
To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 18 March 2021

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Petition: Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy Review

1. Summary

- 1.1. On the 1 February 2021, the Petitions Board considered a petition which was submitted by Mr Steven Harrigan, relating to his concerns that his son had been denied the opportunity to attend his local pre-school nursery - Ralston Early Learning and Childcare Class.
 - 1.2. The Petitions Board agreed that the petition would be referred to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board, with the recommendation that that Policy Board review the current admissions policy in relation to Early Learning and Childcare across Renfrewshire.
 - 1.3. This report is to inform members that Children's Services will carry out a review of the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy and will report the findings and recommendations once the review is completed.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note that a review of the current Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy will be undertaken and findings reported to Members at a future meeting of the Policy Board.
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3. Background

3.1. A petition was submitted to the Council by a Mr Steven Harrigan concerning arrangements for allocating an early learning and childcare placement in the Ralston area.

3.2. The petition raised by Mr Harrigan noted his reasons as:

“I am raising this issue as a concerned parent. I reside in the Ralston area, yet my son has been denied the opportunity to attend his local pre-school nursery at Ralston Primary. This is mainly due to the zoning of the school by the council and in turn taking in a greater zoning area that the school can cope with, thus in turn leaving local residents and their children to go outside the area, despite paying council tax for Ralston. The zone for Ralston takes in places such as Gallowhill and Hawkhead Road, despite both areas having at least one suitable local pre-school nursery. As Ralston is a very desirable school this leads to a large number of parents in these areas making Ralston their preference when selecting options. This has led to a large number of local children, including my own missing out on their local school, when I feel strongly that local children should be given preference first.

I have previously raised the issue with the council, the school and my local Councillor Neil Graham. I was then granted a video call with a representative from each. Kathleen McDonagh from the council, Mr Graham and the Head of Ralston, Jillian McGowan. They outlined the reasons behind the decision and stated it was the Council who indeed make the rules. This is what I'm hoping to get changed, as I previously stated I feel it is neither fair nor right local children miss out on their local schools”.

3.3. The process for allocating places at Ralston Early Learning and Childcare Class is in line with the guidance set out in the Early Years Admissions Policy. Mr Harrigan's son was unsuccessful in securing a place at Ralston due to over demand for places at the establishment.

3.4. The catchment area for early learning and childcare is different from a primary school, with a placement at nursery having no bearing on the allocation process for primary school provision. Also, not all primary schools have an early learning and childcare class attached to it.

3.5. Renfrewshire Council's early learning and childcare provision is geographically arranged to provide parents with a range of options such as term time/school day places and 52 weeks /extended day provision; and to ensure sufficient capacity for all children entitled to early learning and childcare. Within the Ralston area there is only one early learning and childcare establishment which is Ralston Early Learning and Childcare Class, a term time class. Renfrewshire Council's model of delivery is in line with the Scottish Government's policy guidance for expanding early learning and childcare.

3.6. A copy of the full report to the Petitions Board can be accessed via the attached link [Petition](#)

- 3.7. In response to the recommendation of the Petitions Board, Children's Services will undertake a review of the Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy and report the outcome and any recommendations to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board.

Implications of this report

- 1. Financial**
None
 - 2. HR and Organisational Development**
None.
 - 3. Community/Council Planning**
None
 - 4. Legal**
None
 - 5. Property/Assets**
None.
 - 6. Information Technology**
None.
 - 7. Equality and Human Rights**
None
 - 8. Health and Safety**
None.
 - 9. Procurement**
None.
 - 10. Risk**
None
 - 11. Privacy Impact**
None
 - 12. Cosla Policy Position**
None.
 - 13. Climate Risk**
None.
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List of Background Papers

- (i) Petition: Admission Policy, Ralston Early Learning and Childcare Class, Petitions Board, 1 February 2021.

Children's Services

KMcD/LG/KO

22/02/2021

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