

Procedure - Admissions in Mainstream Schools

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Department Responsible

Department:	Children, Education and Justice Services		
Division:	Education		
Section:	Schools		
Owner:	Arran Finlay, Senior Education Officer		
DPIA :	Yes ☐ No ☒		
	Link to DPIA:		
IIA:	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐		
	Link/Location:		
If appropriate, has Health and safety had oversight of this procedure	Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒		
	Name of contact:	Date:	

Version History

VERSION	APPROVED BY	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHOR
1.0	Education Committee	December 2017		Maria Plant
2.0	Education Committee	February 2021	Change to catchment reserved places in Secondary Schools.	Arran Finlay
3.0	Education Committee	25 March 2025	Clarification of need for Baptismal Certificate Extension of places being held for Armed Forces Families	Arran Finlay

1. PURPOSE

This procedure aims to provide clear guidance for all staff in the management of admissions to mainstream schools. It accompanies the Admissions to Mainstream Schools Policy.

2. SCOPE

This procedure 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

TERM	DEFINITION
Reserved places:	Places reserved for children and young people moving into the school catchment through the academic session.
R.C. school:	Roman Catholic school.
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.
Composite Class:	A class in which there are pupils at more than one stage of the primary school
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 the Council place more than 25 children in a P1 class there will be two teachers
Mainstream Schools:	Schools which meet the needs of the majority of pupils and are non specialist provisions
Placing Request:	A request for a placement in a school
Non Catchment Placing Request:	A request for a placement in a school which is not the catchment school for the address of the individual
Department:	Children, Education, and Justice Services Department
Exceptional:	A pupil whose circumstances are deemed exceptional by the Committee on Pupil/Student Support
Intake Limit:	The number of pupils to be admitted into a year group as decided by the Department
In time Catchment Application/Non-Catchment Placing Request	Applications received by 24 th December each year.

4. PROCEDURE

Catchment Registration and Placing Requests for P1 and S1

- 4.1 Catchment registration and the handling of placing requests across the city is a major but routine organisational procedure undertaken by the Council on an annual basis.

The P1 process commences in November with parents/carers being asked to register their children with one of their catchment schools by 24th December. This is an online form -

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/school-places/start-primary-school/1>

Any parents/carers wishing to make a non catchment placing requests should do so by 24th December. <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/school-places/start-primary-school/1>

Head Teachers are involved throughout the process and are asked to update their Parent Council in early February, where necessary, to share with them plans for P1 intakes and **draft** class organisations for August. Schools are made aware that class organisations can change between February and the start of the session.

The S1 process commences in November each year, with all P7 pupils in the Council's schools being allocated a place in S1 in one of their catchment secondary schools.

If a child attends an RC primary school, the Council will allocate the child's catchment Roman Catholic (RC) high school, however if the child is not baptised Roman Catholic this place is subject to the availability of spaces. If spaces are not available in that particular school, the child will be allocated a place at their non-denominational catchment school.

Any parents/carers wishing to make a non catchment placing requests should do so by 24th December - <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/school-places/start-secondary-school/1>

The Committee on Pupil Student Support meets in February each year to agree exceptionality and to prioritise pupils on the waiting list – this does not guarantee them a place at the school.

- 4.2 It is important to note that numbers of registered pupils do change, which may lead to changes in class organisations.

The initial figures are analysed during January to establish class organisations and identify any accommodation issues and identify where catchment pupil numbers might exceed school capacity. Proposed intakes are based on these figures. The process continues to be managed by the Council through to the start of session in August when the waiting list is returned to the school to manage.

- 4.3 The process is characterised by complex patterns of pupil flow across the city and a constantly evolving picture as late applications are made and pupils are withdrawn. Nearly all schools experience a drop between the number of catchment P1 pupils registered by 24th December and the number taking up a place in August. In many schools this drop can be significant and is explained by parents successfully making a placing request to another school, deciding to defer entry, choosing the private sector or moving house within the intervening period.

- 4.4 These changes mean many schools which initially appear to have more catchment pupils than can be accommodated, may have no difficulty in ultimately accommodating their catchment intake in August. It may also mean that some placing requests refused in March will be successful by August. The council keeps P1 and S1 school numbers under regular review throughout the process which can lead to some non catchment requests being granted by the start of the new school year, however, many requests cannot be met, due to the number of catchment children who have been allocated places.

- 4.5 If a placing request is refused a parent has the right to appeal in the first instance to an independent committee and if that is unsuccessful to the Sheriff Court.

- 4.6 Children, Education and Justice Services publish a timeline outlining the process involved in P1 and S1 placements on an annual basis.

https://orb.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/17936/placing_in_schools_timetable

Catchment Registration and Placing Requests for Other Stages

- 4.7 For placing requests outwith the P1 and S1 intake process, parents should apply directly to the school in the first instance.

