

## **Applying for a nursery place**

### **When will my child become entitled to free nursery education?**

Children born between **1 January 2020** and **31 March 2020** can receive their free 15 hours a week from **April 2023**.

Children born between **1 April 2020** and **31 August 2020** can receive their free 15 hours a week from **September 2023**.

Children born between **1 September 2020** and **31 December 2020** can receive their free 15 hours a week from **January 2024**.

Children aged 3 to 4 may be entitled to an additional 15 hours of free early education for children where parents are eligible. Please go to [www.cumbria.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/schooladmissions) for further information regarding this extended entitlement.

Some 2-year-old children are also entitled to free places. Contact the Children and Families Information Service for more information (contact details on the further advice and information page 4).

### **Can I choose the nursery that my child will go to?**

Parents have the right to express a preference for the nursery that they would like their child to attend, but that is not the same as choosing. The allocation of places in nursery classes or at nursery schools which are undersubscribed is relatively straightforward and you are likely to get a place at your preferred nursery. However, if there are more applications than places available, applications for the will need to be prioritised in line with the nursery admissions policy for the school/nursery. For more information about admissions policies please see 'What are the different types of maintained schools and nurseries and how are they different?' below.

### **What are the different types of maintained schools and nurseries and how are they different?**

There are different types of local authority schools and nursery schools and how admissions to their nursery classes are dealt with varies.

In **foundation** and **voluntary aided** schools (as well as **free schools** and **academies**), the governing body or academy trust are responsible for admissions.

In **community** and **voluntary controlled** schools with a nursery and for nursery schools, the local authority is responsible for admissions.

A list of nursery schools and infant and primary schools that have nursery classes can be found on the School Admissions website. This will also tell you if the schools/nurseries are community or voluntary controlled or voluntary aided, foundation, free school or academy.

## Why is the type of school or nursery important?

An admissions policy is a set of criteria which are used to assess who has priority for places in the event that a school or nursery is oversubscribed, from those with the highest priority for a place to those who have lower priority.

For community and voluntary controlled infant and primary schools with nursery classes, and nursery schools, the local authority nursery admissions policy provides the criteria by which applications for oversubscribed classes will be prioritised. A copy of the policy can be found on page 5.

For voluntary aided/foundation/free schools and academies with nursery classes, you should check with the school about their nursery admissions policy.

## When do I need to apply for a nursery place?

### **Community and voluntary controlled schools with nursery classes:**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| April 2023 entry     | Closing date for applications – 13 January 2023   |
| September 2023 entry | Closing date for applications – 24 March 2023     |
| January 2024 entry   | Closing date for applications – 22 September 2023 |

### **Voluntary aided/foundation/free schools and academies:**

Check with the individual school for the closing date.

## How do I find out which is my catchment nursery?

If you are not sure which is your catchment nursery, please contact the School Admissions and Appeals Team (contact details on the further advice and information page 4).

## Do I have to apply for my catchment nursery?

No. You can express a preference for any nursery, but if you apply for a nursery that is not your catchment nursery and it is oversubscribed, you will have lower priority when places are being allocated.

## How do I apply for a nursery place?

You should complete **Form SA13** and take it to the nursery that you would like your child to attend. You also need to take **proof of your child's date of birth** (such as birth certificate, passport, or health card) and **your address**.

You also need to check the nursery admissions policy for the nursery you would like your child to attend to see if any **supporting evidence** should be sent with your application. For example, it may be that the policy gives priority for families of a certain faith and you might be asked to provide proof of this.

**Please note that in allocating places in oversubscribed nursery schools and nursery classes – late applications will only be considered in very limited exceptional circumstances which would need to be explained when submitting your application form.**  
**Which address will be used for allocating a place?**

The address of the parent with whom the child normally lives will be the address that is used in the allocation process. It is not possible to use an alternative address such as the child's grandparent or a childminder.

If you are moving house, you must inform the nursery as soon as possible.

**What do I do if I need more flexibility than the standard five mornings or five afternoons?**

If a nursery is oversubscribed, priority for places will be given according to the oversubscription criteria in the school/nursery's admissions policy. If a nursery is not oversubscribed, you should discuss with them whether or not they would be able to accommodate your preferences.

For information about other childcare providers, please contact the Children and Families Information Service (contact details on the further advice and information page 4).

**When will I hear about my application?**

Parents and carers are usually informed around six weeks after the closing date, although it can be earlier than this.

**Can I appeal if my application is not successful?**

**No.** There is no right of appeal against allocation decisions for nursery schools and nursery classes.

**When will my child go to school?**

In Cumbria, most children start school in the September following their fourth birthday. They can continue in nursery education until the start of the term after their fifth birthday (if a place is available), however most parents want their children to start school in the September so that they can make friends and get used to school life.

**My child will be young in their year and I am worried that they will be too young to start school when the time comes? Is there anything I can do?**

Parents/carers of children born between 1 April and 31 August can delay their child's admission until the following academic year, when they would enter Reception rather than their normal age group [i.e., year 1].

