

Intake Figures and Limits for Primary and Secondary Schools Session 2023/24

Report by Fiona Robertson, Executive Director, Children, Young People and Partnerships

1 Recommendations

Council is requested to approve:

- The requirement to apply intake limits, as detailed in the report, at a number of schools in order to safeguard places for pupils to be able to attend their catchment school.

Council is otherwise requested to note:

- The estimated intake figures for primary and secondary schools in Section 3, tables 1 – 3.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

This report provides Council with an update on the enrolment of pupils and intake for the school session 2023/24. The report identifies a number of schools where there is pressure on school capacity and the need to apply intake limits to safeguard places for catchment children and to manage placing requests.

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3 Intake August 2023

- 3.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended by section 33 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1996) allows education authorities to reserve places for incoming pupils into catchment areas of schools. This assists education authorities in managing their schools and prevent them being at capacity at commencement of an academic year. Furthermore, this enables schools to accommodate incoming catchment pupils at their catchment schools when they move into the area during the academic year.
- 3.2 Section 28A (3A) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended) provides a general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. Acceptance of a placing request for a child who is resident out with the catchment area of a specified school could prevent the education authority from retaining reserved places at a specified school or in relation to any particular stage of education at the school. It is for this reason that the education authority may refuse to grant a placing request that would impact on the ability to reserve places in schools. Reserved places are not allocated to children making placing requests or non-baptised catchment children at Roman Catholic schools. The places are reserved for children who may move in to the catchment area during the academic year. The number of reserved places is generally set at one per class at primary and one per 40 places at secondary. The number of places is increased in areas with a high rate of housebuilding.
- 3.3 The progress of house building in parts of Midlothian is continuing to generate growth in pupil numbers. This combined with parental placing requests for certain schools with limited capacity means that pupil intake limits are required in order to safeguard places for pupils to be able to attend their catchment school.
- 3.4 The provision of schools and their capacity, alongside pupil projections, are set out in the Learning Estate Strategy. The Learning Estate Strategy Update report was presented to Council 13 December 2022.
- 3.5 The council's approach to pupil placement is to provide a place for every pupil at one of their catchment schools and to grant placing requests for siblings whenever this is possible. Where catchment schools are over-subscribed the pupil placement process reserves places at neighbouring schools to ensure every pupil is afforded the opportunity to attend a local school. Maintaining this commitment is continuing to be challenging with the growth in pupil numbers we are experiencing and the consequent pressure on school capacities.
- 3.6 The following factors are considered for both primary and secondary schools when determining the appropriate number of reserved places that are likely to be required for pupils moving into the catchment area of the school during 2023/24:
- The proposed level of capping at the school and number of expected pupils
 - Current and planned housing developments
 - Projected school rolls
 - Projected migration into the catchment area
 - Information about reserved places from previous years

- School capacities
- Information known to us, for example, families indicating a move into the area before/after commencement of the academic year
- Future expansion of the Learning Estate

- 3.7 Pupil enrolment for the 2023/24 school session is well underway. The national deadline for the submission of placing requests was 15 March 2023, and decisions on those requests will be made and communicated by letter to parents/carers during April. The Education Appeal Committee will meet in June to consider any appeals received in respect of placing requests which have been refused.
- 3.8 Prior to the August 2023, school intake children who turned 5 between 1 January and 28/29 February after their school start date were entitled to a further funded year of early learning and childcare (ELC) if they deferred starting primary school. Children who turned 5 between their school start date and 31 December could defer and request a further funded year of ELC but this was at the local authority's discretion. With effect from August 2023, the legislation changes so that all children who turn 5 after their school start date and defer are entitled to a further funded year of ELC. 204 deferrals have been received this year to date. This represents a significant increase from the 167 received for August 2022 (+22%). This increases the number of children at early learning and childcare settings and reduces the number of children commencing Primary 1 in August 2023. It remains to be seen whether this increased level of deferrals is as a result of the change in legislation and will continue in future years, or if it is as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. If the latter, when the deferral numbers return to pre-pandemic levels the Primary 1 intake will be higher and increase pressure on capacity while the numbers feed through.

