Maintained Nursery Admissions Guidance – Two year olds eligible for early education funding

Nursery provision in maintained schools is non-statutory and admissions are managed at individual school level, although guidance is provided. Schools are not required to follow the published School Admissions Code. Maintained nursery classes are a key contributor to the delivery of the universal early education entitlement and places are offered entirely free at the point of delivery. Models are generally 5 x 3 hour sessions fitting in with school times of the day, however, schools can now apply greater flexibility to meet the needs of their parents offering different models of delivery.

Details of how places for 3 and 4 year olds eligible for early education funding are allocated, and which schools have nursery provision, can be found in the nursery education booklet for the Royal Borough of Kingston and the Nursery education booklet for the London Borough of Richmond:

http://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/download/216/nursery_education_in_kingston_upon_thames
http://www.richmond.gov.uk/nursery_schools

The Local Authority sets guidance for the admissions arrangements for maintained community nursery classes and Church Schools/ Voluntary Aided schools set their own. The Local Authority does not oversee the admissions for two year olds but offers the following guidance.

How the places are allocated and admissions criteria are agreed within a school can vary considerably. Parents should consider these when selecting a particular school and expressing a preference.

Two year olds – eligible for early education funding

Nursery schools offering free childcare places to 2 year old children eligible for early education funding may consider including the following admission criteria in addition to their existing 3 and 4 year old admissions policy:

- To children of an appropriate age to fill the vacancy to ensure a balance of places across the age range.
- 2 year old children receiving early education funding to be prioritised under exceptional need criteria when allocating nursery places for 3 year olds.
- Schools can admit rising threes into a maintained nursery class/school and do not need to register as an early years provider with Ofsted as long as the child has its third birthday before the end of the term in which they were admitted. In effect schools can take a rising three and staff at a 1:13 ratio, as long as staffing ratios are sufficient to meet the needs of the children. Where spare capacity exists, nursery schools and schools with an existing nursery class that have been rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted will be permitted to admit eligible two year olds and receive 2 year old funding until the term following their 3rd birthday. **Please note that in order to receive early education funding for a rising three the child must be in receipt of early education funding for 2 year olds.**

- From 26th May 2015, providing school’s provision for two-year-olds meets the requirements for exemption (e.g. children are pupils of the school), they will no longer need to register this separately with Ofsted. Updated guidance will be published in due course but as the requirements for exemption mirror those currently in place for three-year-old provision, schools should use these when deciding if they need a separate registration when they are planning their provision.

PAN numbers can be exceeded in the short term when a 3 year old child eligible for early education funding is sitting in a 2 year old early education funded place as follows:

**Before the application deadline:**

- Provided the school publishes its admission number so that parents know the number of available places before they apply, and subject to the usual considerations of ratios, health and safety, impact on other providers etc.

- As information is used to increase admission number during the period ahead of the allocation, schools should contextualise and give reasons e.g. due to unexpected demand for nursery places the school has worked with the Local Authority to add more places to meet demand.

**After the application deadline:**

- Subject to all applicants who have applied being accommodated and the usual considerations of ratios, health and safety, impact on other providers has been taken into account.

Admission criteria should be published on the School webpages.
Annual reviews of admission criteria for 2 year olds should take place to respond to the changing needs in the locality. The Governing Body should be consulted regarding any proposed changes and these must be clear and accessible for parents.

Further advice and guidance for schools intending to offer two year olds funded nursery places are advised to liaise with the following team to access support:

**Early Years Business and Admin team**
020 8831 6267
or email early.years@achievingforchildren.org.uk