



ADMISSION TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED NURSERY SCHOOLS AND UNITS

The LA has adopted principles in relation to the admission of children into Community, Voluntary Aided and Controlled Nursery Schools and units.

Places are allocated according to the criteria listed below:

Children in Care

Children who are 'in care' or a child who was previously 'in care', but immediately after being 'in care', became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order*

A 'child in care' is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school:

- a) In the care of a local authority
- b) Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989)

An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Children In Need

The Children Act 1989 defines a child 'in need' as:

He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the Local Authority under Part 3 of the Act.

His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services.
He/she is disabled.

Children Transferring from One Nursery Setting to Another

Once a child has begun attending a particular nursery school/unit, it is usually in the child's best interest to remain at that nursery school/unit until they transfer to the next phase of their education. However, where parents move house, for example, it may be impractical to remain at the same setting. There may also be other exceptional reasons as to why a transfer from one Maintained Nursery School or Unit to another would be appropriate, but this would be rare and subject to the agreement of the school following guidance from the Local Authority. Where possible nursery schools will aim to provide for children who have already started Early Years Provision.

Allocation of 2 year old places

2 year old children can access a nursery place (either as 15 hours or 30hours) at Seaham Harbour Nursery School through a valid code if:

1. The family receive some additional form of support
2. Parents are working and meet the eligibility criteria 30hour working parent place

Parents must complete an eligibility check and the details must be shared with Seaham Harbour Nursery School. A validation check will then be carried out on the eligibility code and details provided by the parent on the application form.

Children who are eligible are admitted the term after their second birthday with a Play and Learn code or as soon as they turn 2 with a Working Parent code.

If all available two year old spaces are filled, families may choose to be placed on a waiting list and will be notified if a place becomes available.

The offer of a place will be prioritised according to date of birth. Where applicants have the same date of birth, priority will be given to the earliest date of application.

Seaham Harbour Nursery School will ensure there are places available for both funded 15 hour children and also 30 hour places for children of working parents, who meet the criteria. The number of places will vary according to school capacity and demand

Allocation of 3 year old places

Where a child has accessed the free entitlement for 2 year olds in Seaham Harbour Nursery School, for a minimum of 15 hours per week, they shall receive priority for admission to Seaham Harbour Nursery School in order to preserve continuity, providing that they also live within County Durham's administrative area.

If a child has not accessed the free entitlement for 2-year-olds, they shall be placed on a waiting list that will offer places based on date of birth. Where applicants have the same date of birth, priority will be given to the earliest date of application

3 year old children can access a nursery place (either as 15 hours or 30hours) at Seaham Harbour Nursery School through a valid code if:

1. The family receive some additional form of support
2. Parents are working and meet the eligibility criteria (30hour working parent place)

Parents must complete an eligibility check and the details must be shared with Seaham Harbour Nursery School. A validation check will then be carried out on the eligibility code and details provided by the parent on the application form.

All children can access a nursery place from the term after their third birthday. This will consist of 15hours of universal entitlement.

Children with working parents can access an additional 15hours, to give them an extended 30 hour nursery place.

Children who are not eligible for the extended 30 hours offer should be offered the 15 hours universal entitlement for a minimum of three terms before they are due to enter a full time school place in the Reception year.

The offer of a place will be prioritised according to date of birth. Where applicants have the same date of birth, priority will be given to the earliest date of application.

If all available three year old spaces are filled, families may choose to be placed on a waiting list and will be notified if a place becomes available.

Seaham Harbour Nursery School will ensure there are places available for both funded 15 hour children and also 30 hour places for children of working parents, who meet the criteria. The number of places will vary according to school capacity and demand

30 hours oversubscription

If there are more places available than applications, all children will be offered a place. Subsequent applicants will be offered places until the provision is full. Once all places have been allocated, further applications will be included on a waiting list and places will be allocated in accordance with the 30 hours oversubscription criteria.

If there are more applications than places the 30 hours oversubscription criteria will be applied as follows: Places will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis on receipt of a verified code.

Children Living in Other Authorities

Although there are no catchment areas for places, preference will be given to children whose parents live within County Durham's administrative area. Only when all children living within the boundary of County Durham have been allocated a place, may a child living in a neighbouring area be offered a place.

Deferral of a place to Reception

Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) and nursery units educate children from 2 – 4 years old. If a child's needs require a specialist setting for when they move onto school, the MNS will work with the family and professionals involved in the child's care to gather evidence to request an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP). An EHCP does not guarantee a place in a specialist school.

If there are no available spaces in a specialist school, parents/carers will be offered a place in a mainstream Reception class. Parents/carers must either accept or decline the offer for the place.

This MNS does not accept requests to defer a child's Reception place due to the unavailability of a specialist school placement and/or to spend an additional year in Nursery provision for a mainstream school to prepare their place.

A child with an EHCP will have a SEND caseworker. A child with a high level of need will have Early Years support transition funding in place on transfer to Primary School. Parents/carers should work with the relevant local authority personnel and /or Primary School SENCo to explore suitable options. Durham SENDIASS can support with an appeal process.

Ratified by Governing Body October 2025