Primary Schools

- 3.9 For August 2023, the primary schools where the number of Primary 1 pupils residing in their catchment exceeds Primary 1 intake capacity and may be oversubscribed are:
- Bilston Primary School
 - Bonnyrigg PS
 - Burnbrae PS
 - Hawthornden PS
 - Lawfield PS
 - Mauricewood PS
 - Moorfoot PS
 - Newtongrange PS
 - Paradykes PS
 - Rosewell PS
 - Roslin PS
 - Stobhill PS
 - Woodburn PS
 - Sacred Heart Roman Catholic PS
 - St David's RC PS
 - St Luke's RC PS
 - St Mary's RC PS
- 3.10 In addition, at the following primary schools the number of Primary 1 pupils residing in their catchment was the same as the Primary 1 intake capacity:
- Gore Glen PS
 - Gorebridge PS
- 3.11 The catchment numbers used to create the above lists of non-denominational schools includes all children living in each catchment area. Until parents and carers register

their child for Primary 1 it is not known how many are Roman Catholic and may choose to go to their catchment Roman Catholic school. In theory, therefore, all catchment children could choose to attend their catchment non-denominational school. The Roman Catholic schools on the list are those where more children have registered for Primary 1 than there is capacity.

- 3.12 At the time of writing, the deadline for placing requests had not passed. These requests and the deferrals are still being received and the figures in this paper are subject to change. While there may still be some movement, issues with oversubscribed schools is currently limited to: Bonnyrigg, Loanhead, Moorfoot, Roslin, Stobhill, St David's and St Mary's. However, we also have limited available capacity at Newtongrange. Intake should, therefore, be capped at these schools to ensure we do not exceed capacity.
- 3.13 The following tables set out the catchment numbers, intake projections and reserved places.

Table 1: Primary 1 non-denominational schools' catchment numbers, estimated intake numbers, intake limits and reserved places August 2023

Non-Denominational Primary Schools	Catchment P1s	P1s registered net of deferrals etc	Estimated P1 intake August 2023	P1 intake limit August 2023	Reserved places
Bilston Primary School	45	34	32	33	2
Bonnyrigg Primary School	55	48	60	60	3
Burnbrae Primary School	77	71	61	72	3
Cornbank St James Primary School	28	23	32	47	2
Cuiken Primary School	38	29	23	60	2
Danderhall Primary School	70	54	56	90	3
Gore Glen Primary School	51	43	53	60	2
Gorebridge Primary School	51	44	35	60	2
Hawthornden Primary School	38	30	26	54	2
King's Park Primary School	60	51	57	75	3
Lasswade Primary School	37	26	33	60	2
Lawfield Primary School	57	46	36	60	2
Loanhead Primary School	23	20	28	30	2
Mauricewood Primary School	56	51	52	54	3
Mayfield Primary School	36	31	34	50	2
Moorfoot Primary School	12	10	13	14	1
Newtongrange Primary School	61	51	55	56	2
Paradykes Primary School	63	53	49	60	2
Rosewell Primary School	28	26	27	33	1
Roslin Primary School	56	44	44	47	3
Stobhill Primary School	39	33	32	33	2
Strathesk Primary School	33	32	30	54	2
Tynewater Primary School	18	17	21	33	1
Woodburn Primary School	109	93	97	110	4
	1141	960	986	1305	

Note: Includes all children who subsequently register for their catchment denominational school.

Table 2: Primary 1 denominational schools' catchment numbers, estimated intake numbers, intake limits and reserved places August 2023

Denominational Primary Schools	P1s registered net of deferrals etc	Estimated P1 intake August 2023	P1 intake limit August 2023	Reserved places
Sacred Heart RC Primary School	21	21	25	1
St Andrew's RC Primary School	20	18	25	1
St David's RC Primary School	33	24	25	1
St Luke's RC Primary School	25	23	25	1
St Mary's RC Primary School	33	23	25	2
St Matthew's RC Primary School	5	7	10	1
	137	116	135	

- 3.14 When considering how to cap school rolls, Midlothian Council, as an education authority, must look at all schools and available resources. The total population of children who require places in schools is considered and, at a local level, how many are within each catchment area. Each school will manage its resources and this is balanced with other schools' situations to ensure that resources are equitably shared throughout Midlothian, thereby avoiding unreasonable public expenditure.
- 3.15 The intake at denominational schools will be managed with the application of pupil intake limits and by giving first priority to those who are baptised Roman Catholic. Intake limits will be set in the context of the number of applications from pupils who are baptised Roman Catholic, the availability of suitably qualified teachers and the capacity of all schools serving each catchment area. It is not anticipated that the number of qualifying pupils wishing to attend the denominational schools will exceed their intake capacities.

