

[Deferring Primary 1 | Fife Council](#)

Deferral Process - Accessing an additional year of funded ELC

In Scotland, children usually start primary school in the year preceding or during which they have their 5th birthday. This means that in Primary 1 classes, children are usually aged between 4½ and 5½ years. Where a child does not start school at the anticipated August start date for their year group, it is called deferred entry to primary school.

Children who are five at the start of the school session in August must start school in August. Alternatively, parents/carers can make arrangements to home educate their child.

If your child's 5th birthday falls between 18th August 2022 (the day after the school commencement date) and the end of February 2023 you have a legal right to defer their entry into Primary 1 until August 2023, when they are nearer 6 years old.

Previously, only children born in January and February had the automatic right to receive an additional year of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) when they deferred. From August 2022, Fife Council will be taking part in a Scottish Government pilot scheme to extend this to all children who are eligible to defer entry into Primary 1. This is before it becomes a universal right in August 2023.

Every child is different, even those of the same chronological age. Prior to making your decision it is important to give consideration to a range of factors, including:

- how your child feels about starting school.
- your child's strengths as a learner.
- the particular outcome that would be achieved for your child by having an additional year at nursery.
- who can help inform your decision-making.

While the decision to defer a child's entry to primary school is ultimately for parents, it is widely accepted that the best decisions are reached with the involvement of those who know your child as a learner. We would recommend that you discuss options for your child with the staff in your ELC provider as soon as possible. If you have any questions about the primary school your child will attend, you can contact the Headteacher of the school directly.

We have provided answers to some FAQs at the bottom of this page to help you with your decision. Additional useful information on what to consider is also available at: [Can my child defer starting school? | Parent Club](#)

Application Process for Deferrals if your child currently attends a Fife Council Local Authority Nursery Provision

A Request for Deferral application should be submitted by 31st January 2022, directly to your current Fife Council ELC Provider. This is to ensure your child's placement in your current setting is continued as part of the normal Fife Council ELC admissions process for academic year 2022-23. Nursery staff will be able to help you with this.

Application Process for Deferrals at Private/Voluntary sector providers or childminders in partnership with Fife Council to deliver funded ELC

Parents/carers should check with the nursery/playgroup/childminder their child attends that they would be able to continue with their current placement for academic year 2022-23. If so, a Request for Deferral application should be submitted directly to your provider by 31st January 2022.

Request to Change Provider / Attendance Pattern for 2022/23

If you wish to change the ELC placement your child attends for academic year 2022-23, then you should complete a new application for a nursery place for session 2022-23 for 3-4 year olds, in addition to the deferral request.

- For placements based in a Fife Council ELC service, a completed application form should be submitted by 31st January 2022. This will be processed in line with Fife Council's Early Learning and Childcare Admissions policy. You can still submit a late application for deferral / new placement after 31st January 2022 and before the start of academic year in August 2022, but this will limit the options of funded ELC placements available to your child, as most Fife Council nursery places will have already been allocated.
- For placements based in a private nursery, playgroup or childminder offering funded ELC on behalf of Fife Council, you should contact your preferred ELC provider directly to request a place for 2022-23. Each Service has its own admissions policy and will be able to let you know if they are able to offer your child a placement for the following year.

FAQ's

How do I know my child is ready for school? I am concerned they may not cope.

Primary 1 classes are very well equipped to meet a wide range of needs and no longer require children to have certain skills to start school. Children have access to

developmentally appropriate learning experiences planned to meet their needs both academically and emotionally.

It is important to avoid focusing on what your child is not yet able to do, especially in relation to reading and writing. Young children have a well-developed ability to learn new skills when supported by skilled practitioners.

Primary teachers work closely with early learning and childcare staff to ensure that information about your child's learning and achievements are shared.

Staff will also share other information that will help the teacher support your child's learning, for example friendship groups, preferred ways of working.

What is the difference between nursery and primary 1?

The Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence ensures that there is continuity and progression of experiences and outcomes from nursery to primary 1. Children's experiences at the start of primary 1 are more aligned to those in nursery.

Experiences are active and support how young children learn and develop best.

What happens if the staff at my child's nursery disagree with my decision to defer?

Whilst it is beneficial that decisions are made jointly by parents and professionals, ultimately, the final decision to defer rests with parents, as this is a parental choice.

Do I still need to register my child for primary 1?

If you have decided to defer your child, you are not required to enrol your child into Primary School. You do, however, need to register your child for Primary School for the year after their deferred year.

However, if your decision is not yet final you may wish to register your child for entry into Primary School as well as completing a deferral form to keep your options open. If this is the case, you should continue to link closely with your ELC provider and chosen primary school. Once you have made a final decision about deferral you should inform both the ELC provider and Primary School as soon as possible about your decision.

What can I do to support my child's transition from nursery to primary school?

To help support your child to make the most positive start you can:

- listen and talk to your child about this change. Use positive language and encourage them to feel excited and ready for the next stage.
- involve your child in getting ready for school by helping choose the things they will need, for example their uniform, lunchbox, schoolbag.
- support school staff in getting to know your child, let them know about interests and health issues.
- keep in touch with the school about anything that may affect your child's learning.
- find out how the school will communicate with you.
- talk to your school if you have questions or concerns.

[Parenting across Scotland](#) has further information to support your child starting school.

What if my child has additional support needs?

Children with additional support needs are supported throughout all stages of their education, particularly at points of transition. With effective communication and teamwork, children's strengths and development needs are planned for and put in place for when children begin Primary 1.

Are there advantages to delaying my child's entry into Primary 1?

Despite a vast range of support and developmentally appropriate learning experiences within Primary 1 classes, some children can benefit from an additional, carefully planned year at nursery. This is individual to each child.

Will there be implications for my child later on if they are deferred?

It is important to consider your child's whole school career when making the decision to defer. In Scotland, young people can leave secondary school at 16. Children who are deferred will be the eldest in their cohort and this is worth reflecting upon when making your decision, as they would be able to leave school without sitting any formal qualifications.

Should I discuss delaying my child's entry into Primary 1 with nursery staff?

This is highly recommended. Staff in early learning and childcare settings will be able to discuss deferring starting Primary 1 and offer information about transition. They will be able to alleviate any concerns you may have and give further information about Primary 1.

What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind before your child takes up their deferred placement, every effort will be made to provide a primary school place at your child's catchment school if you have not already applied for one.

Once children begin their deferred year, the decision is unable to be reversed at any point in your child's education.