



Placing in Schools

This booklet provides information that may be helpful when you are considering which school you want your child to attend and how to make a placing request.

General Information

Midlothian is divided into catchment areas for primary and secondary schools. Catchment schools depend on home address and not attendance at a nursery school/early learning and childcare setting or primary school. Every address has a catchment denominational school and a catchment non-denominational school for both primary and secondary education. All denominational schools in Midlothian are Roman Catholic.

Whilst every effort is made to provide enough places for all children in the catchment area, we cannot guarantee every child a place at their catchment school.

Information about individual schools and school handbooks are available directly from the school.

Denominational Education

In Midlothian all denominational schools are Roman Catholic.

A child does not need to be Catholic to enrol in one of our Roman Catholic primary schools or secondary school, but a place is not guaranteed for those not baptised Roman Catholic. Where a Roman Catholic school is oversubscribed priority is given to catchment Roman Catholic children who are baptised, and where parents have provided the baptismal certificate. We do not create additional classes for other children if all baptised Roman Catholic children can be placed.

Children with Additional Support Needs

In line with legislation we have a policy of including children with additional support needs in mainstream schools where possible. Some children may be educated in specialist schools/classes.

Further information about additional support needs is available from the Additional Support for Learning Officer, whose contact details are given at the end of this booklet.

Home to School Transport

Your child may receive free transport if they attend their catchment school and their home address is more than two miles from the school based on the shortest recommended walking route. Your child may also receive free transport if the Council has placed them in a non-catchment school due to a catchment school being full. From August 2017 pupils resident in Loanhead who make a successful placing request for S1 at Beeslack High School will also be eligible for free transport.

Your child will **not** receive free transport if they attend a non-catchment school as a result of a placing request being granted.

Children living under shared care

Where parents are separated the address of the parent with whom the child resides for the majority of their time per week and is in receipt of child benefit for the child, is used to determine the catchment area. If the shared care arrangement is a 50/50 split, you will be asked to provide proof such as a legal agreement. If the Council is satisfied that the care is equally shared, you will be given the opportunity to choose which of the catchment schools at which to register.

Composite Classes

Composite classes are part of the normal organisation in many primary schools and can have a maximum of 25 pupils. Age is the main criterion for selecting pupils for composite classes. Normally composite classes will have a minimum of four pupils from each year stage.

Team Teaching

Team teaching is where two teachers teach a class that has more than the maximum number of pupils per teacher for that particular stage. The maximum size of a P1 class size is 25, a P2 or P3 class is 30 and a P4, P5, P6 and P7 class is 33.

Primary 1 Registration

Registration into the new Primary 1 is administered by the Pupil Placement section.

Which primary school should my child attend?

Every residential address has a catchment non-denominational primary school and a catchment denominational primary school. Most parents choose to send their child to one of their catchment schools. You can check your catchment school on Midlothian Council's website at midlothian.gov.uk/schoolplace or by contacting Pupil Placement, contact details are given at the end of this booklet.

You have the right to request a place for your child in another school; this is called a placing request.

What is the earliest date my child can start school?

Any child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 March in any year and the last day of the following February can start school on the first day of the autumn term in August. There is no intake of new P1 children at any other time during the school year.

Children may attend part days in the early stages but such arrangements should not extend beyond the second week of the new school session. This helps the children settle into their new life at school. Head Teachers will be happy to tell you exactly what happens at a particular school.

What is the latest date my child can start school?

Any child who is five before the start of the new school session should start in August.

A child who is five after the start of the new school session does not need to start school until the following year and can ask to defer. Please contact your early learning and childcare setting for information and advice about deferring your child. You must register your child at one of your catchment schools even if you apply for a deferral.

Must I send my child to school?

You are responsible for your child's education. The Council has a duty to provide education and the vast majority of parents/carers choose to send their children to school. Where you exercise your right to educate your child at home, the Council is required to ensure the arrangements are adequate. If you intend to educate your child at home, information is available on the Council's website at midlothian.gov.uk/homeschool.