Secondary Schools

- 3.16 This year there is only one secondary school where the number of Secondary 1 pupils residing in their catchment exceeds Secondary 1 intake capacity: Dalkeith. Two secondary schools are close to their intake capacity: Lasswade and St David's.
- 3.17 Since August 2017, the Council has provided home to school transport for pupils residing in the Loanhead area who choose to attend Beeslack High School rather than Lasswade, which is their catchment secondary school. This has had some success in easing the pressure of pupil numbers at Lasswade with approximately 34% of pupils resident in Loanhead opting to attend Beeslack next year.

- 3.18 Although the number of pupils attending Roman Catholic primary schools and due to move to secondary in August 2023 is close to the intake capacity of St David's RC High School, 19% of these pupils have requested that they attend a non-denominational secondary school. This will reduce the number attending St David's.

The table below shows the estimated Secondary 1 intake for August 2023.

Table 3: Secondary 1 catchment numbers, estimated intake numbers, intake limits and reserved places August 2023

School Name	Catchment S1	Estimated S1	S1 intake limit	Reserved places
Beeslack High School	98	141	150	6
Dalkeith High School	209	209	200	6
Lasswade High School	298	291	300	10
Newbattle High School	267	243	260	7
Penicuik High School	136	129	140	4
St David's RC High School	157	139	140	4
Total	1165	1152	1200	

- 3.19 Rolls at Dalkeith HS, Lasswade HS and St David's HS need to be capped to ensure we do not exceed capacity and are able to reserve places (as stated above). Pupil enrolment for these high schools will be managed by use of intake limits, proactive management of placing requests and early engagement with parents and schools on the optimal placement of Secondary 1 pupils for August 2023.

Pupil Placement Guidelines

- 3.20 The policy guidelines on Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools have been updated, including incorporating the change in legislation relating to entitlement to an additional funded year of early learning and childcare which takes effect from August 2023. This policy update was approved at Council on 4 October 2022 and is included in Appendix 3.

Summary

- 3.21 As in previous years, pupil intake for August 2023 will be assessed regularly, ensuring effective management of the pupil placement process by taking account of placing requests and reserving places in neighbouring schools to provide places for pupils whose catchment school is over-subscribed. Intake limits based on schools' capacity will be applied as necessary in order to prevent schools from exceeding their capacity.
- 3.22 The letters confirming Primary 1 school places and the outcome of secondary placing requests will be issued to parents/carers during April.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource

There are no direct resource implications arising as a result of this report.

4.2 Risk

There is a risk that the council will not have a place for every pupil at their catchment school. This is mitigated by the application of limits on pupil intake, reviews of placing requests, and, in the case of denominational schools, by giving first priority to those who are baptised Roman Catholic.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

4.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Key outcome: Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes

GIRFEC outcomes: Children and young people are supported to be healthy, happy and reach their potential; Inequalities in learning outcomes are reduced.

4.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The aim of this paper supports the priority to reduce the inequalities in learning outcomes by improving the quality of learning and teaching, leading to raised levels of achievement and attainment, by providing every child with the opportunity to attend school in their local community.

4.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Council's approach to pupil placement adopts a preventative approach by maximising the opportunities for pupils to attend school in their local community.

4.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This report informs Council of the potential impact on communities arising from pressure on school places.

4.8 Ensuring Equalities

This paper informs Council of the impact of managing pupil admissions in line with national and local policy and procedure.

4.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

The sustainability issues relating to this report relate to the sufficiency of schools places particularly in areas of housing development, the provision of additional capacity is being taken forward via the Learning Estate Strategy coupled with the School Catchment Review Programme.

4.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising directly as a result of this report. The IT requirements arising in order to put in place the additional capacity for each school will be identified as part of the development of the project specifications. The budget required to fully equip any additional classes required for August 2023 will be developed in liaison with Digital Services.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Primary School Pupil Census 2022

Appendix 2 Secondary School Pupil Census 2022

Appendix 3 Policy Guidelines - Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools

