

# **Guidance for Headteachers for the Admission of children to Nursery Classes from September 2003**

**From September 2003 the Local Education Authority will assume responsibility for the admission to all community and voluntary controlled nursery classes and schools.**

**All school prospectuses should include a statement of and information about admissions to nursery classes. A suggested format for this is included at Annexe A.**

**The following guidance attempts to answer the most commonly asked questions regarding the arrangements for admissions to nursery classes and schools. For ease of reading this guidance refers only to nursery classes but it is intended that it apply equally to nursery schools. For further information or specific queries please contact:**

<b>General queries</b>	<b>Anne Dobson</b>	<b>01603 222071</b>
<b>Admission Administration</b>	<b>Richard Snowden</b>	<b>01603 223489</b>
<b>Financial Queries</b>	<b>Hilary Bradshaw</b>	<b>01603 222427</b>

- **Why are the arrangements for the admission of children to nursery classes and schools changing?**
  - During the last few years there have been many changes which have affected the provision of early education e.g. the implementation of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, funding for early education sessions for 3 and 4 year olds. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership is responding to these changes and seeking to ensure that by September 2004, every three and four year old who is entitled to an early education place will be able to access one. One requisite of this is to create more local provision to enable families without transport to access a place. Nursery Classes will continue to provide for a wider community, but priority will be given to local children. Central administration will ease school workload and create greater consistency across the county.
- **What sessions and times can children attend nursery classes?**
  - All three and four-year-olds are entitled to five early education sessions each week. Each session lasting a minimum of two and a half-hours. Nursery classes and schools are expected to provide this as a minimum and many provide longer sessions. Sessions may be morning or afternoon or a combination of these
- **Can children attend both a pre-school and a nursery class?**
  - Yes, the five weekly sessions may be split between a playgroup and a nursery class, in which case the school should allocate the additional sessions not attended to another child. However, children may not be funded for more than five sessions weekly, and any sessions over five will be deemed childcare and must be funded by the parent. Where a

child attends a nursery class for five sessions weekly, any sessions at another pre-school will have to be funded by the parent. It is not possible for parents to select to pay for nursery class sessions as these are already funded through Standard Spending Assessment.

▪ **How will I know that a child is not going to attend for five sessions?**

- It would be helpful to inform parents through the school prospectus of the need to let the school know whether the child will attend for five sessions weekly. Where a parent does not wish for their child to attend school for five sessions weekly, they may either:  
inform the headteacher in order that the additional sessions may be allocated to another child (this may mean that 5 sessions will not be available later that academic year if the parent wishes to increase sessions mid-year) or  
delay their child's admission into nursery class and maintain the child's place at pre-school, (this may mean that a place will not be available later in the academic year if required)

▪ **When may a child start in a Nursery Class?**

- Children may be admitted into nursery classes at the beginning of the term following their third birthday if a vacancy exists. This would not preclude children starting mid term if a place were to be available.

▪ **Which children will be given priority when allocating places?**

- If there are more applications for places than there are places available, the Local education Authority will give preference to children living **nearest** the school according to the following criteria in this order of priority:
  1. Children with a statement of Special educational Needs naming that school
  2. Children who live within the designated area and have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission
  3. Children who live within the designated area and have a brother or sister attending the adjoining middle/junior school at the time of their admission
  4. Children who live within the designated area and have no brother or sister attending the school or adjoining middle/junior school at the time of their admission
  5. Children who live outside the designated area and have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission
  6. Children who live outside the designated area and have a brother or sister attending the adjoining middle/junior school at the time of their admission
  7. Children living outside of the designated area and have no brother or sister attending the school or adjoining middle/junior school at the time of their admission

▪ **How do I find out what the designated area is?**

- All schools should be aware of their designated area. If unsure please contact school admissions (Tel:01603 223489)
- **Do all children have to start in the nursery class on the first day of term?**
  - Most nursery classes have developed transition arrangements with local pre-schools and many three-year-old children are attending five weekly sessions of early education. Where children have been attending a pre-school or nursery setting for five sessions of early education weekly, the nursery class should offer five part-time sessions from the start of the school year. It is expected therefore that all children will be attending 5 sessions by the Phoenix Year Group Totals date.
- **Can children be phased into the nursery class?**
  - Where a child has not attended a pre-school setting or a parent feels it is in the best interests of their child to phase part-time entry into nursery class over a longer period an individual programme of transition may be agreed between the parent and the headteacher. (N.B. If it is intended that the child will build up to five sessions during the course of the term, the child will not be entitled to funding for any early education sessions at another pre-school.)
- **If a parent defers their child's entry into mainstream school, can the child continue to attend the nursery class?**
  - Yes, where the parent of a child attending nursery class defers their child's entry into mainstream school until January or April, a place for that child must be maintained within the nursery class.
- **What is the difference between the funding for early education places and nursery class places?**
  - Early Education Places in pre-schools and nurseries in the Private and Voluntary sector are currently funded per child through the Nursery Education Grant. When a child attends a nursery class, the nursery class place is fully funded through Standard Spending Assessment and takes precedence over any previous early education funding through Nursery Education Grant. Schools should ensure that parents understand that any sessions attended at the nursery class will count towards their entitlement to five sessions of early education. This may mean that the parent is now eligible to pay fees for a previously subsidised childcare place.
- **When are children eligible for a funded early education place?**
  - By September 2004 all children in Norfolk will be eligible for a funded early education place from the beginning of the term following their third birthday. Please contact the Childcare Information service for further information or the current situation (01603 622292)
- **Can children attend a nursery class for five sessions and continue attending an early education provider for part of the day also?**