How to register a pupil for entry into P1

Although pupils have two catchment schools, a non-denominational school and a denominational school, you should only register your child at one catchment school (your 'preferred' catchment school). You must register at your 'preferred' catchment school even if you are intending to make a placing request for a non-catchment school or applying to defer starting school.

A letter is sent to the parent/carer of all known pre-school children at the beginning of November advising their catchment school options. Registration for catchment children will take place in November.

You will be asked to complete a Pupil Registration Form and provide proof of your address, such as a Council Tax Bill, Child Benefit letter, recent Utility Bill e.g. gas, electric or landline telephone bill or driving licence. If your child does not attend a Midlothian Council early learning and childcare setting or receive funded ELC from a partnership provider, a copy of the birth certificate or passport will be required.

Due to COVID19 and the restrictions on visits to schools a new online registration process has been introduced. This includes registration and placing request forms and the facility to upload evidence: midlothian.gov.uk/schoolplace.

Please note that registration does not guarantee a place at your preferred catchment school.

Allocation of Catchment Primary School Places

The Council will normally give the highest priority to children living in the catchment area of a school. In the event of a school having more catchment children than places available, priority will be given in the following order:

- children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances;
- children who are baptised Roman Catholic (Roman Catholic Schools);
- children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time;
- then all remaining catchment children.

If there are more children than places available in any category, proximity of home to school and/or ease of travel will normally be used. A sibling attending the nursery class at the same time will not be taken into account.

If a place at your preferred catchment school is not available, you will be offered a place at the nearest school with places available. If your preferred catchment school is a denominational school, this will be the nearest denominational school with places available. Your child will be placed on a waiting list for the catchment school in order of priority and, should a place become available for your child, you will be contacted.

Once the place is offered it will not be withdrawn unless the place was obtained using false information or the family change address before the start of the school year.

Change of Address

Children who move, or are moving before the start of the school year, will have a place reserved in their non-denominational or denominational catchment school based on their address at the start of the school year. This is subject to places being available and where proof of change of address has been received by **15 March**. For families who are renting, acceptable proof of change of address is a signed tenancy agreement. For families who are purchasing, a letter from a solicitor confirming missives have been concluded is not sufficient to enrol a child. The Council will ask for further proof by way of a council tax statement, utility bill e.g. gas, electric, landline telephone bill, HMRC child benefit letter or driving licence to accompany the concluded missives letter following the move. Discretion can be used if the parent/carer is due to move a week prior to the new term commencing.

To register a pupil into P1 after the start of the school year, and at all other stages of primary education

Parents/carers should contact their choice of school in the first instance (preferably in writing) to request a place at the relevant stage. You should include your child's full name, date of birth, address and a contact telephone number. You can make a placing request online at midlothian.gov.uk/placing.

Primary 7 to Secondary 1 Transition

All parents/carers of P7 pupils resident in Midlothian, who attend a primary school in Midlothian, will receive written confirmation from Pupil Placement in November that their child has been registered for a place at their catchment secondary school, based on their home address. If your child attends a non-denominational primary school they will be registered at their catchment non-denominational secondary school, if they attend a denominational primary school they will be registered at St David's Roman Catholic High School. If you wish to request your other catchment secondary school you must complete a placing request form. The placing request form is available online at midlothian.gov.uk/placing, alternatively a paper version of the form is available on Midlothian Council's website or can be obtained from Pupil Placement at pupil.placement@midlothian.gov.uk.

If you wish to send your child to another school instead of your catchment school, you should make a placing request.

Allocation of Catchment Secondary School Places

The Council will normally give the highest priority to children living in the catchment area of a school. In the event of a school having more catchment children than places available, priority will be given in the following order:

- children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances;
- children who are baptised Roman Catholic (Roman Catholic schools);
- children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time;
- children who attend an associated primary school;
- then all remaining catchment children.

If there are more children than places available in any category, proximity of home to school and/or ease of travel will normally be used.