Appendix 1

Primary Schools Pupil Census 2022

School	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total	% of Capacity
Bilston Primary School	28	34	27	25	21	29	19	183	76%
Bonnyrigg Primary School	57	55	57	64	56	62	58	409	89%
Burnbrae Primary School	53	65	71	74	75	75	64	477	89%
Cornbank St James Primary School	46	45	48	45	37	44	40	305	89%
Cuiken Primary School	27	30	23	47	31	33	37	228	50%
Danderhall Primary School	66	65	52	39	51	51	41	365	61%
Gore Glen Primary School	47	55	51	47	37	39	25	301	69%
Gorebridge Primary School	55	40	30	53	35	39	44	296	64%
Hawthornden Primary School	38	40	33	31	44	49	39	274	63%
King's Park Primary School	71	80	76	68	68	62	61	486	96%
Lasswade Primary School	55	49	40	51	46	59	51	351	89%
Lawfield Primary School	50	47	51	28	45	61	52	334	73%
Loanhead Primary School	26	21	28	29	25	21	31	181	83%
Mauricewood Primary School	54	54	51	52	44	51	63	369	94%
Mayfield Primary School	32	40	36	32	41	34	44	259	66%
Moorfoot Primary School	10	14	13	13	11	8	11	80	89%
Newtongrange Primary School	52	55	57	52	58	47	40	361	92%
Paradykes Primary School	58	53	53	44	37	38	41	324	76%
Rosewell Primary School	25	28	35	19	20	16	20	163	93%
Roslin Primary School	31	38	44	30	43	30	32	248	93%
Sacred Heart Primary School	18	7	20	18	14	22	24	123	70%
St Andrew's Primary School	25	14	21	21	19	22	23	145	83%
St David's Primary School	24	28	29	30	23	28	30	192	88%
St Luke's Primary School	18	27	30	32	26	31	33	197	81%
St Mary's Primary School	23	27	22	22	29	21	18	162	67%
St Matthew's Primary School	3	6	5	7	6	11	9	47	63%
Stobhill Primary School	28	23	30	32	29	30	26	198	82%
Strathesk Primary School	25	34	27	37	37	46	42	248	63%
Tynewater Primary School	16	26	29	41	25	28	26	191	79%
Woodburn Primary School	86	101	103	98	92	86	84	650	88%
Primary Schools	1147	1201	1192	1181	1125	1173	1128	8147	

Appendix 2

Secondary Schools Pupil Census 2022

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total	% of Capacity
Beeslack Community High School	138	142	133	132	127	57	729	85%
Dalkeith High School	191	180	170	161	128	96	926	88%
Lasswade High School Centre	296	298	293	293	254	134	1568	98%
Newbattle High School	253	241	194	221	146	47	1102	92%
Penicuik High School	128	96	128	130	92	64	638	68%
St David's RC High School	143	138	134	142	115	65	737	83%
Secondary Schools	1149	1095	1052	1079	862	463	5700	



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

EDUCATION POLICY

Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools

This Policy is authorised by
This Policy supersedes
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Pupil.Placement@midlothian.gov.uk
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Table of Contents

<u>1.0 PLACING IN SCHOOLS</u>	15
<u>1.1 Legal background</u>	15
<u>1.2 Denominational Education</u>	15
<u>1.3 Parents wishing a Gaelic Medium Education</u>	15
<u>1.4 Children with Additional Support Needs</u>	16
<u>1.5 Home to School Transport</u>	16
<u>1.6 Composite Classes</u>	16
<u>1.7 Team Teaching</u>	16
<u>1.8 Children living under shared care</u>	16
<u>1.9 Reserved places</u>	17
<u>2.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS</u>	17
<u>2.1 Registration procedures for entry to primary school</u>	17
<u>2.2 Press advertisements</u>	17
<u>2.3 Contact with parents/carers</u>	18
<u>2.4 Eligibility</u>	18
<u>2.5 Choosing a school</u>	18
<u>2.6 Access to information</u>	18
<u>2.7 Registration of catchment children</u>	19
<u>2.8 Enrolment of catchment children</u>	19
<u>2.9 Change of address</u>	20
<u>2.10 Phased entry arrangements</u>	20
<u>2.11 Deferred entry to primary school</u>	20
<u>2.12 Early admission</u>	21
<u>3.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS</u>	21
<u>3.1 Eligibility</u>	21
<u>3.2 Transfer between primary and secondary schools</u>	21
<u>3.3 Primary-secondary liaison</u>	22
<u>3.4 Induction programmes</u>	22
<u>3.5 Registration procedures</u>	22
<u>3.6 Allocation of Catchment Secondary School Places</u>	22
<u>3.7 Intake numbers</u>	23
<u>3.8 Issue of school handbooks</u>	23
<u>3.9 Press advertisement</u>	23
<u>3.10 Making a Placing Request for a Non-Catchment Primary or Secondary School</u>	23

<u>3.11 What will happen when a placing request is made to Midlothian Council?</u>	24
<u>3.12 Restriction or limitation of places</u>	25
<u>3.13 Other relevant factors that may be taken into account</u>	25
<u>3.14 Refusing a placing request</u>	26
<u>3.15 What happens if the Council refuses a request?</u>	26
<u>3.16 Primary school placing request</u>	27
<u>3.17 Secondary school placing request</u>	27
<u>3.18 Placing Requests for Children with Additional Support Needs</u>	27
<u>Contact Details</u>	28
<u>Useful Websites</u>	28

1.0 PLACING IN SCHOOLS

1.1 Legal background

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 a 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 in order to assist parents/carers in making their choice of school.

