



# Nursery Admission Policy

## Statement of intent

This policy was written with reference to Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on the Free Education and Childcare (September 2014) and applies to all community and voluntary controlled school maintained nurseries in Tameside. Governing bodies from these schools must follow this policy so as to ensure consistency for parents in applying for nursery places. The policy has been written in conjunction with headteachers from the Nursery Admissions Consultation Group.

Livingstone Nursery aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition into primary school. The Governing Body is the Admission Authority and is responsible for setting the school/setting's Admission Policy. The policy is written to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their education at Livingstone Primary and Nursery School. This policy follows non-statutory guidance, and the current School Admissions Code does not apply for nurseries and early years settings. This policy will be reviewed annually.

## Purpose

- To provide clear guidance for Governing Bodies on Nursery Admissions in all maintained nurseries.
- To ensure a consistent approach to Nursery Admissions throughout the authority

## Entitlement to Nursery Education Places

All children are entitled to a free part-time nursery education place. That entitlement is from the term **after** their third birthday. However, provision is made by a range of providers and the local authority aims to provide places in the year before they enter Reception. Some places may be available for three year olds in the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday if there are places available. Application information and forms are available from the school office or the school website. The admission form is an appendix to the Nursery prospectus.

From September 2012 each child is entitled to 15 hours free early years education per week from the term following their third birthday. This entitlement can be delivered flexibly by the school (where it is able to do so and in response to parental demand). If the free entitlement is taken flexibly, it must be no less than two and a half hours per session and no more than 10 hours per day. The full 15 hours entitlement should be over no fewer than 2 days.

From September 2017, parents who work a minimum of 16 hours per week may be entitled to an extra 15 hours of free early years education per week. This is on production of an eligibility code. Some schools maybe offering this, otherwise the parent may decide to take the additional 15 hours elsewhere.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***The Local Authority will:***

- distribute Tameside's policy for nursery admissions to all appropriate Governing Bodies
- provide schools with a standard nursery admissions application form
- disseminate information about nursery education providers via the Family Information Service
- provide guidance and support for Governing Bodies offering Nursery provision
- publish timescales for Nursery Admissions annually
- measure distances by request
- provide access to an online portal which allows schools to verify eligibility codes for the extra 15 hours.

### **The Governing Body / school should:**

- keep a record of all parents expressing an interest in a nursery place for their child
- send out application forms to parents of children, who have expressed an interest according to LA timescales.
- make it clear on all correspondence to parents that a place in nursery does not guarantee a place in Reception
- inform parents in writing of an offer or a refusal according to LA timescales
- inform parents of whether they are able to offer the additional 15 hours of free early years education and how to apply for an eligibility code.
- provide copies of the following leaflets/factsheets to parents who have been refused a place:
  - Free entitlement funding - Directory
  - Admissions to Nursery Classes 2017/8
  - How to claim your free early education place

### **Parents / Carers are expected to:**

- register their interest in a particular school by contacting that school
- complete and return an application form according to given timescales
- apply for an eligibility code for the additional 15 hours and complete the form providing the necessary information for school to check their eligibility.
- confirm acceptance of a place

## **Allocation of Nursery Places**

Places will be allocated to Tameside residents who will be 4 years old between 1 September 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 (and therefore born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014) in the first instance.

Places should be offered to children who will become 4 years old between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

Where a school receives less applications from Tameside residents who will be 4 years old between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2018 than there are places available, all must be offered places. Where a school receives more applications from Tameside residents who will be 4 years old between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2018 than there are places available the following over subscription criteria must be applied in order:

1. Children in Public Care (Looked After Children)
2. Children with Exceptional Medical Needs or Home Circumstances and / or Special Educational Needs

Written evidence must be provided from a doctor or other agency that he/she has exceptional needs which means that admission to a particular school nursery is essential. A panel of governors will make a decision as to whether to admit a child under this criteria using the evidence provided. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

*It is anticipated that the total number of children allocated places according to these criteria would form only a small proportion of the total number of children attending the Nursery.*

**3. Siblings:** this will apply where the applicant is 4 years old by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 and has brothers or sisters attending the school at the time of application, who will still be attending at the time of admission. Within the sibling tiebreaker, preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.\*

The sibling criterion includes; natural sisters/brothers; half sisters/brothers; step sisters/brothers; adopted sisters/brothers; sisters/brothers of fostered children, and in each case living at the same address. This allows for the admittance of children whose siblings will still be attending the preferred school.

#### **4. Age**

Priority will be given to children in the following order:

- 1 Children who will be 4 years old by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017
- 2 Children who will be 4 years old by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018
- 3 Children who will be 4 years old by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018

Where over subscription occurs in applying criteria 4.1, 4.2 or 4.3, a tiebreaker will be applied to all applications remaining within the criteria. Priority will be given to applicants who live closest to the school.

5 Distance will be measured as a straight line from the child's home address to the main gate to the school property using the LA's school admissions data mapping software, which uses a Geographical Information System based on Ordnance Survey.

The address from which distance will be measured will be the permanent residential address, at the time of application, of the parent with whom the child lives. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the home address is the address from which the child travels to school for the majority of school days per week. If the number of days is exactly equal the home address will be that of the parent who receives the Child Benefit.

