



**Information for parents and  
carers about enrolling their  
child in an East Lothian Council  
School**



# **Section 1- general information**

## **What this book is about**

This book gives you information that may help you when you are considering enrolling your child in an East Lothian Council school and/or want to make a placing request.

It is in four sections:

- Section 1 — general information (for example, the law, catchment areas, Catholic education, children with additional support needs, transport, how to get in touch with us)
- Section 2 — enrolling your child in a school
- Section 3 — placing requests
- Section 4 — what happens when you make a placing request.

If you would like to find out more about anything in this book, please get in touch with us by using the contact information at the end of this booklet.

Please note this booklet is intended for guidance only. It is not an authoritative statement of law relating to education or schools.

## **School Information**

All schools have up to date handbooks available giving information about themselves. The Head Teacher will be pleased to send you a copy. The telephone number of each school can be found in the telephone directory under East Lothian Council and on the website:

<http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk>

## **School Preference**

The law allows parents to express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend (such a school is often referred to as a non-catchment school). This is done by making a placing request. The Council as the Education Authority grant these requests wherever possible. In East Lothian many placing requests are granted but it is important to note that not all requests can be met.

## **Catchment Area**

Every school has a catchment area, each catchment area has clear boundaries. Catchment maps are available on the East Lothian Council website. Children living in the catchment area are given priority for places in this school. Entitlement to a place in a school is based on home address and **not** on attendance at an associated school or nursery class.

## **Catholic Education**

In some areas there are separate Catholic schools available for parents wishing their child to be educated in this type of school.

## **Children with Additional Support Needs**

East Lothian has an inclusion policy, with the expectation that children with additional support needs will be educated wherever possible in their catchment school. East Lothian Council recognises that parents can express a preference for the school/provision they wish their child to attend. For further information, please contact the Education Business Unit.

## **Transport**

East Lothian Council will award assistance with travel if your child is attending the catchment primary or secondary school and lives more than two miles away, based on the most suitable walking route.

Assistance with travel will not be given if you have chosen to send your child to a non-catchment school.

## **Composite Classes**

Composite classes are formed in the majority of East Lothian schools. A composite class is one in which pupils from 2 or more year groups are taught together. The number of pupils in a composite class should be no more than 25. Composite classes are based primarily on pupil age. For example a P3/4 class would have the oldest pupils in P3 and the youngest pupils in P4. The only other factors considered are if a child has severe/ complex needs and the physical size of the classroom.

All classes, whether composite or not, contain pupils of different abilities and levels of development. Teachers use a variety of methods, for example, small group teaching and individualised learning to ensure that the differing abilities of all children are met.

## **Section 2 - enrolling your child in an East Lothian Council School**

Entry into the new Primary One (P1) and Secondary One (S1) classes is administered by the Education Business Unit, which is part of Resources and People Services.

### **When is the earliest my child can start school?**

Any child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 March 2019 and the last day of February 2020 can start school in August 2019. There is no general intake of P1 children at any other time during the session.

### **Early entry to Primary School**

If your child has not reached the age of 5 by the last day in February 2020 they do not fall within the definition of a 'qualifying child'. Parents cannot normally make a formal placing request for a child to start school early. However, under section 38 of Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, parental wishes for a child to start school early should be considered if the Authority deems that it would be appropriate given the child's aptitude and ability. If you require information on admission of children under school age to primary school please contact the Education Business Unit.

### **When is the latest my child can start school?**

Any child who is five before the beginning of the autumn term should start school in August 2019 (ie the start of the new school session in mid-August). If you would like some advice about the best starting date for your child, please talk to the nursery staff or to the school's Head Teacher.

### **Which primary school should my child attend?**

For every address there is a local primary school (the "catchment" school) and for some areas, there is also a local Roman Catholic school. Most parents choose to send their children to their catchment school. Catchment school maps are available on our website. If you are not sure which is your catchment school, you should contact the Education Business Unit.

All parents have the right, however, to request a place for their child in another school. Wherever possible, the education authority must grant these requests. Further information is to be found in Section 3.

### **How to register a pupil into P1**

If you want your child to go to the catchment school you should register your child with the school. Birth certificates and proof of residence (the most recent Council Tax Assessment letter/book plus a recent utility bill) must be produced. You should do this before **16 November 2018** (specific day/time should be checked with the school concerned). This allows the children living in the catchment area to be given priority for places. It is advisable to register in your catchment school even if you are making a non-catchment placing request.

