

Children & Families

Prevention and Early Intervention Team

FEL Admissions Policy Template 2018



CONTENTS	
Introduction	3
Understanding Priorities	3
Standard Admissions Policy Content	4
1. Schedule	4
2. Services Available	4
3. Charges	4
4. Allocation of Places	5
5. Supporting access to Extended FEL (“30 Hours”)	5
6. Flexibility	5
7. Reception Class Places	5
8. Oversubscription	6
9. Waiting Lists	6
Appendix 1: Example breakdown of charges to parents/carers	7
Appendix 2: Oversubscription Criteria: supporting notes	8
Appendix 3: Legislation	8

Introduction

Under the Funded early Learning (FEL) Code of Practice, all providers are advised to have an admissions policy that is available to parents and easy to understand.

Section 8.2 of Sheffield's FEL Code of Practice states: "Each provider **must** have a written admissions policy which must state that Children in Care will be given priority when allocating places."

Admissions policies should be fair, clear and objective but the requirements for different settings will vary widely. For that reason this document serves to provide a guide for providers to build their own admissions policy upon, with consideration of the headings used and the areas discussed.

This guidance refers to FEL services only, and does not refer to private business arrangements.

Understanding Priorities

As a Local Authority our priority is to enable as many children as possible to access early education through FEL funding. This includes supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds who will benefit most from the FEL service.

We understand that different providers will have different priorities, depending on whether they are a school, a community enterprise or a for-profit nursery.

If your setting prioritises children whose parents will pay for additional hours or services, this should be clear in the admissions policy.

If you have a limited number of places that are funded hours only, then it may be helpful to apply this guidance and the priorities for allocating places to free places and paid for places separately.

Standard Admissions Policy Content

1. Schedule

Any scheduled dates that parents need to be aware of. These might include:

- Open days
- Application opening date
- Application closing date
- Date of announcement or confirmation
- Waiting list review date

2. Services Available

Which services are on offer and how many places are available?

There are three early education entitlements available to children aged 2, 3 and 4:

- 2 Year old FEL (subject to eligibility, code issued by SCC Portal)
- Universal FEL for 3&4 year olds
- Extended FEL, aka “30 Hours”, for 3&4 year olds (subject to eligibility, code issued by HMRC)

This section includes how many places are available completely free of charge and how many places are available where parents are able to pay for additional hours, services or consumables.

3. Charges

Are parents are expected to pay for consumable items (e.g. food) or additional services (e.g. music lessons)? These additional items/services should be detailed.

What is your policy for parents who are unable to pay additional charges? This could be the offer of completely free places or waiving additional fees.

Under what circumstances do you waive charges? For example, if the child qualifies for EYPP, if the family also pays full fees for a younger sibling, or if the family pays for additional hours.

If priority is given to parents who will pay additional charges or for additional hours, this should be clearly stated and the over-subscription criteria should be applied to any completely free places separately from places with charges attached.

Is your lunch hour a privately paid for hour or part of the funded hours?

It is the provider’s responsibility to ensure that all charges are clearly explained in your communication to parents, including your admissions policy. If there are different charging models, these should be detailed separately so parents can work out any charges they may be liable for.

An example of how different models and charges can be explained for parents is available in Appendix 1.

4. Allocation of Places

For 3&4 year olds, do you prioritise “30 Hour” or “15 Hours” places?

You may want to support as many individual children as possible and prioritise “15 hour” places. Therefore you will only allocate extended hours once the demand for universal hours has been satisfied.

Alternatively, you may prioritise continuity for those children entitled to the extended hours. In this instance you can assign a balance of “15 Hour” and “30 Hour” places.

5. Supporting access to Extended FEL (“30 Hours”)

How do you support parents when you are unable to offer the full entitlement to an eligible child?

As a minimum your policy should explain that they are able to use more than one setting. It could also include details on partnerships with other providers, robust transition procedures, or information sharing agreements.

Your application form should ask parents whether they are interested in taking only part of the entitlement with you if you are unable to provide the full hours.

