

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



EDUCATION EXECUTIVE

ADDITIONAL YEAR OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (DEFERRED ENTRY TO P1) – POLICY STATEMENT AND PROCEDURE

ADDITIONAL YEAR OF SCHOOL EDUCATION – POLICY STATEMENT AND PROCEDURE

REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (PRIMARY, EARLY YEARS AND RESOURCES)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Education Executive approval for the revised policy statements and procedures on an Additional Year of Early Learning and Childcare (Deferred Entry to P1) and an Additional Year of School Education.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To note the revised procedures and approve the revised policy statements on an Additional Year of Early Learning and Childcare (Deferred Entry to P1) and an Additional Year of School Education.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The Provision of Early Learning and Childcare (Specified Children) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Education (Scotland) Act 1980
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	Consideration of delegation to Head of Education (Primary, Early Learning and Resources) to modernise and improve procedures where benefits for parents/carers and educational benefits can be realised.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	-

V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The cost of full implementation of the Early Learning and Childcare obligation across Scotland has been taken account of in ongoing revenue funding from April 2022
VII	Consideration at PDSP	25 October 2022
VIII	Other consultations	Headteachers, West Lothian Parent Council Forum, Principal Education Psychologist.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

All parents and carers in Scotland have the legal right to defer their child's entry to primary school if they are not yet 5 years old at the beginning of the school year.

Currently, the youngest children (those with a January or February birth date) are automatically entitled to an additional year of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) at their nursery, childminder or playgroup, when they defer their primary one start. Those with an August to December birthday can still defer their school start, but have to apply to the local authority to request funded early learning and childcare for that year.

The Scottish Government has legislated so that, from August 2023, all children who defer will automatically be able to access funded ELC.

West Lothian Council anticipated the introduction of this legislation, and practice has been to grant access to funded ELC for those eligible to defer entry to P1 since August 2021, within existing policy and budget.

To reflect this legislative change, it is necessary to update the current policy on an additional year of early learning and childcare, and also on an additional year of school education as these two issues were previously dealt with in the same policy document. As they are substantially different issues, it has been decided to present them as separate policy statements and procedures in future.

Draft policy statements and procedures are attached for the consideration of the Education Executive.

The Additional Year of Early Learning and Childcare (Deferred Entry to P1) Policy Statement and Procedure has been updated to reflect legislative change. No significant change has been made to the Additional Year of School Education Policy Statement and Procedure following confirmation from the Principal Educational Psychologist that it continues to reflect the latest research on the matter.

A number of initiatives are underway and planned to modernise and improve the Pupil Placement function. These include the introduction of a new support system to increase automation of procedures, reducing bureaucracy and delay in decision making, with the aim of providing a more responsive service to parents/carers. Consideration of greater involvement of schools, and delegation of some decision making to schools, with the aim of improving educational outcomes, is also underway. For this reason, it is intended that the current procedures will be subject to change where benefits for parents/carers and improved educational outcomes can be realised, and that the Head of Education (Primary, Early Years and Resources) be granted delegated authority to make these changes.

E. CONCLUSION

The Education Executive is invited to consider and approve the revised policy statements and procedures on an Additional Year of Early Learning and Childcare (Deferred Entry to P1) and an Additional Year of School Education.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments:

- 1) Additional Year of Early Learning and Childcare (Deferred Entry to P1) Policy Statement and Procedure
- 2) Additional Year of School Education Policy Statement and Procedure

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Head of Education (Primary, Early Years and Resources)

Date of meeting: 15 November 2022



Policy and Procedure: Additional Year of Early Learning & Childcare (Deferral of Entry to P1)

Author: Hannah Haywood

Service: Education Services

Review Date: November 2023

POLICY STATEMENT

All parents/carers in Scotland have the legal right to defer their child's entry to primary school if they are not yet 5 years old at the beginning of the school year. All children whose entry to Primary 1 is deferred will automatically be entitled to an additional year of funded Early Learning and Childcare.

Dates at which children start Primary School

Children whose fifth birthdays occur between 1 March and the start of the next school session must start Primary school in the session after their fifth birthday occurs.

