

Education Resource Group- Parent/Carer Information

Introduction

The City of Edinburgh Council's vision, principles and practice of inclusion are set out in *Included, Engaged and Involved in Edinburgh* (2018) policy and the *Edinburgh Learns Inclusion Framework* (2019)

In accordance with the duties outlined in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000), the City of Edinburgh Council presumes that unless exceptional circumstances exist children and young people will be educated within a mainstream school*.

The Education Resource Group (ERG) reviews requests when the Team Around the Child (TAC) feel that they have exhausted universal and enhanced support and extra help or a specialist placement is needed. The ERG aims to place children in mainstream schools whenever possible, following Edinburgh's GIRFEC Assessment Framework. The group is made up of senior education officers with expertise and experience in various areas of education.

When reviewing specialist placements, the ERG considers:

- Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000)
- presumption of mainstream guidance (2019)
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act (2004)
- views of parent/carers and young person where appropriate
- specialist provision profiles
- the team around the child's assessment of their needs
- to what extent the child's needs are complex and enduring
- evidence of appropriate child planning through GIRFEC procedures
- available capacity in special provision
- prioritising educating children within their learning community.

If specialist places are full, priority is given to children with the greatest need. Placement at one stage (e.g., pre-school) doesn't guarantee placement at the next (e.g., primary or secondary school).

For care-experienced children, additional duties are considered. ERG decisions cannot be appealed, except for placing requests. Further information can be found at [Enquire](#)

Personal data is stored by the City of Edinburgh Council and used to support children throughout their education. More information can be found in their privacy notice. [CEC Privacy Notice](#)

1. Requesting Assistance

An ERG request is made by the child's current school. The school must also provide:

- Minutes from the most recent planning meeting
- A current assessment of the child/young person's needs
- Parental views on the child/young person's educational needs and support required
- The child's views on their own educational needs and support
- Relevant planning documents (e.g., Individual Education Plan (IEP), Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP))

2. Communication

ERG decisions are usually emailed to the Named Person (this is usually the Headteacher) for the child within 10 days of the meeting. The Named Person is responsible for sharing the decision with the child, their parents, and the Team Around the Child. If there is no Named Person, the outcome is shared with the professional working most closely with the family, for example an Education Support Officer (ESO) or Educational Psychologist (EP), who will inform the family.

If a specialist placement is agreed, the ERG will notify the Headteacher of that school. The Team Around the Child will then work together to ensure the child's needs are properly assessed and supported.

3. Transition Stages

The ERG reviews requests for specialist placements during key transitions, such as starting early learning and childcare settings, moving to P1, and from P7 to S1. Not all specialist placement requests will be approved, so parents must also enrol their child in their catchment school. If a specialist place is accepted, the mainstream place will be withdrawn. Final decisions will be made by March 31, 2025.

For transitions from Early Learning and Childcare to Primary School, requests are reviewed in February, and the catchment primary school must be involved in the planning process to explore mainstream support options.

For P7 to Secondary School transitions, requests are reviewed in December, and the catchment secondary school must take part in the planning process to ensure all mainstream support options have been considered.

4. An Additional Funded Year of Early Learning & Childcare

Under the *Standards in Scotland's Schools Act* (2000), the City of Edinburgh Council expects children to start school at age five, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Children who turn five between March 1 and the end of February the following year can start school that August, so some will be younger than five when they begin.

Most parents send their children to school when eligible, but deferred entry can be considered in some cases.

Automatic Deferrals: In accordance with Scottish government guidance children whose 5th birthday falls between the day after their school commences in August (this includes in-service days) and the last day of February the following year can access an additional funded year of Early Learning and Childcare if parents believe that would be in the best interests of their child. In this instance, parents can choose to enrol and send their child to school or defer entry until the following school year. If a child meets this deferral criteria, parents and/or the team around the child if relevant, do not need to seek permission for a deferred entry but are asked to notify the council of this request.

Requesting a Retained Year: It is a legal requirement that children who are five years of age at the start of the new academic year, start school in August. It is only in **exceptional circumstances** that an additional funded year of Early Learning and Childcare will be granted for a child who does not meet the criteria for an automatic deferral. This is at the discretion of the Council and there is little flexibility unless there is clear evidence that this would be in the best interests of the child. Parental preference/circumstance alone would not be considered a reasonable justification for removing a child's right to access school at five years old. Research on repeating a school year shows a consistently negative effect on children's progress, with increased chances of young people disengaging from school and leaving early ([Repeating a year | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)). A child who repeats a year would be old enough to leave school at the end of S3 or December of S4, having had little or no experience of senior phase education or opportunity to achieve national qualifications.

