Midlothian Council

Children, Young People and Partnerships – Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools Policy

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Policy Statement

This document is the policy for admission to mainstream primary and secondary schools for Midlothian Council.
The policy will ensure consistency across all schools and provide information for parents/carers considering enrolling their child(ren) in a Midlothian Council school and/or submitting an out of catchment placing request.

Definitions

Additional Support Needs (ASN): When a child or young person experiences barriers to their learning, for whatever reason, they may have additional support needs and can receive appropriate support to overcome these barriers and be successful in their learning.

Composite Class: A class including pupils from more than one stage of primary school.

Denominational Education: Roman Catholic schools in Midlothian.

Education Resource Group (ERG): Multi-agency group responsible for determining placements at specialist ASN provisions and Saltersgate School.

Intake Numbers: The number of pupils permitted for admission into a year group determined by the Education Service.

Mainstream Schools: Classes within schools which are not specialist provisions or special schools.

Placing Request: A request for a placement in a school which is not the catchment school for the address of the child/young person.

Reserved Places: Places reserved for children and young people moving into the school catchment area through the academic year, as determined by the Education Service.

School Catchment: An area from which children and young people are eligible to attend a local school based on their residential address.

Specialist ASN Provisions and Saltersgate School: ASN provisions provide additional support for children and young people who experience complex barriers to learning and development.
Midlothian Council also has a 5-18 special school called Saltersgate School which supports children and young people with severe and complex and/or medical needs.

Team Teaching: A team of two teachers who teach a class that exceeds the maximum number of pupils per teacher for that particular cohort.

1.0 SCHOOL PLACEMENTS AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

Catchment areas have been designated for all Midlothian primary and secondary schools. Every residential address has a catchment denominational school and a catchment non-denominational school for both primary and secondary education.

The parents/carers of all children known to Midlothian Council due to be enrolled for the first time in a primary school or transfer from a primary to a secondary school, shall be given information about their catchment school options and notified of their right to request an alternative school.

For all other stages, the onus is on the parent/carer to make enquiries regarding alternative school placement for their child(ren). A parent/carer may submit an out of catchment placing request for their child(ren) in a school at any stage.

The admission of pupils to both primary and secondary schools is defined in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

Key points to note are:

- Parents/Carers have the right to request admission to the school of their choice;
- Such a request must be in writing and is known as an out of catchment placing request;
- The Council has a duty to accede to this request, except in certain circumstances specified in the Act;
- The council has a duty to inform parents/carers of their right to make a placing request and to provide certain prescribed information to assist parents/carers in making their choice of school.

With the fastest growing population of any local authority in Scotland, Midlothian Council continues to prepare to meet future demand in education. As a result, current school catchment areas may change during this period of growth.
For information on open or completed school catchment area reviews, please visit the Council's website at www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultations.

1.1 Denominational Education

In Midlothian all denominational schools are Roman Catholic.

A child does not need to be Catholic to enroll in one of our Roman Catholic primary schools or secondary school, but those who are baptised in Roman Catholic faith will have priority over non-Roman Catholic children. See section 2.3 for details of how we prioritise catchment places where a Roman Catholic school is oversubscribed. We do not create additional classes for other children if all baptised Roman Catholic children can be placed.

Acceptable proof of Roman Catholic faith for registration at a denominational school are; the child's Roman Catholic baptism certificate or Roman Catholic first communion certificate. If your child was baptised in a different Christian faith but now attends a Roman

Catholic church, then we require a letter from the parish priest and the baptism certificate.

1.2 Gaelic Medium Education

Gaelic Medium Education for Midlothian residents is currently provided by the City of Edinburgh Council. Midlothian Council will provide home-to-school transport for pupils enrolled in Gaelic Medium Education. Currently, parents/carers wishing to have their child(ren) educated in the Gaelic Medium should make a placing request for the Gaelic Medium primary school, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce or the Gaelic Medium Unit at James Gillespie High School in Edinburgh. To apply for a place in either school, the parent/carer should complete a placing request form available on the City of Edinburgh Council website. Further information at: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/school-places/gaelic-schools-1

Parents/Carers can request that the Council carry out an assessment for the need for Gaelic Medium primary education to be provided within the Council area.
Further information and an assessment request form are at available www.gov.scot/publications/gaelic-medium-primary-education-assessment-request-form/

1.3 Children with Additional Support Needs (ASN)

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 provision classes or school. Further information about additional support needs is available to Midlothian families from the ASN, Inclusion and Wellbeing Team. Their contact details are given at the end of this document.

