

## Choosing Your Child's Entry date for School: Information for Parents and Carers

This leaflet is intended to help you make an informed choice about when your child should start primary school by answering some of the most frequently asked questions we receive.

Throughout this document, the word 'parent' should be interpreted as including the child's legal guardian.

The term 'setting' should be interpreted as any Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision which could include a local authority nursery, a partner provider nursery or a funded childminder.

All information in this document relates to the school year commencing August 2023.

### Some Frequently Asked Questions

#### Will my child start primary one before or after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday?

Children who are five on or between 1 March and the school commencement date in August must legally start school in August or parents can make arrangements to home educate their child.

Parents of any child with a 5<sup>th</sup> birthday on or between the day after the school commencement date and the last day in February of the following year have the legal right to choose whether they will start school before or after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. If parents, with a child in this age group, choose for their child to start school after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday their child will be automatically entitled to an additional year of 1140 hours of funded ELC.

Alternatively, parents can decide to home educate their child or make other suitable arrangements for their education, e.g. enrolling them at an independent school. Please note: ELC does not constitute primary education.

| <b>Where a child's 5th birthday falls on or between the following dates:</b>                | <b>The child will cease to be eligible ELC from:</b>           | <b>Starting school and stopping ELC</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> March and the school commencement date in August                            | August occurring in the year of their 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday | Children must start school in August the same year they turn 5.<br>Alternatively, suitable arrangements e.g. home schooling should be made for the child's education.                             |
| The day after the school commencement date in August and end of February the following year | August after their 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday                    | Children can start school in August preceding their 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday, but their entitlement to Early Learning and Childcare continues to the August after their 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday. |

### **If I am considering sending my child to school after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, what should I do?**

You should discuss your thoughts with staff in your child's ELC setting. Staff will meet with you, to discuss your child's learning and development. Advised by the information shared you will be able to make your decision about when your child should start school, before or after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

If you choose for your child to have an additional year of funded ELC you should complete a [declaration form](#) (Please note the declaration form will be available to complete from week commencing 16 January 2023) to retain your child's current place and attendance pattern for their pre-school year. If you wish a different attendance pattern for your child's pre-school year or wish to access ELC in a different funded provider you will be required to complete an application form.

If you decide that your child will start school, you should complete the school enrolment form. (Please note the school enrolment form will be available to complete from week commencing 9 January 2023)

### **When do I need to finalise my decision whether my child will start school before or after his/her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday?**

Ideally decisions should be finalised by the last day in February. You should either complete the school enrolment form if your child is starting primary one or notify the ELC setting that you wish your child to have another year of funded ELC. This will allow children to be appropriately involved in transition activities if they are moving on to school. It will also enable decisions to be made about staffing in primary one classes and capacities in ELC settings for the following academic year.

If you are unsure, you should notify the ELC setting and at the same time register your child for primary school to ensure a space is held for them should you change your mind. Every effort will be made to give your child a place in the ELC setting of your choice, but this cannot be guaranteed. Places will be allocated according to Perth and Kinross Council [Policy and Guidelines for Admission to Nursery Classes and Early Childhood Centres](#).

### **Will my child cope with primary one?**

Primary schools are very well equipped to meet a wide range of needs. Additional supports are put in place at transition from nursery to primary one to ensure individual children's needs are met in a supportive learning context. e.g. use of visual supports to aid communication; support for toileting and other self-care needs; playground supports; active learning opportunities; buddies etc. The staff at your child's ELC setting will be happy to discuss these possibilities with you. You can also approach the headteacher of your catchment school for information.

### **If I choose to home educate my child for their first year of education can my child start primary one the following year?**

Children home educated in the year after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday would begin in primary two the following year should parents then opt to send their child to school. Further information is available on the Perth and Kinross website [Home Education - A Parent's Choice - Perth & Kinross Council](#)

### **Is there anything I need to consider or be aware of if I send my child to school after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday?**

It is important to consider your child's school career from nursery to secondary school and beyond. For example, by sending your child to school after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday your child will legally have the option to leave secondary school before sitting their National Examinations.

If you wish to discuss any information in this leaflet please do not hesitate to contact a member of staff at your child's ELC setting. Staff will be aware of the Policy and Guidelines for Admission to Nursery Classes and Early Childhood Centres and can advise you further.

| Timeline         |  |
|------------------|--|
| November         | Discuss child's progress with ELC staff. Begin decision making.  |
| January/February | Ideally make final decision to allow appropriate transitions arrangements to take place.<br>Inform ELC setting if you wish your child to have an additional year of funded ELC <b>or</b> complete enrolment for school |
| March-June       | Planned experiences to support children moving on to school with transition  |