In the event of distances being the same for 2 or more applications where this distance would be the last place/s to be allocated, the place will be allocated to the pupil that is nearer using walking distance as measured using the local authority's school admissions data mapping software.

**Allocating places to Tameside resident children applying after the main allocation procedure has been completed**

Where a school still has nursery places available after the main allocation process has been completed, the Governing Body should offer places to subsequent applicants on a 'first come first served basis', as long as that child is of the correct age i.e. will become 4 years old between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 (and therefore born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014) and lives in Tameside. Should a Tameside resident parent request a place after the allocation process and the school has places available, a place should normally be offered.

### **Waiting Lists**

Where a school has allocated all its nursery places, it may operate a waiting list. If a place becomes available, it should be allocated to a child on the waiting list according to the over subscription criteria.

#### **If a school still has nursery places available after the summer half term 2017, the following will apply:**

Offering places to children who do not live in Tameside. Where a school still has nursery places available after the summer half term preceding the September that applicants wish to be admitted, these can be allocated to children who do not live in Tameside and who will become 4 years old between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018, (and therefore born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014) according to the over subscription criteria.

#### **If a school still has nursery places available after the start of term in September 2017, the following may apply**

Offering places to children who will become 3 years old between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 who live in Tameside. The governing body may decide that it will offer empty places to Tameside resident pupils who will become 3 years old between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 if there are still places available after the start of term in September 2017. Pupils will not be able to start in the nursery until the beginning of the term **after** they become 3 i.e. January 2018 at the earliest. Pupils accepted into the nursery in this category will not be required to apply for a place in September 2018 as they will automatically continue in the nursery. Places must be offered using similar criteria as for the main allocation:

- 1 Children in Public Care (Looked After Children)
- 2 Children with Exceptional Medical Needs or Home Circumstances and / or Special Educational Needs
- 3 Age: Children who will be 3 years old by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 to start in January 2018

#### **Tiebreaker - Siblings and Distance**

Where over subscription occurs in applying criteria 1, 2 or 3, a tiebreaker will be applied to all applications remaining within the criteria. Priority will be given to applicants who have a sibling in the school at the time of admission followed by applicants who live closest to the school.

#### **If a school still has nursery places available after the start of term in January 2018, the following may apply**

Offering places to children who will become 3 years old between 1st January 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 who live in Tameside. The governing body may decide that it will offer empty places to Tameside resident pupils who will become 3 years old between 1st January 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 if there are still places available after the start of term in January 2018. Pupils will not be able to start in the nursery until the beginning of the term **after** they become 3 i.e. after Easter 2018 at the earliest. Pupils accepted into the nursery in this category will not be required to apply for a place in September 2018 as they will automatically continue in the nursery. Places must be offered using similar criteria as for the main allocation:

- 1 Children in Public Care (Looked After Children)
- 2 Children with Exceptional Medical Needs or Home Circumstances and / or Special Educational Needs
- 3 **Age:** Children who will be 3 years old by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 to start after Easter 2018

### **Tiebreaker - Siblings and Distance**

Where over subscription occurs in applying criteria 1, 2 or 3, a tiebreaker will be applied to all applications remaining within the criteria. Priority will be given to applicants who have a sibling in the school at the time of admission followed by applicants who live closest to the school.

### **Withdrawing offers of nursery places**

Once an offer has been made in writing, there are limited circumstances in which a nursery may withdraw the offer including:

- Offers made on the basis of fraudulent applications.
- Offers made on the basis of intentionally misleading applications.
- Where a parent has not responded to an offer within a reasonable time.
- Where a child is in receipt of more than their entitlement of nursery education.
- Where a family registers their child at two maintained settings.

### **Refusal of admission**

A child may be refused admission only if:

- The nursery has reached the admissions limit.
- The child is not of the appropriate age.

The strict statutory criteria governing adult:pupil ratios mean that it is not possible to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to award a place at a nursery provision. There is no right to appeal the Admission Team's decision not to award a place where the provision in question is not named in the EHC and the Student Assessment team has determined that other provision is suitable.

Parents may appeal to the SEND Tribunal against the provision named by the Authority in the EHC.

### **Sickness absence**

Where a child experiences long-term sickness (of less than a half term's duration) the nursery may keep open the place and retain nursery education grant for the child.

If the illness continues but the parent and nursery intend the child to return subsequently then Early Years Education Funding may be claimed in good faith.

### **30 hours provision**

Livingstone Nursery will be offering the additional 15 hours for eligible working parents for the children who are in their full Nursery year in which they turn 4. Due to staffing ratios, we are only able to offer the statutory 15 hours for children who start Nursery in January or April and do 4 or 5 terms with us. Instead, if parents are eligible, they would be able to claim their additional 15 hours from an alternative provider should they so wish. These children will be eligible for the extra 15 hours once they start their full Nursery year.

In order to prove eligibility, parents must go online to acquire an eligibility code. This code and NI number must be brought to the school office for us to check through an online portal. This must be done before start of the term in which the parents start to claim the extra 15 hours. Eligibility then must be confirmed on a termly basis by the parent. Should eligibility change, there will be a grace period in which the parent will still be able to claim the extra 15 hours of childcare.