

## **London Borough of Merton**

### **Interim Policy and Guidance to parents: The Admission Of Summer Born Children**

**October 2015**

#### **Introduction**

Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, issued a letter on 8 September describing the Government's future policy intention regarding summer born children. Accompanying this was a request for admission authorities to take immediate action prior to new guidance and regulations being issued. This follows earlier Department for Education guidance issued in December 2014 which stated requests should only be agreed in very limited circumstances.

LB Merton officers will take a more open approach to such applications for late summer born children with the presumption that they will be approved as long as there is a reasonable justification from the parents that it is in the child's best interests, and we have undertaken some procedural checks to ensure there are no known issues that we may need to consider further.

To make the process easier for parents we will also no longer routinely request specific evidence from a professional, but we will continue to require a written request for consideration until such time as Regulations are amended.

Please note this policy update only applies to Merton community schools, as VA schools, Free Schools, Academies and schools in other boroughs are able to have their own policy.

This Interim Policy and Guidance is to enable the council to administer admissions applications fairly to the spirit of the School Minister's letter, while taking into account some of the practical issues that arise from it, such as the implication for nursery places.

#### **Submitting Requests**

Written requests should be made at the same time as a Reception application for entry according to the child's date of birth; this allows us to seek the view of the preference school (which we are required to do under current regulations) as well as ensures a school place can be allocated if, for any reason, the request is not granted or parents decide not to proceed with the request.

Requests should therefore be submitted in advance of the closing date for Reception applications, 15 January 2016, and may be made by email to [admissions@merton.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@merton.gov.uk) .

Where parents wish to be considered for a school where the London Borough of Merton is not the admission authority (such as an Academy, Free School, Voluntary Aided school, or school outside of Merton), a separate request must currently be made to each admission authority.

## **Outcomes**

We will endeavour to consider requests and provide outcomes within 2 weeks of the request being made. Outcomes will provide instructions on what to do next and, if the request is not agreed, the reasons for this will be given.

## **Reception Applications The Following Year**

Where parents, whose requests have been agreed, make a further Reception application for the following academic year, this must be made on a paper application form via the parents' home local authority.

The Pan-London Online Admissions Portal currently only permits applications to be made according to the 12 month date of birth range.

## **Nursery Education**

Parents may continue to access the Nursery Education Grant until they reach statutory school age. Parents should speak to their nursery provider (if not a LB Merton community school) if their place will remain available for a further year.

## **Attending a Nursery Attached to a Community School**

Where a request is made for delayed entry to Reception prior to the closing date of 15 January, and the request is agreed, a child attending a LB Merton community school nursery may remain in the nursery for the following academic year up to the end of the summer term prior to reaching statutory school age.

If a request is not agreed, the child will leave nursery at the end of that academic year.

Where a late request is made following the 15 January closing date, the parent will need to request to go back onto the waiting list for the nursery as the nursery place may have already been allocated on to another child.

If no application for nursery has been made, this may be done following the outcome being issued.

*Please note – attendance in a school nursery does not give any priority for a Reception place.*

## **Future Review of This Policy**

A new School Admissions Code is expected to be introduced in early 2016; LB Merton admissions policy will be reviewed and determined at that time.