

## Change of School Application Process 2021/22

This document is to support you through the process of changing schools during the academic year (known as “In Year”). It applies to infant, junior, primary or secondary schools for children up to the age of 16.

For post-16 education, please contact the school or college directly.

For information on a nursery place or other childcare, please visit

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childcare>

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## Introduction

If you have moved to a new house, you can apply to change school during the school year. We call this an "in-year admission". You can also apply if you want your child to go to a different school.

The stability and continuity of a child's education is very important, and a change of school should only be considered if it is in the best interests of the child. Changing a school can affect children in different ways and the decision to move them should not be taken without careful thought.

This guidance is to give parents and carers the information needed to make an in-year application to either primary or secondary school. Please take the time to read the information provided before making your application.

### Is a change of school the best option for your child?

Sometimes a change of school is unavoidable, perhaps due to a change in family situation, or a house move. However, in other circumstances, it can be disruptive to your child's learning. For example:

- Your child may need to adapt to the new school delivering the National Curriculum differently
- If your child has already chosen their GCSE or A Level options, they may not be able to continue with them; the new school may use different exam boards and/or offer different subjects
- They are likely to have to adapt to new routines and new friendship groups
- They may have a longer journey each day to get to school
- The new school may not have before and after-school clubs available.

So, before you make the final decision, you may want to explore the following options with your child's current school:

- Discuss any issues or concerns that you have with the current school with the headteacher, or a member of the governing body
- Review any additional pastoral or learning support that you think your child needs with their classroom teacher or headteacher
- If your child is getting into trouble at school, discuss any possible reasons and solutions for this with their teacher.

If you feel there are issues with your child's current school and want to seek advice on your rights, do not agree to remove your child from the school's register before discussing your situation with us.

## Choosing other schools

To identify the most appropriate school for your child, we recommend that you:

- Research each school by visiting their website and social media accounts and, if possible, visit the school in person.
- Read the school's latest Ofsted inspection report, available on the [OFSTED website](#).
- If your child has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), [contact colleagues in SENDAR](#) for further advice.
- If you wish to apply to a grammar school, find out about their testing procedure prior to applying for a school place.
- Consider how your child will [travel to school](#). Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to get their child to school and you should not assume that any transport assistance will be available for your child.

## How to apply

You can make an in-year application to us for most schools in Warwickshire. You can list up to 6 school preferences. If places are available, we'll offer you the highest preference possible.

Some Warwickshire schools handle their own in-year admissions. A list of those schools can be found on our [website](#).

Independent (fee paying) schools also deal with their own admissions. Please contact them direct to apply.

## Which route is right for you?

There are different arrangements in place, depending on where you live and where you want your child to go to school.

- If you live in Warwickshire and want to apply for a Warwickshire school, you will be able to apply through our [online portal](#)
- If you live in Warwickshire and want to apply for a school outside Warwickshire, you should contact the school itself to ask about their admission arrangements.
- If you live outside of Warwickshire and want to apply for a Warwickshire school, contact your home authority (who you pay your council tax to) to discuss the application process before using our online application.

## **Completing the application**

When submitting your application, please complete as much of the form as you can. If there is missing information, it is likely to result in your application being delayed.

Please also ensure that any documents to support your application - such as proof of address or evidence of your faith - are included.

We also ask you to give the reason for the change of school and, if it is because there are issues at the child's current or previous school, you will be asked to give details. We expect that attempts to resolve issues have been made and that a change of school is a last resort.

We advise that you apply for more than one school. If places are available, we'll offer you the highest preference possible. If there is not, then we will try to offer you a place at the school listed next. There is no advantage in applying to just one school and doing so is more likely to delay the process.

## **How long does an application take?**

We aim to process all applications within 10 school days. However, if any of your school choices do not have space for your child, this may take longer. If this is the case, we will let you know and send you a letter to confirm the details.

Applications may also take longer than 10 school days for:

- Children with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Applications will be passed to the Special Educational Needs and Disability, Assessment and Review (SEND) team, who will consult with the school(s) involved whether they can meet the individual needs of the child.
- Grammar school places. Entry to a grammar school is based on a child's ability, which is assessed via a selection test. There are two different types of test, dependent on the child's age. If your child is under 12 years old, please contact us for further information. If your child is over 12 years old, please contact the grammar school(s) in which you are interested.
- Children who fall under the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) (details on page 6).

## **How are places offered?**

All schools have their own admission criteria. These are used to decide which children should be offered places in circumstances where there are more applications than places available. We refer to this as the "over- subscription criteria".

There are more details about the criteria used for each type of school available [online](#).

All admission authorities are legally obliged to operate an equal preference system. This means that all your school preferences will be looked at equally and we will try to offer your child a place at your highest preference school. There is no benefit to naming a school more than once on the application.