If a place at a catchment school is not available, parents/carers will be offered a place at the nearest Midlothian secondary school to their home address with places available. They will be given the option to make a placing request to another school, if they so wish. The pupil will be

placed on a waiting list for the catchment school in order of priority and, should a place become available, parents/carers will be contacted by Pupil Placement. Where there are more pupils in one category, the priority will be based on distance.

Once the place is offered it will not be withdrawn unless the place was obtained using false information or the family change address before the start of the school year. Children who are offered a place at their preferred catchment school will be enrolled automatically.

To register a pupil into S1 after the start of the school year, and at all other stages of secondary education

Parents/carers should contact their choice of school in the first instance (preferably in writing) to request a place at the relevant stage. You should include your child's full name, date of birth, address and a contact telephone number. You should also include the courses your child is currently studying. An online placing request is available at midlothian.gov.uk/placing.

Making a Placing Request for a Non-Catchment Primary or Secondary School

All parents/carers have the right to request a place for their child in a non-catchment school; this is called a placing request.

If your child is starting primary or secondary school in August and you want them to attend a non-catchment school, you may make a request by completing a placing request. The placing request form is available online at midlothian.gov.uk/placing, alternatively a paper version of the form is available on Midlothian Council's website or can be obtained from Pupil Placement at pupil.placement@midlothian.gov.uk.

If your child is at any other stage of their education you should contact the Head Teacher of the school of your choice.

If your child has additional support needs the right to make a non-catchment placing request includes the right to request a special school or special class. Parents/carers who wish to make this kind of placing request should discuss their choice of school with the child's lead professional before making their request.

It is the Council's statutory duty to grant placing requests where there are places available, except in certain circumstances.

What will happen when you make a placing request to Midlothian Council?

The following information applies if you want to make a placing request for your child in a Midlothian Council school. You should contact the relevant council if you want to make a placing request for a school outside Midlothian.

Please note that you can only make a placing request for one school at a time. If your initial request is refused you can make a second request for an alternative school.

The Midlothian closing date for placing requests to start P1 or S1 in August is the preceding December. The Council will still consider a request if it arrives after this date but before 15 March, the national cut-off date.

You will receive an acknowledgement within fourteen days of receipt by Pupil Placement. The Council will consider all placing request received by 15 March and decisions will be communicated to parents/carers by the end of April.

Placing requests received after 15 March will be decided within two months of receipt and parents/carers notified. However, exceptional circumstances can only be considered when a placing request is received by 15 March, it will not be considered with a late placing request. In most cases, where we receive a late placing request, your child will be placed on a waiting list below the requests received on time. It is, therefore, important that placing requests are submitted by 15 March providing all relevant information and supporting documents. Assistance in completing a placing request is available through the [pupil placement team](#).

Placing Request forms for P2 to P7 and S2 to S6 are available to download on Midlothian Council's website or from the schools. These placing requests will be acknowledged within fourteen days of receipt and a decision made within two months.

Restriction or limitation of places

The Council will give the highest priority to children living in the catchment area of a school. Places remaining after catchment children are enrolled will be available for non-catchment children.

Placing Requests

Non-catchment placing requests will be granted if there are places available after all catchment children are accommodated and reserved places retained within the agreed intake limit.

Additional classes will not be created for non-catchment children.

Priority will be given to applicants in the following order (catchment and non-catchment):

- children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances;
- children who are resident in the school's catchment area and are baptised Roman Catholic (Roman Catholic schools only);
- children who are resident in Midlothian and are baptised Roman Catholic (Roman Catholic schools only);
- children who are resident in the school's catchment area who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account;
- children who are resident in the school's catchment area;
- children who are resident in Midlothian who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account;
- children who are resident in Midlothian;
- children who are resident outside Midlothian and are baptised Roman Catholic (Roman Catholic schools only);
- children who are resident outside Midlothian who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account;
- then all other applicants.

Other relevant factors that may be taken into account

Attendance at an associated primary school (for requests in S1) may be taken into account however it does **not** guarantee that a request will receive priority or agreement.

