

# Policy: Admissions to Mainstream Schools

**Implementation date: March 2016**

## Control schedule

**Approved by:** Education Children and Families Committee

**Approval date :** 1 March 2016

**Senior Responsible Officer:** Moyra Wilson; Senior Education Manager

**Author:** Moyra Wilson

**Scheduled for review:** December 2017

## Version control

Version	Date	Author	Comment
0.1	December 2015	Moyra Wilson	Approved by Education, Children and Families Committee
0.2	February 2015	Moyra Wilson	Incorporating non material wording and presentational changes, including separation of procedures into a separate document, to improve accessibility to users.

## Committee decisions affecting this policy

Date	Committee	Link to report	Link to minute
08.12.15	Education Children and Families		

# Policy: Admissions to Mainstream Schools

## 1 Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy is required to ensure clarity and consistency in the management of admissions to mainstream schools at all stages. Under Section 30 of the Education Act 1980, it is the duty of every parent who has a child of school age, to provide that child with an education which is suitable to their age, aptitude and ability. Every parent must do this either by ensuring their child attends a public school regularly (or by any other means, for example by home education).
- 1.2 There are corresponding duties on the local authority to provide appropriate school education for all school age children.
- 1.3 The Act describes who a person of school age is - that is a child or young person who has reached the age of five years, but has not yet reached the age of sixteen.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers the admission of pupils to all stages in mainstream schools and, in particular, to those pupils in P1 and S1 in August of any school year.

## 3 Definitions

- 3.1 Reserved places: Places reserved for children and young people moving into the school catchment through the year.
- 3.2 Proofs of residence: A copy of council tax and a utility bill.
- 3.3 R.C. school: Roman Catholic school.
- 3.4 School Catchment: An area from which children and young people are eligible to attend a local school. This area is based on the child's home address.
- 3.5 Composite Class: A class in which there are pupils at more than one stage of the primary school.
- 3.6 Team teaching: Team Teaching is where two teachers teach a class that has more than the maximum number of pupils for that particular stage, for example if there are more than 25 children in a P1 class there will be two teachers.
- 3.7 Mainstream schools: Schools which meet the needs of the majority of pupils and are non specialist provisions.

- 3.8 Placing Requests: A request for a placement in a school.
- 3.9 Non Catchment Placing Request: A request for a placement in a school which is not the catchment school for the address of the individual.
- 3.9 Exceptional: Unusual or complex.

## **4 Policy content**

### **Legislation**

- 4.1 The Council delegates to Communities and Families the function of managing the provision of school places using principles and practices that are in line with the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#), as amended and the [Gaelic Language \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#).

### **Allocation of Placements**

- 4.2 Key principles applied by the Council to the provision of school places are set out below:
  - 4.2.1 Children and young people are admitted to schools in the areas where they stay. These are known as the catchment areas for the school. There are separate catchment boundaries for RC and non-denominational schools at both primary and secondary level and pupils have the option of attending either of their catchment schools, subject to availability of places.
  - 4.2.2 In areas of the City, for example the new Waterfront developments, which currently fall outside existing catchment areas, the Council will identify an 'appropriate school' for pupils living in those areas. This is normally based on distance and geography.
  - 4.2.3 Pupils living in the City of Edinburgh Council area have priority for places over pupils living in other local authority areas.
  - 4.2.4 The Council aims to provide places for P1 and S1 pupils at their catchment school if they are living in the catchment area by the end of February of the year that they will start in P1 and S1. It is important to note that a child must be resident in a house before a place is allocated. Evidence of a house purchase is not sufficient for the allocation of a place.
  - 4.2.5 If there are places available after catchment demand is met placing requests for non-catchment pupils at P1, S1 and all other stages will be allocated.
  - 4.2.6 At other stages in primary and secondary schools places will be allocated to catchment pupils if there are available spaces.
  - 4.2.7 Attendance at a school nursery is not considered when allocating places in schools.

## **Class Sizes and Organisation**

- 4.2.8 The council meets the legislation on class sizes; the Education (Lower Primary Class Sizes) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 (as amended). This means a class size maximum of 25 for P1 and 30 for P2 and P3 is implemented. The Scottish Government has agreed that it is interpreted as a ratio of 25 pupils to one teacher for P1 and as a ratio of 30 pupils to one teacher for P2 and P3.
- 4.2.9 A national agreement has agreed a class size maximum of 33 from P4-7. In secondary schools practical class sizes are 20.
- 4.2.10 The most efficient arrangement of class size and provision of teaching staff in P1 and S1 for each new session is sought for each school after taking account of demand for catchment places in non denominational schools and of demand from pupils who are baptised Roman Catholic in RC schools.
- 4.2.11 When considering an 'additional teacher' for the present year, the Council takes into account the global number of teachers required across the estate and not the previous numbers of teachers required at individual schools;
- 4.2.12 First year intake limits, classroom size restrictions and limits on the overall pupil numbers will be applied where necessary to assist in managing school provision.
- 4.2.13 Additional classes are not normally created specifically to cater for non-catchment placing requests in the primary sector. This includes situations where granting requests in one year would result in the need for additional classes at other year stages.

