

## Information for schools with FS1 (nursery) classes and units

### FAO: Headteachers; Foundation Stage Coordinators; Bursars

The new “extended free flexible entitlement” arrangements commenced at the start of September.

The main element is an increase in the entitlement to **15 hours per week** of free early years education (from the previous 12.5 hours) for each eligible 3 year-old.

Medway schools with FS1 classes have prepared for this increase in hours, and have implemented new opening hours and patterns of provision within their foundation stage commencing this term.

In addition to the extra hours, the new regulations seek to enable families to access early years provision for their young children in patterns that reflect individual needs.

There are two matters that have direct relevance to schools:

1. Funding for FS1 children in school is now determined by the “early years single funding formula” (EYSFF). This is calculated according to a **termly count** (in terms 1, 3 & 5), and paid according to the **actual hours** of attendance for each child. This means that if a child is registered to attend for fewer than 15 hours per week for a given term, then the school will receive funding only for those hours per week for which the child is on the school register to attend.
2. If a parent chooses for their child to attend fewer than 15 hours per week at your school, then from this term the parent will be entitled to receive the remaining free hours at another setting. ie: they will be able to **split their free hours across two settings**.

In practice, only a very small minority of children attend for fewer than their full entitlement of hours. The large majority of parents want their child to attend a single provision where their child can settle and receive an uninterrupted early years experience.

In circumstances where a parent wishes for their child to attend your school for fewer than 15 hours per week, you cannot unreasonably refuse the request.

This may arise because a parent is working on some days each week and they have alternative childcare arrangements on those days that are not compatible with attending your school’s part time FS1 nursery.

Parents should be advised that there is no guarantee that they will be able to increase their child's hours in future terms, since you may have offered the

unused class sessions to another child. Parents should make an informed decision about whether your school's offer meets their current and future needs.

A school may **not** refuse a place solely on the grounds that a parent is not able or willing to register their child to attend for the full week of 15 hours.

However, schools do need to be aware that their termly funding is based on the totality of hours for which children are registered to attend (*nb this is not reduced due to absence through sickness, non-attendance etc*) – so all empty sessions within FS1 classes will impact on the budget received.

The early years headcount date this term is **7 October**.

Queries can be sent to [eyheadcount@medway.gov.uk](mailto:eyheadcount@medway.gov.uk) or phone 332202.