1.4 Home-to-School Transport

1.4.1 Eligibility Criteria

Home-to-school transport is provided for pupils residing within Midlothian who meet the eligibility requirements as described in the Integrated Transport Policy, which can be found at: www.midlothian.gov.uk/integrated-transport-policy.

1.4.2 Placing Requests

Pupils who attend a school due to a placing request are not entitled to free school transport, even if the distance from their primary home address to the school exceeds two miles.

1.5 Composite Classes

Composite classes are part of the normal class structure 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's stage. A parent/carer leaflet called “Guidelines on structuring classes in primary schools’ is available from the schools on request.

1.6 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 cohort.

The maximum size of a Primary 1 class is 25, a Primary 2 or Primary 3 class is 30, and a Primary 4- 7 class is 33 pupils.

1.7 Shared Care Arrangements

Where parents/carers are separated, the address of the parent/carer in receipt of Child Benefit will determine the address for school enrolment. Where child benefit is not being received, the primary contact on education records will determine the address for school enrolment.

If the shared care arrangement is a 50/50 split between the parents/carers, the parents/carers will be asked to provide proof such as a legal agreement or a solicitor letter with details of the 50/50 arrangement. This proof must be provided by 15 March prior to entry into P1 or S1. If the Council is satisfied that the care is equally shared, the parents/carers will be given the opportunity to choose which catchment school to register with.

More information about school transport eligibility for children living in a 50:50 shared care agreement can be found on the Midlothian Council website www.midlothian.gov.uk/integrated-transport-policy.

1.8 Reserved Places

The Education (Scotland) Act 1996, as amended by the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act 2000, gives Education Authorities the power to reserve places at schools for children who move into the catchment areas after enrolment has been completed.

With high levels of house building and migration into the authority, Midlothian Council continues to experience pressure on school rolls. After the allocation of catchment places, places will be reserved for children moving into the catchment area.

In the Primary 1 year group, one place per class (and one place per teacher, where team teaching is in place) is reserved for incoming catchment children for the entire school year.

In the Secondary 1 year group, one place per 40 pupils is reserved for incoming catchment children for the entire school year.

Where there are other considerations, such as house building in certain catchment areas, the number of reserved places may be increased beyond the above ratios, as determined by the Education Service.

For Roman Catholic schools, reserved places will be granted only to catchment baptised Roman Catholic children.

If out of catchment places are granted by an Appeal Committee or a Sheriff, this may result in fewer reserved places being available.

1.9 Press Advertisements

In October each year Pupil Placement will place an advertisement in the local press and Midlothian Council social media channels, advising parents/carers of any child eligible to begin primary education that they should, by a specified date, register their child at their catchment school. Registering a child does not automatically ensure that a place will be made available; this will be determined when all information is collated and examined. Parents/carers will be advised that, even if they wish to make a placing request for a non-catchment school, they must first register their child at the catchment school.

1.10 Contact with Parents/Carers

The Pupil Placement Team will contact parents/carers of Midlothian children eligible to begin primary education and who receive funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in Midlothian by letter.

Midlothian children who are eligible to begin secondary education and attend Midlothian primary schools will be automatically registered at the secondary school based on their home address and notified by letter.

1.11 Access to information

Parents/Carers should have access to information about the schools in which they are interested. This will generally be contained in the school handbook, copies of which will be available from the school and on the school's website. In addition, the Council produces guidelines on admission to Midlothian schools called Placing in Schools Booklet, which is available on our website at: www.midlothian.gov.uk/placingbooklet

2.0 REGISTRATION TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Registration procedures commence at the beginning of November for the following August intake.
The Pupil Placement Team will collate all registration information for each school. This is used to determine whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate all catchment children and all children (catchment and non-catchment) who have been offered a place at a school's Complex Needs Provision or Saltersgate School by the Education Resource Group (ERG).

The Pupil Placement Team will inform primary and secondary school Head Teachers of the number of catchment pupils that will be enrolled and any intake limits that may apply.

Registration and placing request forms are available online from mid-November each year at www.midlothian.gov.uk/schoolplace.

Acceptable proof of Roman Catholic faith for registration at a denominational school are; the child's Roman Catholic baptism certificate or Roman Catholic first communion certificate. If your child was baptised in a different Christian faith but now attends a Roman Catholic church, then we require a letter from the parish priest and the baptism certificate.

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

2.1 Primary Schools

2.1.1 P1 Eligibility

Any child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 March in any year, and the last day of the following February can start primary school on the first day of the autumn term (known as the commencement date).