You will still have to make an application in the next admissions round before the closing date, and it will be considered alongside all other Reception applications for that year. A place in Reception would not be guaranteed at the preferred school.

We would advise you to seek the views of the Head teacher of your preferred school[s] and any other professionals who may be involved with your child to discuss any concerns and reasons for delaying your child's entry to Reception. Professionals in schools will be able to give advice to help parents/carers with their decision. If your preferred school is a voluntary aided/foundation/free school or academy, the school would be responsible for deciding whether or not your child could defer entry to their Reception group.

If you do decide to delay your child's admission, and s/he is already attending a nursery, you are advised to check whether a place would be available for them to continue into the next academic year.

For further advice or information, please contact the Schools Admissions and Appeals Team.

## **When it comes to the time for making an application for a place in a reception class at a school, do I need to make an application if my child already attends the nursery?**

**Yes.** You will need to make an application to the School Admissions and Appeals team before 15 January in the year your child is due to start school.

**NB: Attendance in a nursery class does not guarantee a place in the reception group at the school. It is not a factor in allocating places at community and voluntary controlled schools.** This may be a problem if you live outside the catchment area of a school where your child attends a nursery class.

## **Where can I get further advice and information?**

- Children and Families Information Service
  - <http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrenservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/default.asp>
  - [childrens.information@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:childrens.information@cumbria.gov.uk)
  - 03457 125 737
- Early Years Team
  - [www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage](http://www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage)
- The School Admissions and Appeals Team
  - [www.cumbria.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/schooladmissions)
  - [school.admissions@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:school.admissions@cumbria.gov.uk)
  - 01228 221582
- The nursery you would like your child to attend
- Department for Education - [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)
- Ofsted inspection reports - [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)
- National childcare information - [www.childcarelink.gov.uk](http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk)

## **CUMBRIA CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROPOSED NURSERY ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023/2024 Community and Voluntary Controlled Nursery Schools and Infant/Primary Schools providing Nursery Education**

Where there are more applications than sessions available in a community or voluntary controlled nursery class, applications will be prioritised using the criteria below. They will be applied in conjunction with explanatory notes 1 - 5 which form part of the policy.

1. Children looked after, i.e. in public care, giving priority, if necessary, to the youngest child(ren); children who were previously looked after; and children who were previously looked after outside of England - see note 1.
2. In relation to infant/primary schools providing nursery education, children living in the catchment area who have brothers or sisters in the school (or associated junior school) at the time of admission. See notes 2 and 3.
3. In relation to infant/primary schools providing nursery education, children living outside the catchment area who, at the time of their admission, have brothers or sisters in the school (or associated junior school) who a) have an Education, Health and Care Plan that names that school or b) were directed to that school by the LA in the absence of a place being available in the catchment area school due to oversubscription and the school was identified by the LA as the next nearest with a place available – see note 4.
4. In relation to infant/primary schools providing nursery education, other children living in the catchment area giving priority to those living closest to the school, measured in a straight line between the centre of the pupil's home address and a common point on the school site as determined by the LA. - see note 5.
5. In relation to infant/primary schools providing nursery education children living outside the catchment area who have brothers or sisters in the school (or associated junior school) at the time of their admission - see notes 2 and 3.
6. Children living outside the catchment area, giving priority to those who live closest to the school, measured in a straight line - see note 5.

Applications will be prioritised on the above basis. An exception will be made under the Authority's policy for the education of children with special educational needs where a child holds an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school.

## Explanatory Notes

[These notes are part of the policy]

### Note 1

A child looked after is a child in public care, who is looked after by a local authority within the meaning of Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. Children previously looked after are children who were looked after, but have ceased to be so because they were adopted (under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002) or became subject to a Child Arrangements Order or Special Guardianship Order (Children Act 1989).

Advice issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in July 2021 states that a child previously looked after outside of England is one that was looked after, outside England, by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

For a previously looked after child to be considered under criteria 1, the parent or carer must provide appropriate written evidence to support the application. Without this evidence it **will not** be possible to consider the application under category 1 of the LA Nursery Admissions Policy.

### Note 2

In criteria 2, 3, and 5, priority will be given to those children with the youngest siblings. Brothers and sisters are those living at the same address and includes step and foster children. Priority will only be given where it is known at the time of allocating places that a sibling will be attending the school [excluding a nursery class] at the time of admission.

### Note 3

Where reference is made to 'associated' junior schools this is to describe those situations where infant and junior schools share the same catchment area.

### Note 4

If parents or carers believe they qualify for consideration under criterion 3, they should indicate this on their preference form in the place provided for this purpose.

### Note 5

Distance measurements will be undertaken using the Local Authority's computerised Geographical Information System (GIS). This measures a straight-line measure between the centre of the pupil's home address and a common point on the school/nursery site as determined by the LA.