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 the Council to be due to enrol 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 to make enquiries regarding alternative school placement for their children. A parent may submit a placing request for her/his child in a school at any stage.

1.2 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.

1.3 Parents wishing a Gaelic Medium Education

Gaelic medium education for Midlothian resident pupils 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 wishing to have their children 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 parents should complete a placing request form available on the City of Edinburgh Council website. Further information can be found at: <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/school-places/gaelic-schools-1/1>

Parents can request that the Council carries 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 available from the following website: www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/02/1442/downloads

1.4 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 document.

1.5 Home to School Transport

A pupil 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. A pupil 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.

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

1.6 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.

Please refer to Professional Practice Paper 7 for further guidance.

1.7 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 pupils.

1.8 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 between the parents, the parents will be asked to provide proof such as a legal agreement. If the Council

is satisfied that the care is equally shared, the parents will be given the opportunity to choose which of the catchment schools at which to register.

1.9 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 completed.

With the level of house building and migration into the authority, Midlothian Council continues to experience pressure on schools rolls. After the allocation of places, in accordance with Section 2.8 and 3.6, places will be reserved for children moving into catchment.

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.

For Roman Catholic schools, reserved places will only be granted 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.

2.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

2.1 Registration procedures for entry to primary school

Registration procedures commence at the beginning of November each year.

If an applicant's catchment primary school is subject to a consultation review they should continue to register their child at that catchment school. As part of the consultation process Pupil Placement will keep applicants informed of the implications for their child and the options available. Further information on school consultations can be found at midlothian.gov.uk/consultations.

2.2 Press advertisements

In October each year Pupil Placement will place an advertisement in the local press, 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.

2.3 Contact with parents/carers

At the same time, Pupil Placement will contact by letter the parents/carers of all children eligible to begin primary education and who receive funded early learning and childcare in Midlothian. Head Teachers should ensure that copies of the school handbook are available for any parent requesting one.

2.4 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 children who have been admitted to primary education by another authority subsequently become resident in Midlothian. In such cases, the Head Teacher should consult their appropriate Schools Group Manager before deciding whether to admit the child.

2.5 Choosing a school

Pupil Placement will issue information informing parents/carers of their rights to choose a school when they write to the parents/carers of eligible children. Any parent/carer wishing to make a placing request should obtain a Placing Request application form. It is not essential that parents/carers use the form but they must make the request in writing to the Pupil Placement Section within Children, Young People and Partnerships. It is essential, however, that parents/carers initially register their child at their catchment school.

See the later section for information on placing requests.

2.6 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 prospectus or handbook, copies of which should be available from the school and on the school website. In addition, the Council produces guidelines on admission to Midlothian schools called Placing in Schools, which is available on our website at midlothian.gov.uk/placingbooklet.

2.7 Registration of catchment children

Primary Head Teachers may wish to publicise registration arrangements through their own local channels if they feel this is appropriate so that as many parents/carers as possible are encouraged to register their children at this time. During the registration period Head Teachers should only register those children who are normally resident in the catchment area.

Head Teachers should ensure that catchment children are correctly identified; a Council Tax bill, Child Benefit letter, recent utility bill or driving licence is normally adequate proof. If the pupil does not attend a Midlothian Council early learning and childcare setting or receive funded ELC from a partnership provider, their birth certificate or passport should be seen as well. It is the address of the parent or carer which is relevant; the address of other family members or a child minder with whom the child may occasionally reside is not relevant.

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 a catchment school.

See the earlier section for children living under shared care.

2.8 Enrolment of catchment children

The Pupil Placement Team will collate the registration information obtained from each school and use this to determine whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate all catchment children. Where there is insufficient capacity, 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.

Parents/carers will be advised by letter, sent by the Pupil Placement Team by 30 April, whether they have been granted a place at their catchment school. Those children who have been granted a place will be automatically enrolled at the school.

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.

Those who have not been granted a place at their catchment school will have a place allocated at the Midlothian school nearest to their home 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.

2.9 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.