An exception to these procedures may be where a child(ren) has been admitted to primary education by another authority subsequently become residents in Midlothian. In such cases, parents/carers should contact pupil placement who will advise them of the process.

If an applicant's catchment primary school is subject to a consultation review, they should continue to register their child at that catchment school. Further information on school consultations can be found at www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultations

2.1.2 P1 Registration

The Pupil Placement Team will issue notification letters at the beginning of November, informing parents/carers of their rights to register at one of their catchment schools. Parents/Carers wishing to make a placing request can do so using the online form. It is not essential that parents/carers use the online form, but they must make the request in writing to the Pupil Placement Team within Midlothian Council. It is essential, however, that

parents/carers initially register their child at their catchment school. See the later section for information on placing requests.
Head Teachers will ensure that catchment children are correctly identified; a Council Tax bill (current year), Government Benefit letter (for example Child Benefit letter), utility bill (dated within the last 3 months) or tenancy agreement (which must be signed and dated) is the accepted proof. If the parent/carer is not liable for Council Tax, **two** forms of proof of address are required instead of one. Please contact the Pupil Placement Team at pupil.placement@midlothian.gov.uk for further information and guidance.

If the child(ren) does not attend a Midlothian associated Early Learning and Childcare setting/childminder or receive funded ELC from a partnership provider in the Midlothian area, their birth certificate or passport should be seen as well. It is the address of the parent/carer which is relevant; the address of other family members or a childminder with whom the child(ren) may occasionally reside is not relevant.
A Birth Certificate/Passport is not required if the child(ren) attends a Midlothian Council school or Early Learning and Childcare setting or has a place at a private or voluntary Early Learning and Childcare setting/Childminder that is funded by Midlothian Council.

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings do not have catchment areas. Younger siblings attending the ELC setting attached to a primary school will not be taken into consideration for allocation of school placements.

2.2 Secondary Schools

2.2.1 S1 Eligibility

Pupils will normally transfer to secondary school at the end of a seven-year course of primary education. If, in the opinion of the Head Teacher or other professional advice, there are exceptional circumstances which would make it inadvisable to transfer a child, the repeat year process should be followed.

Pupils attending a non-denominational primary school will be allocated a place at their catchment non-denominational secondary school. Pupils attending a denominational primary school will be allocated a place at St David's Roman Catholic High School. If the parents/carers wish to request their other catchment secondary school, they should complete a placing request form and return it to Pupil Placement.

2.2.2 P7 to S1 Transfer

Pupil Placement will provide primary Head Teachers with details of which school each child will be transferring to.

Head Teachers of primary schools should ensure that detailed information on each pupil is forwarded to the appropriate secondary school. This information will normally include:

- a record of the pupil's level of attainment in Literacy & Numeracy;
- a record of the pupil's progress in other curriculum areas;
- comments on special interests and aptitudes;

- additional information agreed by the Associated School Group (ASG) Headteachers;
- the Pupil Progress Records (PPR), updated to the end of the last session of primary education;
- the Pupil Profile, which is completed by some pupils.

Pupil Placement will inform secondary school Head Teachers of the number of catchment pupils that will be transferred from primary schools and any intake limits that may apply.

2.2.3 Primary - Secondary liaison

Secondary schools normally have established transition arrangements with their associated primary schools which will include initiatives to ease the transition between primary and secondary stages.

2.2.4 P7 to S1 Transition Procedure

Primary schools and their associated secondary schools have established procedures to ensure a smooth transition for all children. This includes transfer of information about each child's progress.

Secondary Head Teachers should also arrange for parents/carers and incoming pupils to visit their school at an appropriate time, prior to transfer. Full information on the school should be sent at the start of the summer term to all parents/carers of pupils transferring to the school.

Pupils who have submitted a placing request to a non-catchment school are still required to attend their catchment school transition events until a placing request decision has been made. If transition events at a non-catchment school are attended, there is no guarantee of a place at that school.

2.2.5 S1 Registration

All parents/carers of P7 pupil’s resident in Midlothian, who attend a primary school in Midlothian, will receive written confirmation letter from the Pupil Placement Team at the beginning of November that their child has been registered for a place at their catchment secondary school, based on their home address. Places at secondary schools may be limited, so registration **does not guarantee** a place.

Midlothian pupils are enrolled in their catchment secondary schools through the transfer of their details from their associated primary schools. Secondary schools need to enrol those pupils whose placing requests have been granted which may include non-Midlothian residents.

