

Change of School Application Process

Guide for Parents and Carers

Useful Contacts

School Admissions Service

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

Tel: **01926 742047 – Option 1**

Fax: **01926 742084**

Email: admissions@warwickshire.gov.uk

Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissions

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

Tel: **01926 742160**

Email: sen@warwickshire.gov.uk

Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sen

Education Transport Team

Tel: **01926 412929**

Email: schooltransport@warwickshire.gov.uk

Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schooltravel

Introduction

Moving to a new school is an important step for any child. Changing your child's school can affect them in many ways and the decision should not be taken without careful thought. However, we know that a number of families will need to transfer their child to another school during the academic year, rather than at the usual transfer times. These school moves are called in-year admissions.

This guidance is written for parents in order to give you the information you need about making an in-year application to either primary or secondary school. It is very important that you read the information in this guide before making your application.

You will need to make an application to us to show which school(s) you would like your child to go to – these are your school preferences. The relevant application form for you to complete can be found on our website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/changingschool

Background Information

Different types of schools

Schools in Warwickshire mainly accommodate children who are aged 4 - 18 and include the following types of school:

- Primary schools – infant or junior, or the two combined which is called primary. Infant schools cater for children from Reception (age 4) up to Year 2 (age 7). Junior schools start from Year 3 (age 7) and go up to Year 6 (age 11), whilst Primary schools accommodate children from Reception right up to Year 6.
- Secondary schools - cater for children from Year 7 (age 11). Some secondary schools only accommodate up to Year 11 (age 16), but the majority in Warwickshire also have a sixth form where children can attend between the ages of 16-18. Secondary schools can include 14-19 education colleges.
- Grammar schools – these are state funded ‘selective’ secondary schools where children are offered places based on their academic ability. Children will need to go through a testing process before they can be considered for a place at a grammar school.
- Independent (private) schools – are fee-paying schools catering for various ages, depending on the individual school. The admissions process will be determined and administered by the school directly.

Each school is classed as an Academy, or a Community, Voluntary-Controlled, Voluntary-Aided or Foundation school. There are also several ‘Free’ schools in Warwickshire.

- Academies are independent state schools and are established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups, or as a result of schools converting in line with specific Government legislation. Places are offered on behalf of the governing body or Academy Trust, which sets and applies the admission criteria for entry.

- Community and Voluntary Controlled schools are managed by the Local Authority (LA).
- Voluntary-Aided schools are managed by the Church of England or Roman Catholic diocese. The governing body of the school sets and applies the admission criteria for entry. Places are offered on behalf of the governing body.
- For Foundation schools the governing body sets and applies the admission criteria for entry. Places are offered on behalf of the governing body.
- Free schools are set up by local groups and have increased control of the curriculum, selection of staff and school conditions. They are funded directly from Central Government. They are not selective and are free for children to attend. Places are offered on behalf of the trust which sets and applies the admission criteria for entry.
- 14 – 19 entry colleges, such as ‘WMG Academies’, enrol students of all abilities and backgrounds and provide a curriculum based on forward-thinking industry requirements combined with a focus on developing employability skills. These colleges may work in partnership with specialist external departments and businesses, such as Jaguar Land Rover and National Grid, as well as with local further education colleges and universities.

Who you should apply to

Some of Warwickshire’s schools handle their own in-year admissions. A list of those schools can be found online at: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/changingschools

Independent (private) schools also deal with their own admissions. Again, please contact the school you are interested in directly to find out about their admissions process.

For all other Warwickshire schools, accommodating ages 4-16, you will need to complete the Change of School application form. If you are a Warwickshire resident then you should return your completed application to the Admissions Service. Our contact details can be found on the back of this booklet.

If you live outside of Warwickshire, but wish to make an application for a place at a Warwickshire school, please contact your home authority (who you pay your Council Tax to) to discuss the application process. You may then need to apply using the Warwickshire Change of School application form.

Applications for Nursery and Sixth Form

Warwickshire Admissions Service only process applications for children seeking entry into Infant, Junior, Primary or Secondary schools – up to the age of 16. If you are seeking a Nursery place for your child then you should contact the Family Information Service (FIS) for more information about that process. Their contact details are on the back of this booklet.

If you would like to make an application for your child to enter sixth form at a Warwickshire school then please contact that school directly and they will be able to explain their admission procedure for 16-18 year olds.

Transport to school

When considering changing your child’s school you also need to consider how your child will travel to school. Parents have a legal responsibility to get their child to school and should not assume that any transport assistance will be approved for the child.

For further information regarding Warwickshire home to school transport please go to:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schooltravel

How to apply

Completing the application form

You must complete all sections of the Change of School application form fully. Section B must be completed by the child's current or most recent school. Failure to include Section B with the application will mean that it cannot be processed and this may cause a delay to your child being offered a school place.