Children whose fifth birthdays occur after the start of the school session and before 1 March of the following year are able to enter Primary 1 in the session in which their fifth birthday occurs. They are also able to defer entry into Primary 1 until the beginning of the session after the one in which their 5th birthday occurs. Parents/carers of children whose birthday falls within this range of dates can make the choice whether their child will start primary school or have an additional year of Early Learning and Childcare.

PROCEDURE

1.1 Applying for an Additional Year of Early Learning and Childcare

Parents/carers who are considering deferring their child's entry to primary school should ask for advice from staff in their child's early learning and childcare establishment before making a decision. Parents/carers must complete the **Application for an Additional Year of Early Learning & Childcare** form.

The dates on which children are eligible to start primary school are included in the **Early Learning & Childcare Admission - Guidance Notes**.

Eligible children are entitled to an additional year of Early Learning & Childcare at a Council establishment or partner provider (childminder, playgroup or private nursery).

Applications must be received by the 15 March each year. This is important to ensure that these places can be granted before new applications for each setting are considered. Applications received after this date will be considered, but places in a setting or session may



not be available if they have been granted to other applicants.

Applications for eligible children who are requesting where their child is already attending or are receiving funding to attend will have an additional year granted automatically when applied for by 15 March.

Applications received requesting a setting/session the child is not already attending will be offered an additional year of Early Learning and Childcare, however it may not be possible to grant the specific setting, times and/or days requested.

Applications received after the 15 March each year, will be considered, but places may not be available if they have been granted to other applicants.

Confirmation of the placement will be issued as the application is processed.

When an additional year of Early Learning and Childcare is granted any Primary 1 place previously allocated will be withdrawn.

If a parent/carer who applied for an additional Early Learning & Childcare year changes their mind and wishes to obtain a Primary 1 place instead, this must be confirmed in writing. The availability of Primary 1 places may be very limited, as places may already have been allocated.

1.2 Applying for an Additional Year of Early Learning & Childcare in another Council Area

Parents/carers of eligible children can apply for Early Learning & Childcare in another Council area.

Parents/carers of eligible children should apply to the Council area in which their choice of Early Learning and Childcare is located. That Council will then determine whether to grant the place or not. If the place is granted parents/carers should inform West Lothian Council (Pupil Placement) that a Primary 1 place in a West Lothian primary school will not be required for another year. This will help the Council plan to ensure that sufficient places are available in future years.



Policy and Procedure: **Additional Year of School Education – Policy Statement and Procedure**

Author: Geraldine Armstrong

Service: Education Services

Review Date: November 2023

POLICY STATEMENT

The Council is committed to the pursuit of educational excellence and aims to make the best possible educational provision for all, taking full account of the needs of each individual child or young person.

This policy applies to all children and young people of school age and follows the principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

Almost all children and young people will move through the primary and secondary stages, along with their same age peer group.

Evidence from research supports the view that it is beneficial for almost all children and young people that they will move through the primary and secondary stages along with their same age peer group, both with regard to social and emotional development and educational progress. The available research also demonstrates that children and young people who repeat a year tend to suffer from longer-term disadvantage, such as poorer mental health outcomes, negative attitudes towards learning and difficulties with social and peer relationships.

This policy recognises that within each year group there will be a wide range of abilities and needs, and that these can be met within the year group with appropriate differentiation and support.

However, there may be exceptional circumstances in which an additional year at the same stage of education can be considered, and the procedure set out below will be followed where an additional year at the same stage is suggested or requested.

PROCEDURE

The procedure sets out how the Council will decide on individual requests for additional years within all stages of education.

A parent/carer should make a request in writing to the Head Teacher of the school their child attends, detailing the exceptional circumstances why they wish their child to be considered for an additional year at the same stage of education.



Where a parent/carer requests an additional year for their child, at the same stage of school education, discussion will take place between the Head Teacher and the school's Education Officer. The views of the child or young person will be considered. The views of other relevant professionals will also be sought where appropriate.

Should an additional year be agreed in principle, there can be no guarantee of placement within the child's or young person's existing establishment as all places may already be taken up.

If the request is refused there is no right of appeal.