2.3 School Catchment

Where there is insufficient capacity in primary or secondary schools, priority will be given in the following order:

Non-denominational schools	Denominational Schools
Midlothian resident children who have been offered a place in the school's Complex Needs Provision class by the Education Resource Group (ERG).	Midlothian resident children who have been offered a place in the school's Complex Needs Provision class by the Education Resource Group (ERG).
Midlothian resident catchment children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.	Midlothian resident catchment children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.
Midlothian resident catchment children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time.	Midlothian resident catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
then all remaining catchment children.	Midlothian resident catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith.
Any remaining unreserved places will be available to Placing Requests, in line with the Admissions Policy Placing Request priority list.	Midlothian resident catchment children, who are not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
	then all remaining catchment children.
	Any remaining unreserved places will be available to Placing Requests, in line with the Admissions Policy Placing Request priority list.

If there are more children than places available in any priority group, proximity of home to the nearest recognised pupil access point in the school boundary will normally be used, measured using a specialist transport mapping system.

If a place at a catchment school is not available, parents/carers will be offered a place at the nearest Midlothian primary, within the same associated school group, or 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 wish. The pupils 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.

3.0 PLACING REQUESTS 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 an out of catchment placing request. It is the Council's statutory duty to grant placing requests where there are places available, except in certain circumstances which are set out in The Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

If the child is starting Primary 1 or Secondary 1 in August and the parent/carer wants their child(ren) to attend a non-catchment school, they may submit a request by completing a Placing Request. The placing request form is available online at www.midlothian.gov.uk/placing, alternatively a paper version of the form can be obtained from the Pupil Placement Team.

If the child is at any other stage of their education, parents/carers should contact the Pupil Placement Team for advice.

When a placing request is submitted for a non-catchment school, the Council will ask you to state the reason(s) the request has been made, for example exceptional circumstances. Please note that the Council **does not** consider childcare arrangements as exceptional circumstances.

All our mainstream schools provide a wide range of additional support needs e.g. Dyslexia, ADHD, ASD, hearing or visually impaired. Therefore, parents/carers will need to explain why the requested school is the **only** school able to support their child's needs. The 2000 Standards in Scotland's Schools Act states that children should attend mainstream schools, unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so.

If the 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. Midlothian 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.

3.1 Submitting a Placing Request

The Midlothian closing date for placing requests to start Primary 1 or Secondary 1 in August is in the preceding December. The national cut-off date is 15 March each year. Decision letters are explained in section 3.6 School Placement Notifications.

It is important that placing requests are submitted by 15 March providing all relevant information and supporting documents as exceptional circumstances may not be considered for requests received after this date. The Council will still consider a request if it arrives after this date, but these placing requests will be acknowledged within fourteen days of receipt and a decision will be made within two months.

Assistance in completing a placing request is available through the Pupil Placement Team. The parents/carers will receive an automatic acknowledgement of their online application. Placing requests received by email or post will receive an acknowledgement within fourteen days of receipt by the Pupil Placement Team.

The placing request forms for Primary 2 to Primary 7 and Secondary 2 to Secondary 6 can be obtained from the Pupil Placement Team. These placing requests will be acknowledged within fourteen days of receipt and a decision will be made within two months.

Members of Midlothian school staff should not provide letters of support to parents/carers in relation to placing requests.

3.2 Placing Request Priority for Places

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

Non-catchment placing requests will only be granted after all children offered a place by ERG, all catchment children and reserved places are retained within the agreed intake limit.

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

Out of Catchment Priority will be given to applicants in the following order:

Non-denominational Schools	Denominational Schools
Midlothian resident children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.	Midlothian resident children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.
Midlothian resident children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. (A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account)	Midlothian resident children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time. (A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account)
Midlothian resident children who will not have siblings attending the school at the same time.	Midlothian resident children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will not have siblings attending the school at the same time.
Non-Midlothian resident children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.	Midlothian resident children, who are not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
Non-Midlothian resident children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time. A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account)	All other Midlothian resident children.
All remaining applicants.	Non-Midlothian resident children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances
	Non-Midlothian resident children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time. (A sibling attending the nursery class will not be taken into account)
	Non-Midlothian resident children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will not have siblings attending the school at the same time.
	Non-Midlothian resident children, who are not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
	All other Non-Midlothian resident children.

If there are more children than places available in any priority group, proximity of home to the nearest recognised pupil access point in the school boundary will normally be used, measured using a specialist transport mapping system.