If your child has previously been educated outside of the UK and you are therefore unable to obtain this information, then we recommend you include a recent school report if possible.

You must also tick the reason as to why your child is looking to move to a different school. You will see several options on the application, including; a house move within Warwickshire, a house move into Warwickshire, a move from abroad, or due to issues which cannot be resolved at the child's current or previous school. If you tick this last box then there is a space on the application form where you will be expected to expand on those circumstances. There is also an expectation that you will have tried to resolve any such matters with your child's current schools and that a change of school is being looked at only as a last resort.

We advise that you apply for more than one school. If we cannot offer your first choice of school we will try to offer a place at the school you have listed next. There is no advantage in applying for a place at only one school, and your child's application may be delayed if additional schools are added later in the process.

How long does it take?

We aim to process all applications within 10 school days, although this can take longer if any of your school choices do not have space in the required year group. You will be notified if this is the case as soon as possible and issued with an official refusal letter. This will then entitle you to lodge a formal appeal for a place at your preferred school(s).

Applications may also take longer than 10 school days for:

- Children with statements of special educational needs or an Educational Health Care plan
- Grammar school places
- Children who fall under the Fair Access Protocol (FAP), which includes students in Year 11 (more information about this protocol can be found further on in the guide)

How are places offered?

All schools have admission criteria which are used to decide which children should be offered places if there are more applications than places available. We refer to this as 'over-subscription criteria'. You can see which type each school in Warwickshire is classed as, as well as the relevant over-subscription they have adopted, on our website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/admissionpolicies

Before submitting your application we would recommend that you visit the schools you are interested in. If schools are full they will not be able to offer you a place immediately, but your child could still be placed on a waiting list for a place. Waiting lists are usually held in the order of the school's over-subscription criteria.

You will be sent an official offer letter confirming the school where a place can be offered.

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

Proof of address

Definition of home address

A home address is where the child spends the majority of their school nights. Proof of this address will be required before a change of school application is processed. If you are applying to change school due to a house move then proof of your new address will be required.

Acceptable proof of address must include either: a copy of your tenancy agreement if renting, or a solicitor's letter confirming completion or exchange of contracts if purchasing a property, **as well as two** of the following: a recent utility bill, council tax bill, housing benefit letter, or bank statement.

We may also ask for evidence to show that you have sold your old property or that it is no longer available for you and your family to live in.

We will not return these documents so please make sure you send clear copies which are labelled with your child's name and date of birth.

Moving house can be a stressful time for the family and you will want to prepare for your move as far in advance as possible. However, you can only apply up to **6 school weeks before** you intend your child to start at a new school. If you have not yet moved we will consider your current address, until you provide us with evidence that you have moved. If you are looking for a September start date, we will only accept applications from the beginning of June.

Children who live at more than one address

Where a child lives with each of their parents at separate addresses, the address used for allocating a school place will be the one where the child spends (i.e. sleeps) the majority of the school week. If the child spends exactly equal amounts of time in the two addresses the child's parents/carers will be asked to nominate which address they wish to be the child's main address for school admission purposes. In the case of disputes between parents, there is an expectation that parents will resolve these amongst themselves and make a single application which both parents are in agreement with. When signing the declaration on the application form there is an expectation that all parents/carers with parental responsibility for the child are in agreement with the process and the schools named.

Addresses used for before and after school childcare will not be considered 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. You must also provide a copy of the parent and child's passports and any relevant visas with your application. The DfE website provides useful advice about this: www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children

For service families, official proof of posting to the UK and a relocation date, along with an expected area of where the family will reside will be accepted as the address for the application. Useful information about admission into schools for children of service personnel is available on the DfE website: www.gov.uk/guidance/childrens-education-advisory-service

Children who are Looked After or Previously Looked After

The meaning of children who are 'looked after' relates to any child who is in the care of the local authority, or who is being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. This usually means that a child is currently living in a foster care placement and has an allocated Social Worker. We will accept applications from foster carers where it has been established by Children's Services that the child will be residing with that family for any period of time. Authorisation may be sought from either/both the allocated Social Worker or the child's birth parent(s) in respect of any school application.

Previously Looked After children relates to a child who was in care – for example, in a foster care placement – but has since been adopted, or has been returned to their parents or another carer under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or other childcare arrangement order, such as a residency order. In this respect, we will accept applications from the parent/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'.