Children have additional support needs if they require something which is extra or different to what is normally provided for other children of the same age. Staff in all schools in Midlothian are skilled in meeting the needs of pupils and all can fully support pupils with a range of additional support needs or those who are experiencing bullying. All schools have transition processes in place to support children starting Primary 1 or Secondary 1, including an enhanced transition programmes for children who need a bit more support. When deciding whether to give a child priority on the grounds of exceptional circumstances, the pupil placement team will consider whether the requested school can better meet their needs than their catchment school.

If there is more than one placing request in any of the categories listed above, the shortest, recommended walking distance from each child's home to the nearest school gate is measured. Those living closer to the school are placed above those living further away

Once a pupil has completed a proper admission to the school they will not be asked to transfer to another school against the wishes of their parents/carers in order to admit a pupil who has moved into the catchment area.

A proper admission is one made under the policy of the Council based on correct information from the parents/carers.

Please note that, if a placing request is successful, the child's place at their catchment school may be allocated to another child. If a parent/carer then changes their mind and wishes their child to attend their preferred catchment school, a place may not be available
Refusing a placing request

If the Council refuses your placing request you will be sent a letter which gives the reasons. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 sets out the reasons why a placing request may be refused.

The main reasons are:

- an extra teacher would have to be employed;
- the Council would have to spend a significant amount to extend or alter the accommodation at, or facilities provided in connection with, the school;
- an extra teacher would have to be employed, or additional class formed, at a future stage of the child's education;
- the number of children at the school would exceed the school's capacity.
- to reserve places at the school for children moving into the catchment area;
- the order and discipline in the school would be seriously affected i.e. through overcrowding;
- the educational wellbeing of pupils at the school would be seriously affected i.e. through overcrowding or exceeding the relevant maximum class size;
- the child's education would be affected because the education at the school requested is unsuitable.

What happens if the Council refuses your request?

If your placing request is refused, you have the right of appeal. Appeals must be lodged, in writing, no later than 28 days after the refusal letter being sent. Details of who to send your appeal to will be in the refusal letter we send you.

In Midlothian, appeals are heard by the Education Appeals Committee. The Education Appeals Committee is independent of the Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate. This is a formal legal process and further information will be sent to you on receipt of your appeal.

Primary school placing request

If a place at your requested primary school is not available, a place will be reserved at your preferred catchment primary school that you have registered at. However if no place is available at your preferred catchment school, then a place will be allocated at the nearest school with places available (if your preferred school was a denominational school then a place will be allocated at your denominational catchment school if possible). A waiting list will be formed for the requested school and/or catchment school and, should a place become available for your child, you will be contacted.

Secondary school placing request

If a place at your requested secondary school is not available, a place will be reserved at your catchment secondary school. However if no place is available at your catchment secondary school, then a place will be allocated at the nearest school with places available. A waiting list will be formed for the requested school and/or catchment school and, should a place become available for your child, you will be contacted.

Placing Requests for Children with Additional Support Needs

The parents/carers of children recorded as having additional support needs also have the right to make a placing request to a special school or a special class. If the Council refuses the request, parents/carers are given a statement of the reasons for the decision.

Under the terms of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009, if parents/carers have been refused a placing request for a child with a coordinated support plan (CSP), to a special school or a special class, a mediation service is available to families of children with additional support needs and they have the right to appeal the decision. Appeals are dealt with by the Additional Support Needs Tribunal for Scotland. Details of who to send your appeal to will be in the refusal letter we send you.

Contact Details

Pupil Placement
Midlothian Council
Children, Young People and Partnerships
Fairfield House
8 Lothian Road
Dalkeith
EH22 3ZG

Email: pupil.placement@midlothian.gov.uk

Additional Support for Learning Officer
Midlothian Council
Children, Young People and Partnerships
Fairfield House
8 Lothian Road
Dalkeith
EH22 3ZG

Email: asn.team@midlothian.gov.uk

Useful Websites

Midlothian Council Website: www.midlothian.gov.uk
Parent Zone Scotland: education.gov.scot/parentzone/
Education Scotland: www.education.gov.scot