

Appendix 1 - Admissions Guidance

How should the setting decide which children to admit once the extended flexible entitlement is introduced?

The setting should use its normal admissions arrangements to decide which children to admit from September 2010. Maintained nurseries and nursery schools should operate their admissions procedures in line with the guidance issued to headteachers in September 2008, as follows:

Nursery Admissions

A child is eligible for admission to nursery education at the start of the term following his or her third birthday.

The availability of Borough Council nursery schools and schools with nursery classes varies from area to area, and parents seeking a nursery place for their child should contact the School directly or Cheshire West and Chester's Family Information Service on 0800 0852 863 for details of available places in their area. The Family Information Service will also give details of private, voluntary and independent nurseries within Cheshire who are contracted to provide free early years entitlement places to nursery aged children.

The Nursery Unit Capacity, where the school has a nursery, is the number of part-time nursery places that a school will have in September. Please see pages 19-21 for details of the Nursery Unit Capacity of the Cheshire West and Chester schools with nursery classes.

All schools with nursery classes are required to comply with the principles set out in the 2010 Code of Practice for the Extended Flexible Entitlement.

For Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools, admission arrangements to nursery classes are decided by the school's governing body. Parents are recommended to contact the schools directly for further information.

For Community and Voluntary Controlled nursery schools and classes, admissions are decided by the Headteacher of the school. The Headteacher should prioritise admissions in the following order:

- (i) Children in need, as defined by the Children Act 1989*
- (ii) Children with special educational needs, as defined by the Education Act 1996*
- (iii) Children for whom exceptional personal/domestic circumstances (whether presented by their parents or otherwise) justify, in the Headteacher's view, admission to nursery education. Such applications may be referred by either the Headteacher or parents to the Head of Service, Achievement and Wellbeing*
- (iv) Other children living in Cheshire West and Chester*
- (v) Children who live outside Cheshire West and Chester*

In the event of a nursery school or class being oversubscribed, the Headteacher may need to apply further criteria to determine which children within a particular category should be given priority. The Headteacher may draw up a specific admissions policy for their school setting out how such determinations will be made, however the following factors should be taken into account:

- (i) The age of the child*
- (ii) The proximity of the child's home to the school*
- (iii) Whether or not the child has siblings in the school.*

The following factors should not be taken into account in determining nursery admissions:

- (i) Which infant or primary school the child is likely to attend subsequently*
- (ii) The length of time the child has been on the nursery waiting list*
- (iii) The level of development of the child, e.g. toileting, or any additional needs that they may have.*

Please note that whether a child has attended the nursery class at a particular school cannot be a factor in determining whether that child will be admitted to the reception class of that school."

It is recommended that where practicable PVI settings should follow similar admissions principles.

How should sessions be allocated to particular children?

Once your setting has identified which children will have places in the setting from September 2010, you should write to all parents to advise them that their children can receive the extended 15 hour free entitlement. It is recommended that children should provisionally be allocated their free entitlement sessions in this letter however you should indicate that if possible your setting will be seeking to offer parents choice and flexibility in the timing of their child's sessions. Children already attending the setting should be allocated extended sessions that reflect their current 2.5 hour sessions as closely as possible and any newly admitted siblings should be allocated the same sessions.

If parents wish to take up their free entitlement at different times than their allocated sessions, they should be given the opportunity to complete a response indicating their preferred choice of sessions / hours by a specified date. It should however be highlighted that while the setting will try to accommodate these preferences, there is no guarantee that this will be possible.

Once responses have been received from parents, you should consider whether any requests for different sessions and/or flexible hours can be accommodated. When allocating hours for children in each intake, it is recommended that applications should initially be prioritised in the following order:

- a) Children in need (as defined by Children Act 1989);*
- b) Children with special education needs (as defined by Education Act 1996);*
- c) Children with exceptional personal/domestic circumstances;*
- d) Children living in a 25% disadvantaged Super Output Area identified by qualifying postcodes;*
- e) All other children.*

Within each of the priority bands identified above, the following factors may be considered in determining whether a child should be allocated particular hours / sessions:

- 1) Any particular needs of the parent or child – e.g. to enable the parent to work or train for work, or to allow them to collect or drop off siblings at school etc.*
- 2) Any potential impact on the operation or sustainability of the setting.*