These requests are managed by Headteachers.

If a place available, this should be offered **within 5 school working days** and arrangements should be made for the child to start at the school as soon as possible. If there are no available places the Headteacher will issue the formal refusal letter which includes information on how to appeal, **within 5 school working days**.

<https://orb.edinburgh.gov.uk/schools-lifelong-learning/school-admissions?documentId=2175&categoryId=201162>

- 4.8 School staff involved in the placement process must ensure that there is not a conflict of interest where a child joining a waiting list is known to them, in such cases the Business Manager or Head Teacher must be informed (or the transactions team if the conflict lies with the HT). If a child is known to a member of staff e.g. their own child or a child of a family member, friend or colleague, this must be declared to ensure the waiting list remains fair and impartial for all. Details can be found here : <https://orb.edinburgh.gov.uk/conduct-behaviour/conflicts-interest?documentId=2337&categoryId=201111>
- 4.9 At all stages in primary and secondary schools if a placing request is refused a parent has the right to appeal in the first instance to an independent committee and if that is unsuccessful to the Sheriff Court.

Waiting lists

- 4.10 Those children who are refused a place will be placed on a waiting list. The priority order for the waiting list in P1 and S1 is determined by the Committee on Pupil Student Support comprising representatives of Education Children and Families Committee who meet in February each year. The usual priority order is:

- Exceptional Children
- Siblings;
- Edinburgh children;
- Out of Edinburgh Children.

4.11 Within each category (other than exceptional) distance [to the school from the home] is then used to determine the place on the waiting list; the shorter the distance the higher the place on the waiting list.

4.12 P1 and S1 catchment and non catchment waiting lists are handed over to the schools in August each year. Any children who are added subsequently to the waiting list, should be added by order of date of application.

Headteachers should ensure that waiting lists are well managed with parents being contacted termly to establish if they still wish their child to remain on that waiting list.

4.13 For families already living within a catchment area, a place may be reserved for 6 school weeks, to allow time for the pupil to transfer between schools. Places cannot be held for non-catchment pupils.

However, available catchment places can be held **for up to 18 school weeks/or at the discretion of the council**, for children of serving members of the Armed Forces, who have proof that they are being posted to Edinburgh.

Key considerations for Parents

4.14 There are key points for parents to consider when applying for school places:

- Places are allocated to children based on their residence and all parents must provide proof of residence for a catchment place when they register their child for school – this applies to all year groups.
- All pupils have two catchment schools, non-denominational and Roman Catholic. Primary children also have the right to apply for a place at Bun-sgoil Taobh Na Pairce. Parents must choose which of these is their preferred school;

- Children attending a nursery class in a primary school are only entitled to a place in the primary school if they live in the catchment area of the primary school.
- In a non denominational school, catchment places for P1 and S1 will only be allocated automatically to children living in the school catchment by the 24th December in the year before they begin primary or secondary school. After that date, they will be treated as late catchment requests.
- If a denominational Roman Catholic school is oversubscribed with catchment children, priority for P1 and S1 will be given to catchment baptised Roman Catholics, where proof is provided.
- If a placing request is successful for one child, it does not guarantee that requests for younger siblings will be successful. This could mean that siblings would attend different schools.
- For families who are in the UK under a VISA scheme, please ensure that you have the relevant documentation, in order to apply for a City of Edinburgh Council school - [How to apply for a visa to come to the UK: Choose a visa - GOV.UK](#)
- Parents have the right to appeal if a placing request is turned down.
<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/school-places/placing-schools-appeal>

Fraud Prevention

- 4.15 The Council is obliged to make random spot checks of addresses as part of fraud prevention for P1 and S1, and parents may be asked to provide proof of residence at any time before the school session begins. The Corporate Fraud team will investigate all claims of false addresses being used to gain a school place and, if established, the place will be withdrawn.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Education Officers have overall responsibility for the maintenance of this procedure.

Head Teachers are responsible for ensuring their staff follow this procedure.

The procedure has been developed to implement the Admissions to Mainstream Schools Policy.

6. KNOWN RISKS

- 6.1 If procedure is not followed in a timely manner, there is a risk of pupils being out of education for a longer period of time than is necessary.

RETENTION PERIOD

RECORD	LOCATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RETENTION PERIOD
Education Records	Education Establishments	Head Teachers	Documents will be retained as per the Council's Records Retention Schedule.
Placing Requests	Transactions Team, Waverley Court BC C.3	Transactions Team Manager/Customer Manager	Documents will be retained as per the Council's Records Retention Schedule.
Placing Appeal Paperwork	Committee Services	Corporate Governance Manager	Documents will be retained as per the Council's Records Retention Schedule.