

Report to Schools Forum

Title:	Free Entitlement Funding for reception classes of Independent Schools
Date:	25 September 2018
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Schools affected:	Early Years settings

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. To notify schools forum of a change to the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance for early education and childcare provision.

2. Main considerations for Schools Forum

- 2.1. On 24 January 2012, following the publication of the Rose Review, a paper by Anne Jefferies was presented to Schools Forum requesting approval to withdraw Free Entitlement Funding for children in Buckinghamshire who have an entitlement to a full time place in a maintained reception class but choose to take up a full time place in an independent school. This proposal was agreed by Schools Forum and consequently brought independent schools in-line with maintained schools with regards to Free Entitlement Funding.
- 2.2. In June 2018 the DfE updated their "[Early education and childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities June 2018](#)" and in July 2018 gave further clarification to the update via a letter to all local authorities. In this they state that: "*Local authorities can fund a range of providers to deliver 15 and 30 hours free childcare, including independent schools, where free places can be delivered via their nursery and/or reception classes*". The footnote in the guidance states that this is not applicable to children taking up a place in a state-funded reception class or a full time place in an independent school reception class with is funded by the local authority.
- 2.3. There are currently only 8 independent schools within Buckinghamshire offering Free Entitlement places. The new guidance from the DfE will hopefully increase this number thereby offering more choice to parents, and because the government will fund the Free Entitlement hours there will be no adverse financial cost to the Local Authority.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. ***From September 2018 Buckinghamshire County Council will fund eligible children in reception in an independent school if that school is on the Directory of approved Free Entitlement childcare providers. The funding will continue until the child(ren) reach compulsory school age.***