To request a retained year in Early Learning and Childcare parents must make a placing request which has a right of appeal to the Education Appeals Committee. Application can be made through the link [Parent Placing request to ERG](#) or by letter or email.

On receipt of the placing request, further information will be sought from the professionals who are working with the child or young person.

Decisions will be shared directly with the parent/carer. You can register for a primary one place at the same as making your application.

PLEASE NOTE: If you do not register for a Primary One place by 24th December, you may not be allocated a place at your local, catchment primary school.

5. School Stage Retentions

School retention describes the process by which pupils repeat a stage of education they have already completed.

Inclusive practice means learning needs can be met in the school stage appropriate to the learner's age, with access to additional support where required. Additional support needs are not a reason for placing a child in a younger class.

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The ERG will consider requests for a retained year only in exceptional circumstances. This could include, for example, where a child or young person has (or will have) missed a great deal of education through illness. However, even in these circumstances it would be expected that in almost all cases the child or young person's needs would be best met in their age-appropriate class, with additional support and reasonable adjustments as appropriate.

To request a retained year, parents must submit a form [Parental Placing Request to ERG](#)

Additional information from professionals will be required, and the decision will be communicated to the parents. For more details on placing requests and appeals, visit [Enquire](#)

6. Early Admission to Primary School

Early admission to primary school is only granted in **exceptional circumstances**. Admission would only be granted after all other ways of providing education within the early learning and childcare setting had been considered, including the provision of additional support, resources and experiences. The best interests of children are paramount when making decisions and primary consideration must be given to ensuring that no lasting detriment to the child's development can be anticipated as a result of early admission.

The law does not, however, allow parents who have been granted early admission for their child, to make a placing request for a specific school. The City of Edinburgh Council has the discretion to decide in which school the early admission is possible. In exercising this discretion, we will respect parental wishes as far as possible.

- **Request Process:** Requests should be made after a planning meeting with evidence of the child's abilities, maturity, and continuous assessment by nursery staff.
- **Form Submission:** Use the link [Parental Placing Request to ERG](#).
- **Important Note:** Being ready for school, missing the entry date, or moving from another country (e.g., England) are not reasons for early admission.

Appeals: If you disagree with the decision, you can appeal by:

- Filling out the online form: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schoolappeals

- Emailing: schoolappeals@edinburgh.gov.uk
- Writing to: City of Edinburgh Placing in Schools Appeal Committee, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh, EH8 8BG

7. Placing Requests for Specialist Provision

Eligibility: Parents of children with additional support needs, or young people who are able to, can request a place in a specialist school, whether it's run by the City of Edinburgh Council or not.

Process:

- **Parallel Planning:** Even if you submit a placing request, still plan for your child's admission to their local catchment school.
- **Form Submission:** Use the link [Parental Placing Request to ERG](#)
- **Documentation:** Include all relevant documents, evidence of the child's needs, and details from previous planning meetings.

Decision Making:

- The ERG will gather additional information from professionals and seek parents'/carers' views.
- You'll receive a decision within 8 weeks.

Grounds for Refusal:

A request may be refused if:

- The education provided isn't suitable for the child.
- The child doesn't need specialist facilities.
- Costs are too high.
- Admission affects the education of the child or others.
- There are capacity issues.
- It contradicts the presumption of mainstream education.

Independent Schools:

- parents must provide written confirmation that the school they wish to apply for is willing to admit their child or young person. Written confirmation of this offer should be sent along with the completed placing request.
- Requests can be refused if the Council can meet the child's needs elsewhere.

Appeals:

If refused, you can appeal to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal for Scotland. Appeal details will be included in the refusal letter.

Key Dates:

- For P1 if you make a placing request later than 24th December, your request will not be considered for whether or not there are exceptional reasons for granting it and your child is likely to be refused a place.
- S1, submit requests by 15 March to get a decision by 30 April.
- Other requests are reviewed individually within 8 weeks.

For more information on legislation and appeals, visit [Enquire](#).