

**Policy for Admission  
To  
Local Authority  
Nursery Classes and Attached  
Nursery schools**

**For admissions from September 2013  
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. Schools which are their **Own Admission Authority** are not legally obliged, but are strongly encouraged, to adopt and follow this policy. There is a separate policy for Nursery Schools which are not attached to a specific primary school.

When new children join the nursery class or school **it is important that parents are made aware that the process of applying for place at a primary school for the reception year is separate to that of applying for a place in a nursery class or school.** Parents whose children attend the nursery school or class, particularly from outside the designated area of the primary school, should be reminded that their child is **not guaranteed** a place at the school when he/she reaches the normal school starting age (i.e. the September of the academic year in which the child will be five). They must apply through the normal County Council school admissions procedures.

Schools offer children a full time place for the whole of the reception year. Schools will need to consider this carefully in planning the organisation of the foundation stage, both for admissions to their nursery, and for children who defer entry to school.

## **Terminology**

**Reception** - the year children become 5 (sometimes known as 'F1' in primary schools)

**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 so this terminology is used.

**Year** – refers to the academic year (September to August)

**Own Admission Authority** – e.g. Voluntary Aided, Academy, Studio, Free and Foundation Trust Schools

**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: Funding entitlement starts from the term after the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday**

Autumn Term: September 1<sup>st</sup>-December 31<sup>st</sup>

Spring Term: January 1<sup>st</sup>-March 31<sup>st</sup>

Summer Term: April 1<sup>st</sup>-August 31<sup>st</sup>

# POLICY FOR NURSERY ADMISSIONS IN OXFORDSHIRE

## (Nursery Classes and Attached Nursery Schools)

1. The County Council has devolved rather than delegated the administration of admissions to nursery classes and attached nursery schools. Therefore, in the event of a complaint the final responsibility and decision for admissions to voluntary controlled and community schools rests with the County Council.
2. The designated area (catchment) of each nursery class or attached nursery school should be set out clearly on a map and be available for parents to see on request. It should also be made available electronically. The catchment area for the nursery will usually be the same as for that primary school.
3. Schools must offer nursery 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. Schools must not operate the nursery with empty places in any term if they have eligible children on the continued interest list.
4. Nursery classes and attached 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 both the school capacity and also the development of children's centres and extended services. Those offering childcare to younger children should develop their overall admissions policies with regard to the criteria in this policy to ensure maximum coherence and continuity for children attending this provision.
5. The minimum entitlement to funded nursery education is 15 hours per week, from the term after the child's third birthday (based on a 3-term year). Schools may offer the 15 hours in a number of ways.
6. 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).
7. Children are eligible for a place from the first day of term (3 term year) and offers of a place must always give this as an option even if the school offers 'staggered starts' to help children with the transition. Staggered starts should not be arranged over more than a week or two.
8. Parents will be notified that a place is available for their child no later than a term in advance (3 term year). Places offered must always be for at least 15 funded hours. Maintained providers may now choose to allow parents to split their free entitlement with a private or voluntary sector provider **but are not obliged to do so**. Allowing splits will impact the school budget and ideally children should access all 15 hours in one setting.

9. Copies of the 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 10).
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.**

10.1 Children with a statement of special educational need that names the school in part 4 of the statement.

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

10.3 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.

10.4 Children who live in the designated catchment area. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given in the following descending order:

- Those children who, at the time of entry, have a brother or sister attending the primary school to which the nursery is attached.
- Those 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.

10.5 Children living outside the designated area who have a brother or sister attending either the foundation stage or the main school at the time of entry. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given within this group to 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.

10.6 Children who attend day care or a voluntary or private sector pre-school on site at the school. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given within this group to 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.

10.7 Children outside the designated area 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 a child is admitted to the nursery, the child is entitled to remain in a part time place in the nursery class or nursery school until the term after he/she becomes five\* **However this may not be the most appropriate place for the child if all his/her peers have taken up their reception (F1) place in a separate class within the school or another primary school.**
- \*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.
- 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 and Transport Services Manager if for a Community or Controlled school. For Aided schools or Academies the complaint should be directed to the Head of the school and then to the School Governors, as they have the ultimate decision regarding admissions to these schools.
  - 15 There is no statutory right of appeal.

**Contact details**

**Admissions & Transport Services Manager**

**Tel: 01865 815844 [admissions.schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions.schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk)**

**Senior Officer (Early Years Organisation)**

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