

# Information and advice on making an in year application

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All applications for school places must be made to Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council.

Please be aware that new application forms received now and during the summer holidays may not be dealt with by schools during school holidays. Most schools do not have staff in during the holidays to be able to process forms. The councils School Admissions Team will prepare all the applications for schools during this period but you are unlikely to hear the schools response to your application until September when the schools return.

- If your child is new to the borough and does not currently have a school place, you can complete a paper form and these are available by calling 01642 526605

## Do I need to apply for an in year place for my child?

Yes. A child cannot be considered for a place in a school unless the parent/carer or other responsible adult has made an application.

## How soon in advance of needing the place can I apply?

You should not apply more than 4 weeks in advance as we cannot hold places for you. Places are offered in the expectation that they will be taken up within 10 school days. We are unable to offer places further ahead than this. The only exception to this is if you are currently in the UK armed forces or a crown servant.

## How many schools can I apply for?

If your child is aged 5 to 16, you can apply to three state schools, of any type, in any local authority on your in year application. These are called “preferences”. To apply for a place in a school sixth form contact the school directly.

## How do I decide which schools to apply for?

Before you apply for any school:

- Be realistic. Stockton schools are very popular. Many schools will not have a place in your child's year group so you may have to accept a different school than the one you would prefer. We are unable to reserve places for children who apply in year.
- Contact the School Admission team to find out which schools have spaces.
- Read the admission policy for the schools you are interested in to understand how places are allocated if there are more applicants than places. Different schools apply different rules.
- Look at the school's website and brochure for information about the school and the latest Ofsted inspection judgement.
- Make an appointment to visit the schools you may be interested in.

## Do I need to provide any additional information to support my application?

If you need to provide evidence to enable your child's application to be considered against the school's admission criteria, it will say so in the admission policy for the school or academy. It is your responsibility to provide this so that it can be considered when places are being allocated. The Admission Policy for schools still maintained by Stockton-On-Tees BC can be found here:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/schools/school-admissions-and-transfers/> and all other schools here:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/schools/school-admissions-and-transfers/applying-for-a-school-place/applying-for-voluntary-aided-schools-academies-and-free-schools/>

Admission authorities will not give an application priority against any of the following admission criteria unless you provide supporting evidence. Please note that not every school includes these criteria within their policies.

- Faith reasons – send the school your proof of faith directly.
- Previously looked after status – send the local authority a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order that confirms that the child was looked after (in care) immediately prior to the order being granted.

- Medical reasons – send the local authority a letter from an appropriate health professional explaining why the named school is the only school that the child can attend.

The evidence you submit will be reviewed by the admission authority for the school/ academy and either upheld or rejected. Please note submitting evidence does not guarantee an offer of a place.

#### Which address should I use?

The address you give must be your child's current permanent address at the time of filling in the application. You must include proof of address, such as a council tax bill, utility bill, rental agreement or solicitor's letter confirming completion date. We do carry out spot checks on addresses and we will withdraw places if fraudulent addresses are given. Please do not send original documents.

#### Information for families moving house

We appreciate that moving home is stressful and that you want to prepare for your move as far in advance as possible. However, when places are offered, this is done on the basis that they will be taken up within 10 school days. This means that you will only be able to apply for a place up to 4 weeks in advance of your move.

If you are moving you should give your child's current address at the time of application and their new address. Please tell us when the move is due to take place and include proof of the new address which should be either a tenancy agreement showing the start date of the tenancy or a solicitor's letter confirming the completion date. You must also provide us with evidence that you have sold or are in the process of selling your current property or that your current lease agreement has ended. Please do not send in original documents.

We are not able to use your new address to measure distances until you have actually moved house. If you are moving to a rented property, you should provide evidence that you have either sold or are in the process of selling your previous property, or that your previous tenancy agreement has ended. This is because the address given must be your child's permanent address and a rental property is not considered permanent if you have alternative accommodation available to you.

#### We are a service family being posted to Stockton. How do we apply for a school place?

We understand that families of UK service personnel and other crown servants are subject to frequent movement within the UK and from abroad. If you or your partner is currently employed as UK service personnel or crown servants please tick the box on the form and include an official Ministry of Defence, Foreign Commonwealth Office or Government Communication Head Quarters letter which confirms the relocation date and quartering address where applicable. If you include this information we are able to process your application in advance of your move provided this is within a reasonable time, for example we cannot process applications for the next academic year until after the May half term.

