

Policy for Admission To Local Authority Nursery Schools

**For admissions from January 2016
onwards**

Introduction

Since September 1997 there has been a countywide admissions policy for community nursery schools and classes. This policy was determined by the County Council and is administered by schools. This has ensured that admissions are based on common principles. Following consultation with Headteachers of Freestanding Nursery Schools, it was agreed that from 2011/12 a separate policy would be produced for these establishments. This is broadly the same as the admissions policy for nursery classes and attached nursery schools except that it removes the requirement for a catchment area. Criteria for allocating places are therefore slightly different.

Primary Schools and Nursery Schools offer Reception children a full time place for the whole of the reception year.

Terminology

Reception - the year children become 5

Nursery (F2) - the year children become 4 and

Nursery (F3) - the year children become 3

Nursery – usually it is not necessary to separately identify F2 and F3 groups

‘Year’ – refers to the academic year (September to August)

Looked After - Children who are looked after by a local authority within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the time of their application and previously looked after children. The term “previously looked after children” refers only to children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order).

Siblings/Brother or Sister - For admission purposes for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools a sibling is defined as a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step brother or step sister who will be resident at the same address at the time of entry.

Eligibility Terms

Note: Universal Funding entitlement starts from the term after the child’s 3rd birthday

Funding for 2 Year Olds is dependent on a range of eligibility factors and a child would normally start no sooner than the term after their 2nd birthday. Please see the following website for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

Autumn Term: September 1st-December 31st

Spring Term: January 1st-March 31st

Summer Term: April 1st-August 31st

POLICY FOR NURSERY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS IN OXFORDSHIRE

(Freestanding Nursery Schools)

1. The County Council has devolved rather than delegated the administration of admissions to Nursery Schools. Therefore, in the event of a complaint the final responsibility and decision for admissions to voluntary controlled and community Nursery Schools rests with the County Council.
2. Nursery Schools must offer places at least up to the published capacity, and staffing provision must be in line with the Statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nursery Schools must not operate with empty places in any term if they have eligible 3 & 4 year old children on the continued interest list.
3. Nursery Schools have a set number of planned places. Any changes to these should be discussed with, and agreed by the Admissions & Transport Services Manager. Requests will be considered in the context of overall sufficiency in the area and extended services, including integrated childcare. Those offering childcare to younger children should develop their overall admissions practices with regard to the criteria in this policy to ensure maximum coherence and continuity for children attending this provision.
4. The minimum entitlement to funded nursery education is 15 hours per week. The universal entitlement starts from the term after the child's third birthday (based on a 3-term year). Nursery Schools may offer the 15 hours in a number of ways.
5. Admissions are three times a year, for as long as places are available. Funding and entitlement are based on a three-term year, and places therefore start in term 1 (September), term 3 (January) or term 5 (April).
6. Children are eligible for a place from the first day of term (3 term year). Nursery Schools may offer a 'staggered start' to help children with the transition. Staggered starts should not be arranged over more than a week or two.
7. Parents will be notified that a place is available for their child no later than a term in advance (6 term year). Places offered must always be for at least the 15 funded hours entitlement and the expectation, unless otherwise stated in the written offer, is that places are taken up in full.
8. Nursery Schools will only agree split attendance in exceptional circumstances, after considering the effect of continuity of education for the child, and the financial implications for the Nursery.

9. Copies of the Nursery School's prospectus will be available on request to parents and to outside agencies. The prospectus should state the opening times of the nursery and set out its educational aims and provision. The prospectus should also set out the County Council's criteria for allocating nursery places when more applications are received than there are places available, as set out in this document (paragraph 9).
10. When more applications are received than there are places available, the following County Council criteria must be applied. These closely follow the admissions criteria for entry to County primary schools. Headteachers should apply the criteria by considering all eligible children from each priority category in turn until all the available places have been allocated. **Other criteria (such as date of birth) cannot be used.**

9.1 Children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan which names the school.

9.2 Looked after children, whom the Corporate Parent agrees should attend the school, and 'previously looked after' children.

9.3 Disabled children who need to be admitted to a school on the grounds of physical accessibility. The definition of disability is that contained within the Equality Act 2010.

9.4 Two year old children who qualify for free early education funding (N.B. only applies when the school is an approved provider for funded 2s)

9.5 Those children who, at the time of entry, have a brother or sister attending the preferred school.

9.6 Children who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Education and Families Geographic Information System.

Headteachers can seek advice and assistance from the Admissions & Transport Services Manager in applying these criteria.

11. If there are more children than places, any child who is not offered a place can only be reconsidered and admitted at a later point if the parents have put the child's name on the school's continued interest list.
12. Once admitted to the Nursery School, the child is entitled to remain until the term after he/she becomes five

*N.B. In the case of a summer born child, parents must either take up the school reception place by the April before the child's fifth birthday; or else need to re-apply through the next admission round for a place to start in the September as a year one child. See the Primary School admissions policy for more detail on deferring entry.

12. Nursery Schools will be fully funded for full time Reception children on their roll.
13. A nursery place should cease no later than the term after the child's fifth birthday, that is, when they are of statutory school age.
14. Any complaint about the operation of this admissions policy, for example in the case of a particular child who has been refused admission, should be directed to the Head of the school in the first instance and then to the Admissions & Transport Service.
15. There is no statutory right of appeal.

Contact details

Admissions & Transport Services Manager

Tel: 01865 815844 admissions.schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Senior Officer (Early Years Organisation)

Tel 01865 815181 e-mail: SchoolOrgPlan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

(for initial advice regarding the application of this policy, and for requests for home to nursery GIS distance measuring)