3.3 Relevant factors that may be taken into account

Children have additional support needs (ASN) if they require support which is different to that 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 enhanced transition programmes for children who require 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 is the **only** school able to support the child's needs.

If there is more than one placing request in any of the priority groups listed above, the distance between home and school is measured using streets and/or footpaths by an online mapping site. The distance is measured from the front door of the home address to the closest school gate; this might be the main school entrance or a rear entrance.

Attendance at an associated primary school (for requests in Secondary 1) will not be taken into account.

Once the place is offered, it will not be withdrawn unless the place was obtained using false information.

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 catchment school, a place may not be available.

3.4 Refusing a Placing Request

If the Council refuses a placing request, a decision letter will be sent to the parent/carer which gives the reasons for the decision. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 sets out the reasons why a placing request may be refused.

The reasons are:

- make it necessary for the authority to take an additional teacher into employment (section 28A(3)(a)(i));
- give rise to significant expenditure on extending or otherwise altering the accommodation at or facilities provided in connection with the school (s.28A(3)(a)(ii));
- though neither of the tests set out in sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) above is satisfied, have the consequence that the capacity of the school would be exceeded in terms of pupil numbers (s.28A(3)(a)(vii));
- be seriously detrimental to the continuity of the child's education (s.28A(3)(a)(iii);

- be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school (s.28A(3)(a)(iv));
- be likely to be seriously detrimental to the educational well-being of pupils attending the school (s.28A(3)(a)(v)).
- assuming that pupil numbers remain constant, make it necessary, at the commencement of a future stage of the child's primary education, for the authority to elect either to create an additional class (or an additional composite class) in the specified school or to take an additional teacher into employment at that school (s.28A(3)(a)(vi)); or
- if the education normally provided at the specified school is not suited to the age, ability, or aptitude of the child (s.28A(3)(b)).
- the acceptance of a placing request in respect of a child who is resident out with the catchment area of the specified school would prevent the education authority from retaining reserved places at the specified school or in relation to any particular stage of education at the school; (s.28A(3A)).

The parent/carer has the right of appeal. Appeals must be lodged/ submitted in writing, no later than 28 days after the refusal letter being sent. Details of how to make an appeal will be in the decision letter sent to the parent/carer.

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 on receipt of the appeal.

If a place at the requested primary or secondary school is not available, a place will be reserved at the catchment primary school that the child has been registered at. However, if no place is available at the catchment school, then a place will be allocated at the nearest school within the associated school group with places available. If the catchment school was a denominational school, then a place will be allocated at a denominational school if possible.

If you live outwith Midlothian and your Placing Request to Midlothian school was refused, you should contact your Local Authority for assistance in placing your child at their catchment school.

A waiting list will be formed for the requested school and/or catchment school and, should a place become available, the parent/carer be contacted.

3.5 Placing Requests for Children with Additional Support Needs

The Midlothian parents/carers of children recorded as having additional support needs also have the right to make a placing request to a Midlothian 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 provision 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 whom to send your appeal will be in the decision letter we send you.

3.6 School Placement Notification

The Pupil Placement Team will notify parents/carers of P1 children, confirming whether their child(ren) has been granted a place at their catchment primary school on or by 30 April. Those children who have been granted a place will be automatically enrolled at the school.

The Pupil Placement Team will notify parents/carers of P1 or S1 children, who have submitted an out of catchment placing request to confirm their Midlothian destination school on or by 30 April.

Parents/Carers of P7/S1 children, who have not submitted a placing request and are satisfied with their child's automatic registration at their catchment secondary school will not receive further notification letters.

Once the place is offered, it will not be withdrawn unless the place was obtained using false information. If a family changes address before the start of the school year, they can request a place at their new catchment school. Midlothian Council may make random spot checks as part of fraud prevention, and we may ask you to provide proof of residence at any time before the school session begins.

4.0 EARLY PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSION

Parents/Carers may make a request for early admission to primary school for children who are not eligible to start Primary 1. The Council does not have a duty to educate children who are not of school age. It is the professional view of the authority, that Early Learning and Childcare is the most appropriate form of education for children until they are of school age.

The Council has delegated the responsibility of granting early admission to the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships, but this will only be considered if it can be established that refusal would harm a child(ren)'s education in the long term.

When applying for early admission, parents/carers should provide evidence to support their case, including written evidence wherever possible.

There is no right of appeal once a decision has been reached on a request for early admission as the child is not of school age.

5.0 DEFERRED ENTRY TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children in Scotland usually start school between the ages of 4 years 6 months and 5 years 6 months.