Placement in a primary school is based on **home address** — attendance in the nursery class does not guarantee a place if they do not live within the school's catchment area . Most pupils will enrol in their catchment school.

If you want your child to go to another school, you can obtain an application form from any East Lothian primary school, the Education Business Unit or the website from November. All requests should be received before **24 December 2018**. If you apply for a place after this date, your request will be considered, but the availability of places may be limited.

### **How to register a child in S1**

For the new S1 intake, all parents of P7 pupils who are in attendance at an East Lothian primary school will automatically receive written confirmation of the catchment secondary school, serving their **home address**, in mid November. (No further action is normally required if you wish your child to attend the catchment secondary school.)

If you would prefer your child to start S1 at another school instead of the catchment school, you have to make a placing request. You can get an application form from any East Lothian primary school, the Education Business Unit or the website from November. Forms should be completed and returned to the Education Business Unit, Education by **24 December 2018**.

In the event of the catchment primary or secondary school being oversubscribed, the Education Business Unit, will contact you.

**How to register a pupil into P1 and S1 after August 2019, and at all other stages**

In the first instance parents should make contact with the school directly (preferably in writing) to enquire if they have space for their child in the relevant year group. You should include the name and address of the pupil, date of birth and a contact telephone number.

Children living in the catchment area are given priority for places in the local school. In the Roman Catholic school where there are more catchment pupils than places available, priority is given to the catchment pupils who have been baptised Roman Catholics.

At other stages, if requesting a place in a secondary school parents should also include the courses the pupil is currently taking.

## **Section 3 - placing requests**

Parents have the right to express a preference for a particular school that they want their child to attend. This is normally done by completing a non-catchment placing request application form. This form is available from any East Lothian primary school, the Education Business Unit or the East Lothian Council website (link below):

**<http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/schoolenrolandplacingrequests>**

The closing date for these is **24 December 2018**.

Please note that for both new P1 and S1 intake you can only make one placing request at a time per pupil. If you enter two or more schools on the form, only the first will be considered. If your initial placing request is refused you can make a second request for another school.

### **Granting a request**

While most requests are granted, in certain cases this is not possible for various reasons. Any reason for refusal of the placing request will be explained at that stage. Once a pupil has been offered a place, the offer will not be withdrawn unless the place was obtained on the basis of false information.

A pupil moving into a catchment area cannot take a place from a non-catchment pupil already admitted to the school.

### **Priority for places**

Pupils living in a school's catchment area have priority over those from outside. Roman Catholic children living in the catchment area of a Roman Catholic school have priority over non-Catholics.

### **Consideration of requests**

When there are fewer requests than places available, all the requests are usually granted. When there are more placing requests than places available, the Head of Education will consider the request and decide which pupils will be granted a place. Parents are not interviewed but each individual case is examined and the circumstances mentioned in the written application are taken into account.

### **Reasons given by parents for placing requests**

The Council Committee for Education has decided that the following factors may be taken into account:

- pupil living in East Lothian
- certified medical reasons for wanting a particular school
- access for the disabled
- brother or sister continuing to attend the school requested
- educational course available only at the school requested
- parents' kind of work or place of work
- behavioural problems of pupil
- road safety
- ease of travel to school
- nearness of home to school
- attendance at the catchment primary school (for a secondary school request)

- parents' affinity with the religious beliefs of the school
- having suffered or likely to suffer bullying or racial harassment
- parents' affinity with the aims and philosophy of the school

Parents do not have to mention any of these if they do not wish to. Alternatively, they may give one or even several reasons. Mention of any of these factors does not guarantee that a placing request will be granted.

### **Refusals**

If a request is refused, reasons will be given. The grounds on which a place may be refused are set by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended), such as:

- where another teacher would have to be provided to accommodate the pupil
- where money would have to be spent on the school
- where it would be detrimental to the child's education
- where it could affect order and discipline in the school or the educational well-being of other pupils
- where it would prevent the Council from reserving places

### **Other matters considered by the Head of Education**

When requests are considered other factors may be taken into account, apart from those given by parents.