Your child will not take priority on waiting lists because you are service personnel or a crown servant, but if you include the requested information we are able to process your application in advance of your move provided this is within a reasonable time.

#### Information for families applying from overseas

All children of compulsory school age living in Stockton have a right to education. However if a child will only be resident in the UK for less than half a term, it may be reasonable to refuse admission to a school.

Children who hold full British Citizen passports, or have a passport endorsed to show a right of abode in the UK, or who are European Economic Area nationals, can make an application from overseas. Other children from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. Any application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until the child is living here. An endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application.

If your child currently lives outside the UK or has recently arrived in the UK, please provide proof of arrival in the UK, for example copies of travel tickets or boarding passes. Contact us if you have any difficulties providing this information. As long as proof is provided showing that the child will be resident in Stockton within 10 school days of the application being made, we will process the application.

We will also require proof of address in order to process the application. If you are moving to the UK but do not have a confirmed address, we are unable to consider your application at all until you are able to provide us with the address where the child will be living. We cannot use the child's proposed Stockton address for distance purposes until the child is actually living here.

### Do you need any information from my child's current school?

If you are requesting a move from another school within the UK, especially within Stockton, you should discuss your child's move with their current school. Please ask the school to complete the school comments section of the application. It is important that we have full information about a child in order to process the application and help with their start at their new school. The information in the schools' section will not be used as part of the allocation process and your child will not be disadvantaged by any of the information on the form. If you do not provide this, there may be a delay in processing the form whilst we obtain the information. If there are reasons you cannot provide this section, please let us know when you submit your form.

Overseas applicants are encouraged to provide information from their child's previous school if possible but this is not a requirement.

### How will you process my application?

When we receive your application, an initial check is carried out to make sure we have all the required information. We will contact you if we need additional information. We also assess whether your child's application should be dealt with under the Fair Access Protocol. If everything is in order, each school you list on your form is considered as a separate application.

If you have applied for a school or academy that manages its own in year admissions, we will forward them your application. Otherwise we will consider your application on the school's behalf. Places in schools will be offered up to the admission number of the school or academy. You can find this in the school's information. It is the maximum number of students the school or academy can accommodate, taking into account the size and layout of the buildings, and is calculated using a government formula.

- You will be contacted by the school/academy or the local authority and told the outcome of each application.
- If there is a space in a school and your child is the only applicant, you will be offered the place.
- If the school is oversubscribed, any available places will be allocated according to the admission arrangements for that school.
- If none of the schools you listed can offer a place and your child needs a school place, the local authority will offer a place at the nearest alternative school to your home with a space.
- If none of the schools you listed can offer a place but your child already has a place at a school they can continue to attend, we will not offer an alternative school.

Please note if you have more than one child, it may not be possible to offer places for all the children in the same school.

### How long will it take to process my child's application?

If all required information is provided with your application, you should hear the outcome from the school/academy or local authority within 10 school days (where possible) of submitting the application. If the local authority has to offer an alternative school place because there are no spaces in your preferred schools, you should receive this offer within 20 school days of your original application.

These timescales may be delayed if information is missing from your application or if your child's application is being considered under the Fair Access Protocol. Also please note that school places are not offered during holidays when schools are closed.

### What is the Fair Access Protocol?

We are required by law to operate a Fair Access Protocol to ensure that potentially vulnerable children can quickly access school places and that all schools admit a fair share of these pupils who for a variety of reasons need more support.

Some of the questions on the application form are included to help identify more vulnerable children to try to ensure appropriate support can be put in place for them at their new school. If we decide that your child should be considered under the protocol, the Fair Access Officer will contact you. More information can be found here <I:\Education Services\Planning and Partnership\School Admissions\Admissions & Transfers\Fair Access and Managed Moves\Fair Access Protocol and supporting documents\Fair Access Policy - July 2017 Final.pdf>

### Where can I get further information and advice?

If you have any further questions after reading these, please contact us directly. We will respond as quickly as possible but at busy times our response times are 3 working days for phone calls and up to 10 working days for written correspondence.

Phone on 01642 526605 (ask for "School Admissions")

Writing to:

School Admissions and Transfers Team  
Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Church Road  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS18 1XE