



## What schools need to know about in-year admissions

In this article we break down what schools need to know about handling in-year admissions. Read on for more detail!

**Please note:** This article has been created in line with the 'School Admissions Code' that will apply from 1 September 2021.

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## Accepting in-year admissions

In accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014, if a school is undersubscribed then any parent that applies must be offered a place; this is also the case for in-year admissions. A parent can apply for a place for their child at any school, at any time.

When dealing with in-year admissions, a school must notify their admission authority of all applications and outcomes; this tends to be the LA for maintained schools, unless the responsibility has been specifically delegated to the governing board. Academies are their own admission authorities.

An admission authority may admit above their published admissions number (PAN) in-year, with this not constituting as an



An application is an in-year admission if it is for the admission of a child to a relevant age group, but it is submitted on or after the first day of the first term of the admission year, or if it is for the admission of a child to an age group other than a relevant age group.

increase to the PAN. If a school believes that they are able to accept applications above the given PAN, then they must notify their LA of this.

## Allocating places

The 'School Admissions Code' states that, with the exception of designated grammar schools, all maintained schools and academies that have places available must offer a place to every child who has applied, without condition or the use of any oversubscription criteria, unless admitting the child would prejudice the efficient provision of education or use of resources.

For example, admission authorities cannot refuse a child's application because:

- They have applied later than other applicants.
- They are not of the faith of the school in the case of a school designated with a religious character.
- They have followed a different curriculum at their previous school.
- Information has not been received from their previous school.

When dealing with multiple in-year admissions where there are not sufficient places for every child that has applied, admission authorities must only allocate places on the basis of the oversubscription criteria in their determined admissions arrangements.

Once an applicant has received and accepted an offer of a school place, arrangements should be made for the child to start school as soon as possible, particularly in cases where the child is currently out of school.

## Waiting lists

If a waiting list is maintained, it must be maintained in line with the following criteria:

- Be clear, fair and objective
- Be maintained until at least 31 December of each school year of admissions
- It must be stated in their arrangements that each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria
- Priority must not be given to children based on the date of their application was received, or the date that their name was added to the list
- LAC, or previously LAC, allocated a place at the school in line with a Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over those on a waiting list

Admission authorities must not refuse parents the opportunity to make an application or tell parents that they can only be placed on a waiting list rather than make a formal application.

Upon receiving an in-year application, it is recommended that the relevant admission authority aims to notify the parents of the outcome of their application in writing within 10 school days, however they **must** be notified within 15 school days. This does not apply to grammar schools.

## **Holding places**

It is for a school's admissions authority to decide how long to hold places for in-year admissions. Usually, a place will be held for three to four weeks, but this depends on how many other applicants the specific school receives – if the school receives a lot of in-year applications, the place should be held for a shorter period of time.

If the application has been submitted by a family where one or both of the parents serve in the armed forces – also known as a service family – or if the family is moving from the commonwealth or abroad, more flexibility should be offered to accommodate for the family's needs.

## **Responsibilities of admission authorities**

### **LAs**

LAs are not required to co-ordinate any in-year applications for schools which they are not the admission authority. They may, however, co-ordinate in-year applications for any or all local own admission authority schools with the agreement of the relevant admission authorities.

A suitable application form, and a supplementary information form where appropriate, must be provided by LAs for parents who are applying for a place for their child at a school for which the LA is co-ordinating in-year admissions. Where an LA receives an application for a school that manages its own in-year admissions, it must promptly forward the application to the relevant admission authority, which must process it in accordance with its own in-year admission arrangements.

LAs must, on request, provide information to prospective parents about the availability of places in all schools within their area. To enable them to do so, the admissions authority for all schools in the area must provide the LA with details of the number of places available of

their schools whenever this information is requested. Such details should be provided no later than two school days after the school has received the request from the LA.

### **Own admission authority schools**

In 2021, own admission authority schools must inform the LA by 1 October whether they intend to be part of the LA's in-year co-ordination scheme which runs from 1 October until 31 August 2022, where this is offered.

In all subsequent years, own admission authority schools must inform the LA by 1 August at the latest as to whether they intend to be part of the LA's in-year co-ordination scheme for the following 1 September to 31 August, where this is offered.

By the same date, schools that intend to be part of the LA's in-year co-ordination scheme must provide the LA with all the information required to be published on the LA's website, including application forms.

Where an admission authority manages its own admissions, it must notify the LA of every application and its outcome as soon as reasonably practicable, but ideally within two school days. This is to allow the LA to keep up to date figures on available places in the area and to ensure they have an awareness of any children who may not have a place in a school.

## **Publishing information online**

### **LAs**

In 2021, LAs must publish in-year admission information on their website by 31 October. This information should explain how in-year applications can be made, and how applications will be dealt with from 1 November until 31 August 2022, along with a suitable application form and supplementary information form where appropriate. This also includes publishing which schools will manage their own in-year admissions and their contact details.

In all subsequent years, LAs must publish this information on their website by 31 August at the latest.

Hard copies of in-year admission information must be provided on request for those who do not have access to the internet.

### **Own admission authority schools**

In 2021, own admission authorities and governing bodies must publish in-year admission information on their website by 31 October. This information should explain how parents can apply for a school place, provide a suitable application form and a supplementary information form where appropriate, how applications will be dealt with from 1 November until 31 August 2022 and when parents will be notified of the outcome of their application, along with the right to appeal.

In all subsequent years, own admission authorities and governing bodies must publish this information by 31 August at the latest.

Hard copies of information must be provided on request for those who do not have access to the internet.

## Right to appeal

When an admission authority informs a parent of the decision to refuse their child a place at a school that they have applied to, it must include:

- The reason why the admission was refused.
- Information about the right to appeal.
- The deadline for making an appeal.
- The contact details for making an appeal.

If appealing, parents must be informed that they must set out their grounds for appeal in writing. Admission authorities must not limit the grounds on which appeals can be made.

### Next steps

- **Read our policy: [Admission Policy](#)**
- **Check out our article: [Up-to-speed on: Changes to the 'School Admissions Code' from September 2021](#)**
- **See our guidance: [Becoming Your Own Admissions Authority: An Explanation](#)**

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## Bibliography

DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code' (applies from 1 September 2021, subject to Parliamentary approval)

DfE (2019) (Telephone conversation regarding how long a school should hold a place for a prospective pupil) [Personal communication: 10 September 2019]