These include:

- legal requirements affecting the school building and accommodation
- maximum class size
- the effect of admission on composite classes (classes containing pupils from more than one school year)

## **Appeals**

Further information on appeals is to be found at the end of Section 4.

## **Section 4 - what happens when you make a placing request**

These guidelines have been approved by the Council Committee for Education for dealing with placing requests. They are also intended to help parents make a placing request.

### **Procedure**

1. All placing requests will be acknowledged on receipt. If you have not received an acknowledgement within 14 days, you should contact the Education Business Unit.
2. If there are no grounds for refusing a placing request, it will be granted. You will be informed of this decision after the 15 March and before the end of April. If the request is granted the place at your catchment school may be allocated to another child.
3. If the school you specify has more placing requests than places, then pupils living within the school's catchment area will have priority. However, no pupil who has been properly admitted to a school will have to transfer against the parent's wishes to accommodate a pupil who has subsequently moved into the catchment area. A "proper" admission is one made on the basis of correct information from the parents.

4. In the case of Roman Catholic schools, where applications from those living within the catchment area exceed the number of places available, priority will be given to those applicants who declare an affinity with the religious beliefs of the school. In such cases, it must be established that the pupils concerned have been baptised in the Roman Catholic Church before the 31 December in the year prior to entry to P1.
5. Where there are more placing requests than places in a school, the factors listed in section 3 will be taken into account in allocating places. This will be done according to the particular circumstances of each individual case. While the factors will be taken into account, it is not guaranteed that a request will thereby be given priority, or granted.
6. Before a placing request is refused, it will be considered by the Head of Education in the case of entry to primary school (P1) or secondary school (S1), and by the Head Teacher in all other cases. They will consider written information supplied by you when making your request. It is therefore in your interest to include any information and supporting documentation relevant to the factors listed when making a request. You should not wait until the refusal of a placing request before providing all relevant information. If your request is refused, you will be given the reasons for that decision and placed on a waiting list. A place will be reserved at your catchment school. You have the opportunity to make a second preference request at this stage.

7. In considering placing requests, the Head of Education will take into account, among other things, the following factors:
- (a) the design capacity of, and physical education space in the school requested, in terms of:
    - The School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) Regulations 1967
    - Legislation on Health and Safety, Building Control and Fire Precautions.
    - Other relevant safety standards relating to school accommodation.
  - (b) the appropriate normal maximum class size as determined by legislation and as defined in the Conditions of Service for Teaching Staff, which form part of the Authority's contract of employment with an individual teacher.
  - (c) the educational desirability of normally not creating additional composite classes.
  - (d) the retention of places for pupils moving into the district during the academic year. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended). The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000.

## **Waiting Lists**

If a placing request is refused, your child's name is placed on a waiting list for a place at the requested school. Waiting lists are held until the end of the school session. For the vast majority of applicants, their place on the waiting list will be formed by giving priority to those with siblings attending the school and then by distance (nearest to the requested school). Distances are calculated using the shortest driving route to the main entrance of the requested school if over 2 miles or safest walking route accompanied by an adult to a recognised point of entry to the school campus if under 2 miles. Please note that safe walking routes are considered to be those on a recognised walking surfaces and not through grass playing fields or agricultural land.

## **Appeals**

As required by law, the Council has set up an "Independent Appeal Committee" to consider appeals from parents against the Council's decision to refuse a placing request. Appeals must be lodged, in writing, no later than 28 days of the refusal letter being received. Parents can present their cases to the Appeal Committee in person, or with the help of a representative or friend. Details of the appeals procedure will be made available to parents if the Authority refuses their request.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **Further Information**

Further information on any of these points may be obtained from:

Education Business Unit  
East Lothian Council  
Resources and People Services  
John Muir House  
HADDINGTON  
EH41 3HA

Telephone: 01620 827587 / 827599  
Email: [schoolplacements@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:schoolplacements@eastlothian.gov.uk)  
Website: <http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/schoolenrolandplacingrequests>

or

Choosing a School—Guide for Parents, available on the Scottish Government Website:

[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

This publication provides information on the relevant legislation.

More information regarding the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, can be found on the following website:

[www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)



Versions of this leaflet are available on request on audiotape, in Braille or in your own language.  
☎ 01620 827199

*Please note the information contained in this booklet is correct at the time of publication (October 2018).*