Fraudulent or misleading applications

We may refuse to accept that you live at the address on your application if we have any doubts, in which case we will ask for further evidence to show that you and your child actually lives at the address stated. We may also seek advice from our legal team on such matters or seek assistance from other agencies, such as the district council of where the address you have provided is located. We also obtain the right to undertake unannounced home visits to an address where this is deemed necessary.

If we offer a place at a school and then discover that the offer was made on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information (for example, a false claim to living in a catchment area), and this denied a place to another child, we will withdraw the offer of that place. This has happened in previous years.

Offers and Refusals

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 inform you of this within 10 school days of receipt of the application. You will receive a letter in the post confirming the offer. You will have 10 school days in which to respond to the offer. If you do not accept the place in this period then the offer will be withdrawn.

If you accept the place then your child will have 6 school weeks from the date the offer is made in which to start at the school otherwise the place may be withdrawn.

What happens if you don't get a place at the school(s) you have applied for?

If we are unable to offer any of your preferred schools, and your child is a Warwickshire resident who has not got a school place at the time, then you will be offered a place at the next nearest community or voluntary controlled school maintained by Warwickshire with spaces available, or the next nearest own admission authority school with spaces available which is prepared to offer a place. A letter will be sent informing you of this offer. We will also send you information about

waiting lists and details of how you can appeal for a place at any of the schools you applied for and were not offered a place at.

Please note: Current legislation limits the size of Infant classes (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) to 30 pupils per teacher. Infant class size appeals can only be successful in very limited circumstances.

Further information about the appeals process can be found online:

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals>

Why do applications for some children take longer than 10 school days?

Some applications may take longer than 10 school days to process. This may be the case for the following:

- **Children with statements of special needs or an Educational Health Care plan**

Applications will be passed to the Special Educational Needs and Disability, Assessment and Review (SEND) team. This team will need to consult with the school(s) about whether or not they can meet the individual needs of the child,

- **Grammar schools places**

Entry to a grammar school is based on a child's ability. This is assessed by the child sitting a selective test and then matching the results to the children already attending the grammar school. There are two different types of test and the one your child will sit is dependent upon their age. If your child is under the age of 12 years, please contact the Admissions Service for further information. If your child is 12 years or over, please contact the grammar school you are interested in directly. You must complete the Change of School application form and return it to the Admissions Service first, whichever testing route your child takes,

- **Year 11 places**

If a student has already started studying in Key Stage 4 it is important that they transfer to a school that can match the majority of options chosen. Children changing school in Year 11 may fall under the 'Fair Access Protocol',

- **Children who are referred by a school to the Fair Access Protocol – see below**

Fair Access Protocol

What is the Fair Access Protocol (FAP)?

Some applications may need to be considered under Warwickshire County Council's 'Fair Access Protocol' (FAP). This applies to certain children when it has not been possible to secure a place through the normal in-year admissions process. However, where a school wishes to refuse an applicant, and chooses to refer the case for placement through the Fair Access Protocol, the child must fall under one of several categories. These include (but are not limited to):

- children from the criminal justice system, or Pupil Exclusion Units, who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education;
- children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;

- children with special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions (but without a statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC));
- children whose parents have been unable to find a place after moving to the area, due to a shortage of places, or refusals by local schools to admit;
(if this process has taken more than 7 working days, the LA will identify a school and approach via the protocol)
- children who, following the overturn of an exclusion review, have no school place;
- children who are studying in Year 11 prior to the January census, who are finding it difficult to secure a school place within 7 working days;
- children with known behavioural problems, who have transferred between two or more Warwickshire secondary schools, and who have not been permanently excluded;
(this may be due to parents withdrawing a child to avoid exclusion, or parents moving their child to avoid the involvement of other professional teams. We reserve the right to refer cases to other professional bodies within Warwickshire, and beyond, where we feel it is in the interest of the child's welfare)
- children who have been removed from a school by their parents to be 'educated otherwise' and are now seeking a school place;
(the expectation is that these children will be referred to their previous school and that school either readmits the child, or makes arrangements for a locally managed move. It is hoped that this will reduce the amount of parents removing their child to avoid sanctions. This clause can only be applied if there are known behavioural issues documented).

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 FAP can be found at:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/changingschools

The Admissions Service

The Admissions Service is there to help both schools and parent/carers with the admission of children into schools, whether this is a normal transfer round or an In-Year application. We will co-ordinate the process on behalf of a school, from sending out the relevant paperwork to parents/carers, to ensuring that an application for a school is received fully completed. We will also advise parents on the process of appealing for a school place, should this be required, and we can also provide advice to schools about the legalities of school admissions by advising them of the procedures outlined in the School Admissions Code and other relevant documentation issued by the Government.

If you would like any further advice or guidance on the admissions process then please do not hesitate to contact us using the details on the front cover of this booklet.