Children who turn 5 after the first day of term in August and before the end of February, are entitled to defer entry to school should their parents/carers wish it.

They will receive a funded ELC place in Midlothian, within either a council funded ELC setting/ childminder during that deferred year. If your child(ren) attends a setting in another local authority, contact them to confirm funding arrangements.

Please refer to the deferral policy for more information about the process.
Deferred entry to primary school | Midlothian Council.

If parents/carers wish to withdraw a deferral request for Primary 1, they must contact the Pupil Placement Team by 15 March at pupil.placement@midlothian.gov.uk. After this date, the main round of placing decisions will have taken place and P1 places may not be available at your child's catchment school. In these circumstances, we may have to seek a place at an alternative primary school.

Children who are 5 on or before the first day of the school term in August, must register at one of their catchment schools. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to apply for an additional year of ELC which is known as a "Retained Year Application".

Please note that all children must register at their catchment school for Primary 1, even if an application for Deferred Entry/Retained Year is being made.

6.0 Moving In/Out of Midlothian

Families who move into the Midlothian Council area before the start of the school year may be able to reserve a place at their new catchment school (denominational or non-denominational) depending on availability of places. To reserve a place, Midlothian Council must receive proof of the planned move by **15 March**. This should be a signed/dated in advance tenancy agreement or concluded missives. The school place will be offered **provisionally** and will only be confirmed once the council has evidence that the family has moved into the new address within Midlothian.
For families who are renting, acceptable proof of change of address is a signed and dated tenancy agreement that shows the tenants' full names, Midlothian address and tenancy start date.

For families who are purchasing, a letter from a solicitor confirming that the missives have concluded can be used to reserve a space, but it is **not enough on its own** to complete enrolment. The Council will ask for further residency proof by way of; a Council Tax bill,

Government Benefit letter, (for example Child Benefit letter) or recent utility bill to accompany the concluded missives letter following the move. For new homeowners, the Council will accept a utility provider's welcome letter clearly stating the parent's full name/s, Midlothian address and account number.

If the parent/carer is not liable for Council Tax, **two** forms of proof of address are required instead of one.

Military families who do not have proof of address should provide the Assignment Order and the March-In-Date letter.

Families residing in temporary accommodation should contact the Pupil Placement Team for assistance. Each case will be reviewed by the Placing Panel.

If a family moves out of the Midlothian Council area before the start of the school year, the Council may withdraw the school place offered in a Midlothian school.

7.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

The addresses below are for mailing only.

ASN, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Midlothian Council
Children, Young People and Partnerships Fairfield House
8 Lothian Road Dalkeith
EH22 3ZG
Email: asn.team@midlothian.gov.uk

Pupil Placement Team, Midlothian Council
Children, Young People and Partnerships Fairfield House
8 Lothian Road Dalkeith
EH22 3ZG
Email: pupil.placement@midlothian.gov.uk

Useful Websites:
Midlothian Council Website: Midlothian Council Homepage
Find a school catchment: Find a school catchment | Midlothian Council
Parent Zone Scotland: Parentzone Scotland | Education Scotland
Education Scotland: Education Scotland | Education Scotland

Implementation

The policy will initially be implemented for the school intake August 2027.
The proposal to clarify the catchment area of St David's Roman Catholic High School and to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Denominational Secondary Education was approved by Elected Members of Midlothian Council on Tuesday, 10 November 2026.

The proposal has different priority groups for secondary denominational placing requests and requires further consideration and approval by Scottish Ministers. The proposal will be implemented as soon as possible subject to approval by Scottish Ministers.
The policy will be shared on the Midlothian Council website. School Handbooks should be updated to reflect the revised policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Education Chief Operating Officer for Midlothian Council has overall responsibility for this policy.

Related documentsApply for a school place | Midlothian Council

Consultations | Midlothian Council
Deferred entry to primary school | Midlothian Council
Gaelic in schools – The City of Edinburgh Council
Gaelic Medium Primary Education: assessment request form - gov.scot
Pupil registration and placing requests | Placing in schools booklet (midlothian.gov.uk) Pupil registration and placing requests | (midlothian.gov.uk)

Integrated Impact Assessment

All new and revised policies must be subject to an integrated impact assessment to ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation.

Risk Assessment

An updated policy will ensure that the admissions process remains effective, clear and consistent to meet the enrolment requirements of the children and young people of Midlothian fairly and effectively. This will reflect and incorporate any recent changes to legislation, policies and procedures as well as schools' circumstances.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual cycle with the next review being August 2027 by Children, Young People and Partnerships.