

Early Entry

Arrangements for entry to primary schools in the Renfrewshire Council area are on a once a year basis - at the start of the new session in August each year. Only children whose fifth birthday falls between 1 March of that year and the last day of February of the following year will automatically be admitted to school. It is, however, open to parents to make a request for early entry to school for a child whose fifth birthday falls after the appropriate latest date.

Parents should be aware of the following issues associated with early entry into school.

1 Physical Development

Is your child physically mature enough to cope with a full-time programme of education?

School places physical demands on children for approximately five hours each day. If a child is not physically mature enough to deal with the school situation, problems may arise in relation to:-

- (a) Concentration on a task
- (b) Mastery of basic learning skills
- (c) Acceptance by other children in relation to the demands of both classroom and playground activities.

2 Emotional/Social Development

Is your child emotionally and socially mature enough to cope with a full-time programme of education?

As a consequence of early admission to school the child would be younger than the other pupils in the class. Difficulties may arise for the child in relation to:-

- (a) Separating from parent.
- (b) Making friends with others within the class group.
- (c) Play activities within the classroom and the playground.
- (d) Behavioural problems due to lack of maturity.

3 Learning Development

Has your child developed sufficiently to cope with the learning programme in a school?

The child learns informally through play and through other individual, social and family experiences in the pre-school period, early entry to school may deprive the child of such activities and experiences, which prepare him/her for the more formal learning situation.

4 Long-Term Implications

Have you considered the long-term implications for your child throughout his/her career?

- (a) At the end of P1, when it may be felt that the child is not ready to proceed to P2, because of difficulty in adjusting to the school learning environment.
- (b) At the end of secondary education when the child will be too young to leave school along with his/her class group and when there may therefore be difficulties with entrance to a desired form of higher education.

Early Entry Requests

A press advertisement will appear in the month of December advising parents of their right to make a placing request and asking for applications to be made by 1 February. Applications for early entry requests should also be made at this time.

Applications should be made using the attached pro-forma to the Director of Education and Leisure Services. Acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days of receipt. The local education office address is:

South Building, Cotton Street,
Paisley, Renfrewshire, PA1 1LE
Telephone: 0141 842 5637

Arrangements will be made for you and your child to be interviewed at the receiving primary school. You will be informed of the date and time of the interview and will be sent a simple form to complete about your child's pre-school experience.

The interview will normally last for no more than an hour and will be conducted by a specialist in early education, designated by the authority, and by the head teacher of the receiving school. The purpose of the interview will be to determine whether your child has reached the level of development which will allow him/her to settle happily into a primary one class.

Following the interview, a report will go to the appropriate member of education and leisure services. If it is decided that your request should be granted, you will receive a letter inviting you to enrol your child in the school of your choice.

In considering requests for early entry the council must take into account the normal constraints affecting the provision of education generally. In determining any request therefore in addition to making an assessment of the child's suitability, the council will require to consider whether additional resources, in terms of staff or by adaptation of school buildings or facilities will require to be committed as a result of the early entry Request.

If education and leisure services decides to refuse your request, you will be advised accordingly and sent a copy of the assessment report on your child. Where there are more requests than there are places available for the P1 stage at a particular school all requests will be considered by a local attendance council and recommendations made to the responsible member of education and leisure services in line with the council's priorities on admission ie:

PRIMARY

Where there are any places available in a primary school priority will be given in the granting of placing requests to those children who live in its delineated area but have been unable to be accommodated in the area school to date and thereafter to early entry children who are considered suitable for primary education and who live in its delineated area.

GENERAL

Thereafter where there are more placing requests for primary or secondary schools than there are places available the priorities for admission to all schools in the Renfrewshire area are as follows:

- (i) the presence of older siblings in the school
- (ii) for children residing within the boundaries of Renfrewshire Council, the priorities in order should be:
 - (a) for Catholic schools, children from outwith the delineated area who have been baptised in the Roman Catholic church and whose parents declare an affinity with the religious beliefs of the school;
 - (b) medical grounds, supported by the family doctor and by the community medicine specialist, that state that the child could only be educated with difficulty in another school;
 - (c) in the case of secondary schools, those children transferring from an associated primary school within its delineated area;
 - (d) in the case of single parent families where refusal of the placing request would seriously prejudice the child's care and well-being;
 - (e) detriment to the child's educational well-being in respect of the availability of subjects previously studied in another school;
 - (f) all other children residing within the council area whose parents have made a placing request.

Once all children residing in Renfrewshire have been considered, the order of priority set out at 1(a) - 1(f) will apply to children residing outwith the boundaries of Renfrewshire. Once all placing requests have been considered according to the priorities listed and there are more requests than places available the remaining places will be allocated by ballot. You do not have to give reasons for making an early entry request. If, however, there are more requests than places available, your case may be strengthened if the reasons for the request are known. Due to the time required to call you and your child for interview it is essential that requests be made in good time to allow the procedures to be followed and to ensure that should the request be granted the child would be able to commence school at the start of the new session.

Transport

Renfrewshire Council has a policy of providing free transport to all primary pupils who live more than one mile from the recognised shortest safe walking route from their local school. This policy is one which is more generous than that prescribed by statute and indeed is one of the most generous of any Scottish Local Education

Authority and therefore could be reviewed at any time. If an “early entry” child is offered a place in his/her delineated area school transport will be provided in accordance with the policy stated above. In all other cases no transport will be provided other than in exceptional circumstances.

Further Information

Information concerning schools in other local authorities is available from the education office of that authority and supplementary information on any school is school concerned.

In addition this council has prepared a more comprehensive leaflet on placing requests for school age children which is available from education offices and should be read in conjunction with this leaflet. It must be appreciated that this information leaflet provides only general guidance about early entry requests. Specific

Education (Scotland) Act 1981 (HMSO)

Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 1982 (S1 1982 No 950 (S.125)) and Amendment Etc Regulations 1993

Education (Appeal Committee Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations 1982 (S1 1982 No 1736)

Education (Placing in Schools and Deemed Decisions) (Scotland) Regulations 1981 (S1 185 No 1733)