

Starting Primary School

A guide for parents of Cambridgeshire children starting primary school in September 2021

This leaflet explains how to apply for a primary school place if your child lives in Cambridgeshire and was born between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017.

Application deadline 15 January 2021

All the information you need to apply for a primary school place, including an online application form and electronic copy of our full admissions guide "*First Steps, Admission to Primary School; a guide for parents*", will be available on our website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions.

Alternatively, you may apply using a paper application form. A copy of the application form can be requested from any Cambridgeshire primary school or by calling 0345 045 1370.

Why not apply online for your child's school place?

From 10 September 2020 you can make your application online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions

The benefits of applying online are:

- it is quick and easy to do;
- the system is secure;
- there is no risk that your application will get lost in the post;
- you can change / amend the details on your application up until the closing date;
- you will get an e-mail confirmation when your application has been received and each time it is successfully resubmitted;
- it is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week up until midnight on the closing date of 15 January 2021 (except during periods of essential maintenance);

All applications are considered equally, whether online or on paper. Therefore, you should not apply twice.

Key facts about the application process

What do I have to do?

You should select up to three schools in order of preference.

To help you make this decision you can:

- find your catchment area school on-line at <http://my.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> or by looking at the *First Steps* admissions guide;
- find other schools in your area by looking at the *First Steps* admissions guide;
- read the oversubscription criteria for the schools you are interested in;
- arrange to attend the schools' open events;
- look at other sources of information like the school prospectus and website;
- consider the home to school transport policy on our website and whether you will qualify for free transport to any of the schools you list on your application form.

You must make an application by midnight on 15 January 2021.

- It is **vital** that you apply by the closing date. Applications which are received after the deadline will be classed as late and processed in round 2 on 18 May 2021. This may result in you not gaining a place at your preferred or catchment school. A school may be oversubscribed one year but be undersubscribed the next. Likewise, the fact that a school was undersubscribed in September 2020 does not mean that you will definitely get a place there in September 2021.
- You must apply to the local authority where you reside, or will be residing by 15 January 2021.
- Applications can be made either online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions or on a paper application form available from any Cambridgeshire primary school or by calling 0345 045 1370.
- If you are applying for any aided church school, make sure you also complete the school's supplementary information form (SIF) and return it to the school by the closing date, otherwise your application will not be processed under the school's faith-based criteria.

What happens next?

We will offer your child a school place on 16 April 2021.

- If you applied online and requested confirmation by email, you will receive an email on 16 April 2021 informing you of the school you have been offered.
- School offer letters will be sent by second class post, despatched on the 16 April 2021, to everyone who applied before the deadline, whether you applied on paper or online.
- If we are unable to offer your child a place at any of your preferred schools, we will offer you a place at the nearest designated school.

What happens if I am not offered the school I want?

- Your child's details will be added to the school's reserve list in case a place becomes available and will be held on this list until 31 December 2021.
- You can ask about other schools that have places remaining, and submit a new application requesting alternative school preferences.
- You can request an appeal. For further information see <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-&-learning/apply-for-a-school-place/admission-appeals/>

Important

- There is no automatic transfer to primary school so an application to the local authority is required in **ALL** cases.
- If you fail to make an application for your child's place before the deadline an offer of a place will **not** be made for your child on 16 April 2021. This may have a severe and negative impact on your chances of securing a place at your preferred school.
- If you are applying for a primary school which requires a completed SIF, you must ensure that you complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) **and** a Local Authority Application Form.

Considering a school

- Find details of a school's profile, Ofsted report and performance data at <http://schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk/>
- Make time to visit the school.
- Do not judge a school by what others say.
- Think about transport and how your child will get to school.

Allocating school places

- All applications received by the deadline are considered at the same time, no school offers are made on a "first come, first served" basis and priority is **not** given to those who put the school as a first preference.
- School places are allocated using the oversubscription criterion for that school. No other information is taken into consideration.
- All Preferences are treated equally. This means we will look to see if a place is available at each of your preferences and offer you a place at your highest preference school that has a place available
- The law says that admission authorities must consider admitting children whose parents have expressed a preference for a school before they consider those whose parents have not expressed any preference. Because of this, if you do not make a request for your catchment area school according to the published admission arrangements it could result in a place not being available at that school.

Use your preferences wisely

- **Use all three preferences available to you and be realistic about the schools you apply for.** Even if your Local Authority accepts more than three preferences, please note that we will only accept a maximum of three Cambridgeshire schools.
- List your school preferences in the order that you would most prefer them, not the order you think you might get them.
- You are advised to name your catchment school as one of your preferences.