2.10 Phased entry arrangements

Head Teachers may wish to phase the primary 1 intake over a period. If this is done, all children eligible for admission should be admitted by the second week of the new school session. However, a parent may require the authority to accept a child from the commencement date.

Head Teachers may also choose to limit primary 1 pupils to part day attendance in the early stages but such arrangements should not extend beyond the second week of the new school session. Any request from a parent for a child to be in full time attendance should normally be granted. Certain children may require special consideration to be in full time attendance, for example due to medical or family circumstances. In such cases, Head Teachers should consult their appropriate Schools Group Manager regarding arrangements for these children.

2.11 Deferred entry to primary school

Children in Scotland usually start school between the ages of 4 years 6 months and 5 years 6 months old. Children who turn 5 between the start of the school year and the end of February can apply to defer starting primary 1 for a year.

From August 2023, all families who are granted a deferral will be able to access a further year of funded quality Early Learning and Childcare (ELC).

Please refer to the deferral policy for more information about the process.

[Deferred entry to primary school | Midlothian Council](#)

Please note that all children must register at their catchment school for P1 even if an application for deferred entry is being made.

2.12 Early admission

Parents/carers may make a request for early admission to primary school. The Council does not have a duty to educate a child who is not of school age and it is the professional view of the authority is that early learning and childcare is the most appropriate form of education for children.

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'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. Members of staff should not provide letters of support to parents/carers.

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

3.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

3.1 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 appropriate Schools Group Manager should be consulted before a final decision is made.

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 the Pupil Placement section.

3.2 Transfer between primary and secondary schools

Pupil Placement will provide Head Teachers with details of which school each child will be transferring from/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:

- an assessment of the pupil's attainment in mathematics and language;
- comments on ability and attainment in other curricular areas, e.g. science, art, music;
- comments on special interests and aptitudes;
- an indication of the pupil's personal attributes and information about their background which may influence their attitude and performance in school work;
- the Pupil Progress Records (PPR), updated to the end of the last session of primary education;

- the Pupil Profile, which is completed by the pupil.

3.3 Primary-secondary liaison

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

3.4 Induction programmes

Primary schools and their associated and neighbouring 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.

3.5 Registration procedures

All parents/carers of P7 pupil's 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. Places at secondary schools may be limited, so registration does not guarantee a place. Parents/carers will also be advised of their right to make a placing request.

See later section for information on placing requests.

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 and who do not attend a Midlothian primary school.

3.6 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 only);
- 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.

3.7 Intake numbers

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. They will also be informed on a regular basis of numbers of any non-catchment requests which have been received and catchment requests out to other schools.

Throughout this period, secondary school Head Teachers should discuss with the Pupil Placement Section any factors that may affect the school's ability to accommodate the projected S1 intake.

3.8 Issue of school handbooks

Head Teachers must ensure school handbooks are updated by November. Delays in updating the handbook should be avoided as parents/carers are legally entitled to this information. The handbook should be made available on the school website.

3.9 Press advertisement

In October each year Pupil Placement will place an advertisement in the local press, advising parents/carers of any Midlothian child eligible to begin secondary education that their child will be automatically enrolled in their catchment secondary school, unless a placing request is made for another school.

3.10 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. 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 P1 or S1 in August and the parent/carer wants them to attend a non-catchment school, they 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 the child is at any other stage of their education parents/carers should contact the Head Teacher of the school of their choice.

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. 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.

3.11 What will happen when a placing request is made to Midlothian Council?

The following information applies if a placing request is made for a child to a Midlothian Council school.

The Midlothian closing date for placing requests to start P1 or S1 in August is in the preceding December. The Council will advise parents and carers of the closing date in the letters sent out. The Council will still consider a request if it arrives after this date but by 15 March, the national cut-off date.

The parent/carer should receive acknowledgement of their application within fourteen days of receipt by Pupil Placement. The Council will notify parents/carers of the outcome of all placing request received by 15 March 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](#).

The 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.

Members of staff should not provide letters of support to parents/carers.

3.12 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 for places

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.

3.13 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.

3.14 Refusing a placing request

If the Council refuses a placing request a 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 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.

3.15 What happens if the Council refuses a request?

If a placing request is refused, the parent/carer has the right of appeal. Appeals must be lodged, in writing, no later than 28 days after the refusal letter being sent. Details of how to make an appeal will be in the refusal 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.

3.16 Primary school placing request

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

3.17 Secondary school placing request

If a place at the requested secondary school is not available, a place will be reserved at the catchment secondary school. However if no place is available at the 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, the parent/carer will be contacted.

3.18 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