- Children are funded for five sessions of early education per week. If a child attends a nursery class for five sessions s/he will not be funded for any other sessions attended at another provider. Parents will be required to pay for any sessions over five.
- **Can a child share their five early education sessions between a nursery class and another provider during the week?**
  - Yes, children may attend a nursery class for less than five sessions and be funded for sessions attended at another early education provider up to five sessions each week. Funding will be allocated pro-rata to the provider. The nursery class may enable places to be split between two children in these instances, but the child may have to wait for a place to become vacant if the parent wishes to increase the number of sessions attended at the nursery class.
- **At present children begin attending our nursery when they become four years old. Will we be able to continue this policy?**
  - No, if there are spaces in the nursery class, places may be allocated to all children from the term following their third birthday according to the admissions criteria.
- **At present children are phased into our nursery class throughout the first half of the autumn term. Can this phasing in process continue?**
  - Many schools arrange to visit children at home during the first two weeks of term and this provides a good foundation for children starting in nursery classes. Many children will have previously attended early education sessions or pre-school groups before starting at their nursery class and it is anticipated that most children will be ready to attend for five sessions by the termly return date. Where a child has been attending a pre-school group for five sessions prior to entry into a nursery class, and parents request five sessions from the start of term, these should be provided.
- **Who will decide which children will be admitted into our nursery Class? How will this work?**
  - The Local Education Authority by application of the admission arrangements for each school.

# Guidance for Headteachers for the Admission of children to Nursery Classes from September 2003

## ANNEXE A

### Suggested format for inclusion in school prospectus

*(Delete those brackets that do not apply to your school, and insert appropriate wording instead of XXX)*

*Children may be admitted into nursery class at the beginning of the term following their third birthday, if a place is available.*

*Children usually start nursery class at the beginning of the term in September, January or April. However, for children moving into the area, where a place is available, children may start mid-term.*

*(Name of school) offers five part-time sessions each week throughout the school year. The times of these sessions will be as follows:  
(XXXXXXXXXX)*

*Nursery places are limited and some of these places are reserved for children with special educational needs.*

*If there are more applications for places than there are places available, the Local education Authority will give preference to children living **nearest** the school according to the following criteria in this order of priority:*

- 1. Children with a statement of Special educational Needs naming that school*
- 2. Children who live within the designated area and have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission*
- 3. Children who live within the designated area and have a brother or sister attending the adjoining middle/junior school at the time of their admission*
- 4. Children who live within the designated area and have no brother or sister attending the school or adjoining middle/junior school at the time of their admission*
- 5. Children who live outside the designated area and have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission*
- 6. Children who live outside the designated area and have a brother or sister attending the adjoining middle/junior school at the time of their admission*
- 7. Children living outside of the designated area and have no brother or sister attending the school or adjoining middle/junior school at the time of their admission*

*If you would like to apply for a nursery class place at (name of school) please contact (XXXXX) It is important that you make sure that the school has*

*received the application for a place for your child by (28<sup>th</sup> March 2003)(closing date for application). You will usually hear whether your child has a place at the nursery class by (early May 2003)(date of offers)*

***If you are given a place in the nursery class, it does not mean your child will automatically have an admission place in the Reception Year. You will have to apply separately for a place for your child in the Reception Class.***

*Although a child's five early education sessions may be split between a playgroup and a nursery class, to maximise the use of the nursery class place the school will allocate the additional sessions not attended to another child. If your child attends the nursery class for five sessions weekly, any sessions at another pre-school will have to be funded by you the parent. It is not possible for parents to select to pay for nursery class sessions.*

*If you do not wish your child to attend nursery class for five sessions weekly you must tell the headteacher in order that the additional sessions may be allocated to another child.*

***(This may mean that 5 sessions will not be available later that academic year if you wish to increase sessions).***

*Alternatively you may delay your child's admission into nursery class.*

***(This may mean that a place will not be available later in the academic year if required)***

*If you have any queries about an application for a place at (name of school) please contact (XXXX)*

*If you have any queries about the admissions process please (either contact the headteacher at the school or) contact Norfolk County Council Education department on 01603 222146*