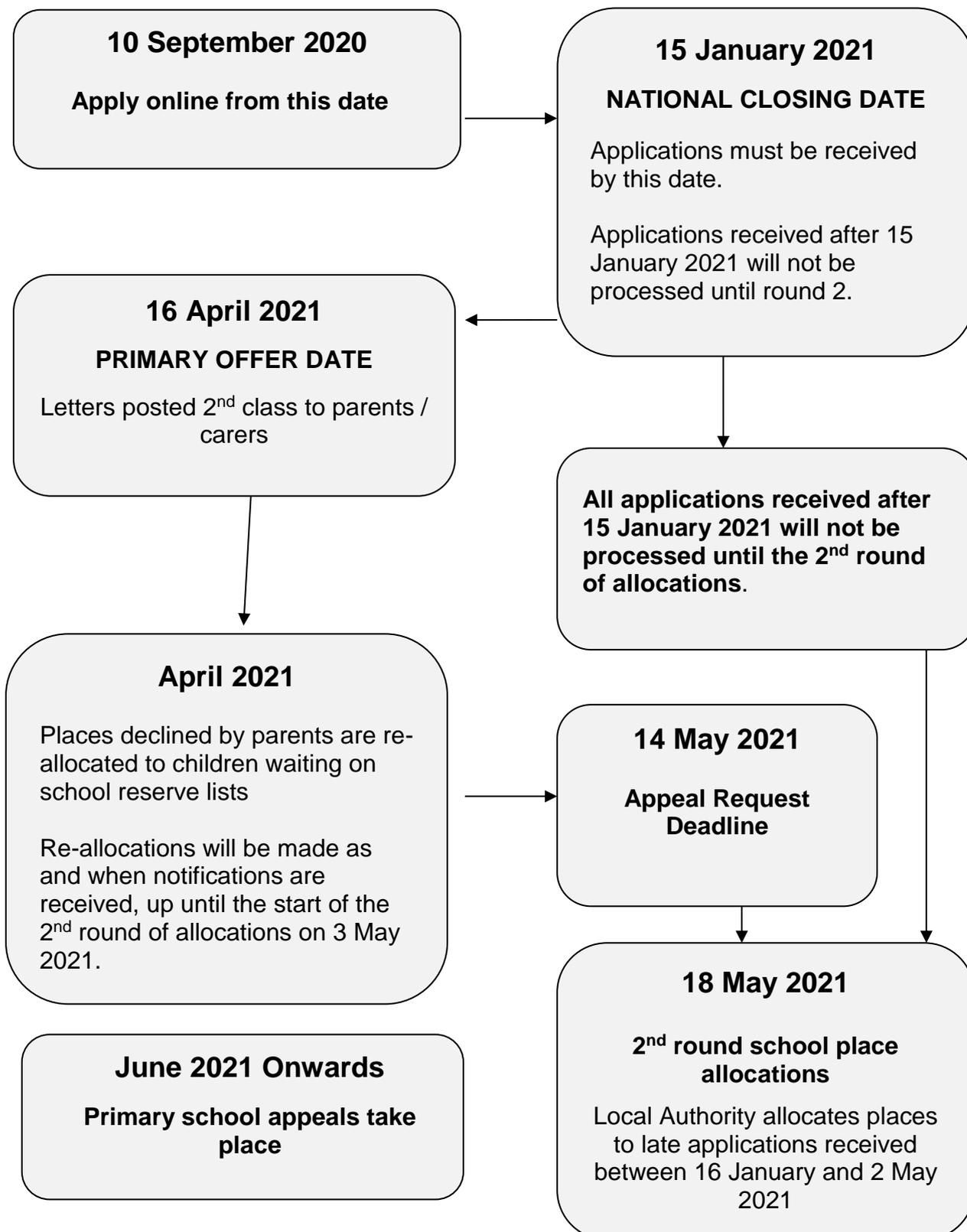
Reminder

If you apply on-line and re-visit your application to view and make changes you **must** ensure it is re-submitted before 15 January 2021.

Naming a school

- Naming more than one school will not weaken your chance of gaining a place at your first preference school.
- Naming the same school more than once will not increase your chance of gaining a place.

Important Dates



If you would like a copy of the leaflet on audio cassette, Braille, large print or other languages, please contact **0345 045 1370**