

# Nursery Class and Nursery Schools Admissions Criteria

Guidance for schools from September 2017

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## **Guidance for schools within North Tyneside on the admissions policy for nursery school and nursery classes from September 2017**

### **Background**

All schools follow a consistent process to support parents/carers to apply to a school of their choice for a nursery place for their child. The current route for parents to achieve this is via an applications' process which is made directly to the school. The deadline for parents/carers is usually for them to apply before the end of January preceding admission in September. Offers of places are made as soon as possible after this date.

The local authority is required to ensure that there is sufficient nursery provision within the borough for three year olds and four year olds, leading up to their statutory school starting age. In addition and in accordance with the Education Act 1996, children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs/Education Healthcare Plan are required to be admitted to the school named in the statement/EHC plan.

To support this process, schools must have in place a clear and effective admissions' policy noted on the school's website and placed where parents/carers can easily access it. Schools need to be clear what the admissions' criteria. Additionally, in light of the eligibility of working families for 30 hours of provision, the following guidance has been drafted for schools to consider and to ensure that they factor these changes/considerations into their admissions policy. If schools are not intending to offer 30 hours themselves or with another setting, then the current admissions policy may still be fit for purpose with an amendment about signposting parents to other childcare settings.

It should be noted that universal places (15 hours/week) in a nursery school or nursery class should be on a part- time basis (usually 5 morning or 5 afternoon sessions per week) and this will be the maximum amount of funding allocated. One nursery session is based on three hours in length.

Full time places can only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the Head of Commissioning and Investment. Appendix 1 provides more specific information about what schools need to consider and Appendix 2 provides a sample document for schools to consider adding into or annexing to the school's admissions policy. However, schools may wish to develop/draft their own criteria.

### **Next steps**

- School to review its current admissions arrangements to ensure that its current policy and practice provides for the changes, including 15 hours entitlement for all and 30 hours for eligible working families (if applicable).

**Nursery class/schools admissions criteria**  
**Universal entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds - factors for schools to consider**

It is important that schools understand the changes that are being brought in from September 2017 and are also able to make a decision in school about what they wish their admissions' criteria for this specific age group of children to be. The following provides some further information. This is the current local authority guidance for admissions.

<b>Oversubscription Criteria</b>	<p><b>For the universal 15 hours entitlement only (all children are eligible for this)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Looked after children in the care of a local authority or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. See note 1 below<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>2. Pupils who live within the catchment area of the nursery school/class (pupils in this category with a sibling link (an older brother or sister)) who will be attending the school in reception will be given priority.</li> <li>3. Sibling link (an older brother or sister) to include adoptive siblings, half siblings, step siblings and long term fostered children residing at the same address.</li> <li>4. Shortest distance measured as a straight line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the nursery school/class using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) system<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ol>
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In addition, schools may wish to prioritise a proportion of nursery places for children taking up 30 hours of provision which will be allocated according to the 30 hour criteria. (give examples i.e. support wraparound school / PVI operated)

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<sup>1</sup> **note 1**

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the time the application for admission to school is made and whom the local authority has confirmed will still be looked after at the date of admission.

An **adoption order** is an order made under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

A **residence order** is an order outlining the arrangements as to the person with whom the child will live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989.

<sup>2</sup> N.B. The above distance measurement will also be used as a 'tiebreaker' within each criterion, if necessary. In the case of flats if there is more than one home address with the same measurement the flat with the lowest number will be offered the place. In all other cases of the same measurement, random allocation will be used.

**Nursery Class/Schools Admissions Criteria –  
30 hours of provision for 3 and 4 year olds-factors for schools to consider**

It is important that schools understand the changes that are being brought in from September 2017 and are also able to make a decision in school about what they wish their admissions' criteria for this specific age group of children to be. The following provides some further information. Schools may choose to do one of the following options with regards to 30 hours of provision.

<b>Option 1</b>	The school will offer the universal 15 hours entitlement and the additional 15 hours of provision for working parents.
<b>Option 2</b>	The school will offer the universal 15 hours entitlement and will work with the childcare setting XXXXX to support parents to build their 30 hours of provision package.
<b>Option 3</b>	The school will offer the universal 15 hours entitlement and will signpost parents to other local childcare settings in order that they can build their own childcare package.

If the school chooses Option 1 or wants to reserve school nursery places for children taking 30 hours of provision, to support the sustainability of wraparound provision (Option 2) , oversubscription criteria will need to be devised. Below are some suggested criteria.

**Oversubscription criteria**

- The same as the current criteria for the universal offer (15 hours of nursery provision)
- or
- A different ordering of the criteria for the universal offer (15 hours of nursery provision)
- or
- Additional school chosen criteria; such as the age of children

**Waiting lists**

In addition school will need to determine what its policy for a waiting list will be. The attached sample document provides information for consideration, however, the school needs to be clear about which their criteria will be and where the parent/carer can raise concerns should they not be satisfied with being placed on a waiting list/refused a place.

**Meals**

The 30 hours offer does not include funding for school meals. Paid meals can be offered to parents as an option only or parents could provide a packed lunch. As nursery provision is non-statutory, there is no free school meals entitlement for families and meals would be subject to VAT.

## **School nursery class admissions criteria – parent eligibility criteria**

### **Additional 15 hours (total of 30 hours provision)**

It is possible for working parents to be entitled to 15 additional funded hours; however this will be subject to eligibility criteria which applies at the time of the application.

Parents will need to check their eligibility for additional provision.

#### **The criteria are:**

- both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW), and less than £100,000 per year
- working will include employed and self-employed persons.
- Parents do not necessarily need to actually work 16 hours a week, but rather their earnings must reflect at least 16 hours of work at NMW or NLW, which is £107 a week at the current NMW rate
- this includes those parents on zero contract hours who meet the criteria.

#### **Parents will therefore be eligible in the following circumstances:**

- both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity leave
- both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on adoption leave
- both parents are employed but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay.

In addition, parents will be eligible where one parent is in receipt of benefits relating to caring responsibilities or a disability and the other parent is working. This will help these households to maintain one parent in employment or enable them to increase their hours of work whilst supporting the other parent with their own needs.

#### **This will apply in the following circumstances:**

- one parent is employed and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring
- one parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits.