purchasing a place and who live within the designated area of the Area Allocations Group.
- Children with September-December birthdays who have not been granted a funded deferred place but are purchasing a place and who live within Falkirk Council boundaries but outwith the designated area of the Area Allocations Group.
- Children who are in their pre-school year and who live outwith Falkirk Council boundaries.
- Children who are in their ante-pre-school year and who live outwith Falkirk Council boundaries.

6.5 Names of children will be received throughout the session for various reasons and these names will be placed on the waiting list. In all cases, priority will be given in accordance with the principles laid out in 6.3 and 6.4.

The place of children on the waiting list can alter according to the priorities of individual children. This is because older children or those with special needs may be added to the waiting list throughout the session.

If a child has been offered a place in the nursery which is not the parents' first choice, then the child's name should remain on the waiting list of the first choice establishment if this is what the parents want. The child will be considered for a place according to the priorities as set out in 6.3 and 6.4 as will all children named on the waiting list.

7.0 ATTENDANCE

Although enrolment and attendance at Nursery is voluntary, it is desirable for the child to have a regular pattern of attendance. There may be occasions, however, when attendance becomes irregular or may stop. Staff should take every possible step to discuss the situation with parents, or other agencies and to encourage and offer support to the family.

A record of attendance using Falkirk Council Education Services attendance records should be maintained daily and monitored regularly.

No child should be removed from the nursery roll without prior discussion with the parent and other involved professionals.

8.0 APPEALS PROCEDURES

- 8.1 Parents who wish to appeal against a decision affecting their pre-school child should be advised to write to the Director of Education giving background to their concerns.
- 8.2 The Director of Education will take appropriate action and will ensure that the appeal is fully investigated and considered by appropriate Staff. The parents will receive a written response advising them of the outcome.

9.0 GUIDANCE

Further guidance for headteachers and managers is available in the Falkirk Council Education Services 'Guidance on Early Years Admission Procedures in Nurseries'.

Appendix EY1

Timetable for Admission Procedures of Pre-Fives to Nursery Education

Throughout the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a record of all application forms received by age taking special note of any Additional Support Needs and other special requirements. • Application forms available at all nurseries, special schools and primary schools and also available on the internet.
At start of Spring Term (January)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission of ante-pre-school children born (between 1 September and 31 December) within the first 2 weeks of term.
By end of January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Allocations Group to have agreed on intake for April.
Late January/Early February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity - local newspapers. • Regular newsletters to include information about applications and admissions.
During first week in February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters to be sent out to parents offering a place and inviting acceptance by return.
By the last working day in February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All application forms to be returned to nursery establishment of first choice.
By the last week in April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Allocations Group to have agreed on intake. • Letters to be sent out to parents offering a place and inviting acceptance by return with an attached parental response slip. • Where unable to provide a place - application form to be sent to 2nd/3rd choice.
At start of summer term (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin admission of ante-pre-school children born between 1 January and last day in February within the first 2 weeks of term.
During the summer term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information to be given to parents about induction process for children.
In August at start of session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin admission of all special needs, pre-school year and ante-pre-school children born between 1 March and 31 August ensuring that all children with special needs are in the first phase of entry. All children will be admitted during first 3 weeks of term.
By end of October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Allocations Group to have agreed on intake for January.
During first week in November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters to be sent out to parents offering a place and inviting acceptance by return