## **Oversubscribed Roman Catholic Schools**

- 4.3 Where catchment applications for denominational schools exceed the available school capacity, or would cause accommodation issues at a future stage, priority will be given to baptised Roman Catholic pupils. Additional staff will not normally be employed to support a P1 intake greater than that required to meet the RC baptised catchment demand unless by doing so resolves potential accommodation issues at another school.
- 4.4 Where a Roman Catholic school is oversubscribed the following actions will be taken:
  - 4.4.1 Priority will be given to catchment Baptised Roman Catholics (BRC) in allocating places;
  - 4.4.2 In the event that there are insufficient places for all catchment BRC then BRC may be prioritised into other RC schools;
  - 4.4.3 Non BRC, or BRC who choose not to be prioritised into another RC school, who do not obtain a place at their catchment RC school will not

be prioritised out to other schools. In these cases, children would be given places at their non-denominational catchment school.

### **Oversubscribed Non Denominational Schools**

- 4.5 At times when there are oversubscribed non denominational schools the decision may be made to prioritise placing requests out of the school.

### **Reserved Places**

- 4.6 One place per class will be reserved for pupils moving into a school catchment in each class in primary school and two places reserved for each team teaching class where possible. In secondary schools one reserved place for incoming catchment pupils will be kept at each year stage where possible. In some areas of the city new housing developments mean that there is the potential for higher than normal movement into particular catchment areas. Where it is possible to do so, in these areas more than one place may be reserved in each class in order to try and ensure that pupils moving into the area can obtain a place at their catchment school.
- 4.7 Where possible a reserved place shall be maintained until a child moves into the catchment. Where this happens the reserved place is given to the child, and is no longer available. If placing requests appeals are granted either by the Appeal Committee or a Sheriff this may result in fewer reserved places being available due to the increased class size.

### **Team Teaching**

- 4.8 Team teaching arrangements in primary schools may be implemented where catchment numbers are expected to exceed capacity based on P1 class sizes of 25. This normally involves raising the P1 intake to multiples of 30 to meet the class size 30 at P2 and P3. Team teaching classes may be organised at other stages in primary schools.

### **Composite Classes**

- 4.9 Composite classes, including at P1/2, are part of the normal organisation in many primary schools, and are generally formed according to the following principles:
- 4.9.1 Age is the main criterion for selecting pupils for composite classes.
- 4.9.2 Normally composite classes will be formed with a minimum of five pupils from one year stage.
- 4.9.3 Unless there are very low numbers of pupils at particular stages, composite classes will not normally be created over three year groups.  
[e.g. P1, P1/2, P2, P2/3, P3 illustrates composite classes over 3 year stages.]
- 4.9.4 Reorganising and recompositing a class structure will sometimes take place to make additional places available for pupils in an individual

school but only where this would not give rise to a potential detriment to the existing pupils at the school.

4.9.5 Exceptional circumstances will be looked at on a case by case basis.

4.9.6 The final composition of the class will be at the discretion of the headteacher at the school.

### **Parental Preference**

4.10 Many schools across the city are experiencing increased demand from their own catchment population for P1 and S1 places. This has had the effect of reducing the number of places available for non-catchment pupils. This means that the number of placing requests being refused has risen. It is anticipated that number of requests being refused will be maintained at a high level as demand from catchment populations continues to grow.

4.11 We encourage parents to learn more about their catchment school by arranging a visit and talking to staff and other parents. Open days are held during the registration period and parents can also contact schools directly to arrange a visit.

## **5 Implementation**

5.1 The implementation of this policy will be 2015 – 2017.

## **6 Roles and responsibilities**

6.1 The Senior Education Manager Inclusion, Parent and Pupil Support has overall responsibility for this policy.

6.2 The Grants Awards and Placements Team are responsible for the day to day administration of the procedure and advising parents of policy.

6.3 Headteachers are responsible for collecting information on catchment children and advising parents of the policy.

## **7 Related documents**

- [Education \[Scotland\] Act 1980](#)
- [The Education \[Appeal Committee Procedures\] \[Scotland\] Amendment Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \[Lower Primary Class Sizes\] \[Scotland\] Regulations 1999](#)
- [The Education \(Lower Primary Class Sizes\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2010](#)
- [Team Teaching CEC](#)

- [Composite Classes CEC](#)
- Procedure: Admissions to Mainstream Schools

## **8 Equalities impact**

8.1 There are no adverse equalities issues arising from this policy.

## **9 Sustainability impact**

9.1 There are no adverse economic, social or environmental impacts resulting from this area of activity.

## **10 Risk assessment**

10.1 The risk of not having a consistent, clear and published policy means that parents/carers are not kept informed about the placements process.

## **11 Review**

11.1 This policy will be reviewed on a two year cycle with the next review being December 2017.