Universal and Extended FEL hours are funded at the same rate, so you should be able to support parents who are unable to access their full entitlement at one setting by providing either set of hours without prejudice.

6. Flexibility

FEL funding can be offered between 6am and 8pm. Are funded hours available for the full opening times of the setting?

How many weeks of the year is FEL available? If you operate over more than 38 weeks, do you have a set stretched offer or a choice of weeks?

If you offer a more flexible service, for example for shift workers, explain how parents can apply for this here.

For children with SEND, the child may benefit from taking some of their entitlement at a specialist setting. This may require a more flexible model that allows normal sessions to be altered.

The FEL Code of Practice stipulates a 4 week notice period for changing providers mid-term. This should be explained to parents here, along with any requirements to give you notice for holidays.

7. Reception Class Places

School settings should make it clear in their nursery admissions policy that a place at the school nursery does not guarantee a place in the school’s reception class and parents should be directed to the relevant enrolment procedure.

8. Oversubscription

The following order of priority is proposed in order to support childcare for those in greatest need when the demand for places outstrips the places available:

1. Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children*
2. Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)
3. Vulnerable children
4. Parent with exceptional need
5. Sibling at the same setting or school attached to the setting
6. Age of child – oldest to youngest
7. Proximity to the setting
8. No local alternative
9. Taking whole of Universal Entitlement (up to 15 hours a week)
10. Taking whole of Extended Entitlement (up to 30 hours a week)
11. Paying for additional services/consumables
12. Paying for additional hours of childcare

See Appendix 2 for definitions and supporting notes for terms 1-5.

*The priority for children who are in care is mandatory under the FEL Code of Practice.

We would also expect children with Special Educational Needs or a Disability to be given priority and for settings to access the available support and training to deliver that service effectively. Please see Appendix 3 for links to the Equality Act 2010 and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25.

Any review or appeals process should be clearly explained in this section.

9. Waiting Lists

Once all your available places have been allocated, unsuccessful applicants can be placed on a waiting list. How you manage this waiting list should be clear and should follow the same priority order as oversubscriptions.

Once a child is on the waiting list, the oversubscription criteria should take precedence over the length of time the child has been on the list.

Appendix 1: Example breakdown of charges for parents/carers

	Options available			
	15 hours Funded Early Learning (Universal offer)	30 hours a week Funded Early Learning (Universal offer plus Extended Entitlement)	35 hours a week: Funded Early Learning plus paid for lunch hours	50 hours a week: Funded Early Learning plus Privately Paid For Childcare
Applicable charges	No charge	No charge for the Universal offer	No charge for the Universal offer	No charge for the Universal offer
		No charge for the Extended entitlement. Subject to availability - places will be allocated according to our admissions policy.	£X per Extended FEL hour for additional services (see below), up to 15 hours per week. and/or £X for lunch hour, including food.	£X per Extended FEL hour for additional services (see below), up to 15 hours per week. and/or £X for lunch hour, including food.
				£X per hour Additional services are included in this rate.

Additional Services Include:

- Breakfast
- Snacks
- Drinks
- Nappies, wipes, sun cream
- Extracurricular activities (e.g. drama, music, trips, dance, yoga)

Appendix 2: Oversubscription Criteria: supporting notes

Looked After Children

This includes children who are currently in care and children who were previously in care but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

All children in this category are given equal status by the Local Authority regardless of their current circumstance.

Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)

This includes children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHC) or children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

Vulnerable children

Children who are subject of a recognised child protection plan.

Parent with exceptional need

This includes children with a parent who has a medical need affecting their mobility and the setting is the nearest to the family home.

Sibling at the same setting or school attached to the setting

This includes all children living together as a family at the same address. In the case of twins, triplets etc. the siblings should be placed together. Consideration should be given to families where another child is already attending at the same location, whether that be the nursery setting or an older sibling attending school.

Appendix 3: Legislation

Equality and inclusion is a key part of the aspiration underpinning the FEL entitlements, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children, children in need and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years July 2014 is available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

For wider legislative requirements protecting against discrimination, refer to the Equality Act 2010: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>