## **Proof of address**

So that we can process your application fairly, we will ask you for proof of the child's home address. This address is where the child spends most of their school nights. We will usually ask for a copy of one of the following:

- Council Tax bill for the current financial year
- utilities bill within the last three months
- car insurance policy
- home insurance policy
- signed and dated tenancy agreement
- latest mortgage statement.

## **Moving to a new house**

If you are moving to a new house, then proof of your new address will be required. We accept:

- signed and dated tenancy agreement, or
- a solicitor's letter confirming completion of exchange of contracts for a house purchase.

Moving to a new house can be an unsettling time for the family and we understand you will want to prepare for your move as far in advance as possible. However, as we can only hold an offer of a place open for a limited time, you can only apply for a new school up to 6 school weeks before you want your child to start at a new school.

This means that if you want your child to start a new school in September, we can only accept your application from the beginning of June.

## **Children who live at more than one address**

Where a child lives at more than one address, we will allocate a school place based on the address where the child spends most of their school nights. If the child spends an equal amount of time in separate addresses, we will ask you to nominate which address you want to be used.

In the case of a dispute, there is an expectation that the parents or carers involved will resolve these before making an application. You will need to submit a single application which all parents or carers agree with. When submitting the electronic signature as part of the online form, you are declaring that all parents or carers with parental responsibility are in agreement with the process, the child's address and the schools you have named.

We do not accept addresses used for childcare (for example, before or after-school care) as a home address.

## **Children from overseas and military families**

If you are applying from overseas, you may use a UK address if you have one, subject to the

same evidence requirements as above, i.e. exchange of contracts or signed tenancy agreement. Other evidence to substantiate ownership of a property may be requested.

For service families, we ask for official proof of posting to the UK and a relocation date, along with an expected area of where the family will reside. Useful information about admission into schools for children of service personnel is available on the DfE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-in-the-uk-for-service-children>

## **Children who are looked after, or previously looked after**

A looked after child is one who is in the care of the local authority, or who is being provided with accommodation by a local authority as part of their social services function. This usually means that a child is living in a foster care placement and has an allocated Social Worker.

We accept applications from foster carers where it has been established by the local authority's Children's Services that the child will be residing with that family for any period of time. Authorisation may be sought from either or both of the child's Social Worker or birth parent(s) in respect of any school application.

A previously looked after child is one who was in care – for example, in a foster care placement – but has since been adopted, is under a childcare arrangement order such as a residency order, or has been returned to their birth parents or another carer under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO). In these circumstances, we accept applications from the parent or carer who is named on the court order relating to the child, or prospective adopter(s) where this arrangement has been approved by a final matching panel. A copy of the adoption certificate will be required with the application.

Children who are currently in private fostering arrangements, and those who were adopted from overseas, may not be considered as 'looked after' or 'previously looked after'. Please [contact us](#) for more details if needed.

## **Fraudulent or misleading applications**

We may ask for further proof of your address at any time. We also operate an address checking process which can include both announced and unannounced visits to the address supplied on a child's application.

We will withdraw the offer of a school place if we find that the offer was made based on fraudulent or misleading information. We may also withdraw the offer of a school place if information is deliberately withheld.

## **Offers, refusals and appeals**

### **If we can offer a place**

If we can offer your child a place at any of the preferred schools on your application, then we will aim to let you know within 10 school days of receipt of your application and proof of address. You will then have 10 school days in which to respond to the offer. If you do not accept the place in this time, then the offer will be withdrawn.

Once you have accepted, you should then contact your child's new school to arrange a starting date. They should start at their new school within 4 weeks from the date the offer was made. If this doesn't happen, the place may be withdrawn.

### **If we can't offer a place at your preferred school(s)**

If we can't offer you a place at any of your preferred school, and your child lives in Warwickshire and is without a school place, then you will be offered a place at the next nearest school maintained by Warwickshire with spaces available, or the next nearest own admission authority school with spaces available which is prepared to offer you a place. We will send the details of this offer to you, along with information about waiting lists and the appeal process.

Further information about the appeals process can be found at:

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals)

### **Fair access protocol**

We use a set of principles when we consider in-year admission applications for "hard to place" or vulnerable children. This is to ensure that all children get a suitable school place and that no school is asked to take an unreasonable number of children who have a higher level of needs.

If your child's application is being considered under the FAP, then you will be notified of this as soon as possible. Further information about the Primary and Secondary FAP can be found at:

<https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1990003847-2518>

### **Useful contacts**

#### **School Admissions Service**

Saltisford Office Park, Ansell Way, Warwick, CV34 4UL

01926 414143

[changeofschool@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:changeofschool@warwickshire.gov.uk)

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions)

#### **Special Educational Needs and Disability, Assessment and Review Service (SENDAR)**

01926 742160

[sen@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:sen@warwickshire.gov.uk)

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sen](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sen)