

Frequently asked questions about in year school admissions

Please click on the following links for answers to the frequently asked question that parents often have at this time. This information supplements the guidance in the other sections.

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[Do I need to apply for a school place if my child has special educational needs?](#)

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education Health and Care Plan **you should contact the SEN and Engagement team first** if you want to move schools. In all other circumstances you must complete the in-year application form.

If your child is moving to Stockton from overseas, and previously attended a special school or unit due to their special educational needs, please enclose details of your child's needs and this special provision with your school application. This will help us to process your application more quickly and ensure appropriate support is provided within Stockton.

[What if my child needs to go to a named school for medical reasons?](#)

Read the admission policy for the school first to check whether medical reasons are given priority when places are allocated at the school. If it is not stated in the policy, the school cannot lawfully consider medical circumstances. 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/>

If medical reasons are included in the admission policy (for example where the child or one or both parents has a disability that means that the child can only go to one school) you must provide a letter from an appropriate health professional explaining why the named school is the only school that the child can attend. If the evidence is late it may not be considered when places are allocated.

The evidence will be assessed by the admission authority and either upheld or rejected. The case is unlikely to be upheld if the preferred school is not the child's nearest school. Please note very cases are upheld.

If your child has special educational needs and you feel they should attend a specific mainstream school on medical grounds, please be aware that the case will be assessed on the same basis as described above. The majority of children with special educational needs are able to have their needs met at any mainstream school and your case is unlikely to be upheld.

[Making an application if you have not moved house](#)

It is extremely important that a child has continuity in their education. For this reason **we strongly discourage unnecessary transfers between schools**. If your child already attends school, **you must** discuss the reasons for requesting a move with the current school as it is important that you try to resolve any difficulties by working with the school rather than seeking to transfer. A school cannot ask you to withdraw your child from school or withdraw your child from the school roll without your permission or first establishing that your child has a new school place.

If you are thinking about a change of school unrelated to a house move, please consider the following before making your decision.

- Each school teaches the National Curriculum in different ways and at different times of the academic year. How will your child cope with learning new arrangements and doing things in different ways? They may have done the work before, missed important earlier work, or find the work new or strange.
- Children need to feel happy at school and relationships with the right friends, and with teachers, are an important part of this. Will your child be able to settle in and get to know new people quickly, so that their learning does not suffer?
- How would your child get to a new school? What will be the cost involved? A change will usually be regarded as parental choice. In most circumstances you are unlikely to qualify for travel assistance to the preferred school.
- Will it be a problem for you if your children attend different schools? There is no automatic right for your other children to also transfer to the new school. Will you be able to transport your children to different schools at the appropriate times?
- You might need to buy a completely new uniform, including PE kit, if your child changes school.

Many things that worry parents, carers and children can be resolved without the need to move schools. Often moving schools does not resolve these concerns and could even have a bad effect on your child's education. If your child is unhappy at school you should speak to the Head teacher, as problems can usually be resolved quickly.

[Applications for students in year 10 and year 11](#)

Particular care should be taken with students in year 10 and year 11. Moving a child's school at this stage can be extremely difficult and detrimental when they are studying for specific examinations. When your child moves to a new school, it may not be possible for them to continue the same GCSE

subjects they have already chosen. Increasingly students are starting GCSE subjects at the start of year 9. We advise you to discuss subject options with the schools you are interested in before you make an application.

Applicants seeking to move schools in year 11 may find that it is too late in some cases for students to be entered for any GCSE examinations.

Depending on the student's previous educational history and fluency in English language, applications for older students may be referred for consideration under the Fair Access Protocol and an alternative to a school placement may be sought, for example English lessons at college.

[How do I apply for nursery class places?](#)

Admissions to a nursery class or nursery school are not managed by the local authority. You should contact the setting directly for nursery admissions information including how and when to apply. Applications should be made directly to the early years setting. Please note there are no feeder links between any nursery setting and how reception class places are allocated. There is no advantage in attending a specific pre-school setting. Children in a nursery class are not given priority for reception places in the school.

[When does my child have to start school?](#)

Children must be in full time education once they reach statutory school age. This starts from the term after the child's fifth birthday.

- Children becoming 5 years old between 1 September and 31 December are of statutory school age at the beginning of the term after 1 January.
- Children becoming 5 years old between 1 January and 31 March are of statutory school age at the beginning of the term after 1 April.
- Children becoming 5 years old between 1 April and 31 August are of statutory school age at the beginning of the term after 1 September.

The first year of school is called reception. Newcastle schools offer all children the opportunity of a whole year in reception regardless of the date of their fifth birthday.

[What age must my child be before they can leave school?](#)

A young person stops being of statutory school age on the last Friday in June during the year that they become 16 years old, as long as the child's birthday is before the beginning of the next school year. If their 16th birthday falls after the start of the new school year, they are still of statutory school age until the end of the last Friday in June of the following year.

After this age, your child does not have to attend a school but must continue in formal education or training until their 18th birthday. This might mean:

- studying full-time in a school, college or with a training provider (many young people also take a part time job alongside)
- working or volunteering full-time, combined with part-time education or training
- taking up an apprenticeship or traineeship

[Which type of school can I apply for?](#)

You can apply for a place at any type of school or academy except an independent school. Independent schools are funded through fees paid by parents. They set their own curriculum and admission policies. If you want to apply to an independent school you should contact the school direct.

Before you apply for any school, read the school's admission arrangements to understand how places are allocated. If there are more applications than places available, the school or local authority will apply these admission arrangements to decide which child or children will be allocated places. 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/>

[Which address should I use for my child's application?](#)

By law you must use the **permanent address** at the time of application at which your child is living with a parent or the person with parental responsibility. The address of a childminder or relatives must not be used. 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.

We carry out address checks and may ask for additional proof of address. Using a false address is taken extremely seriously (it is committing fraud). If not convinced your address is genuine, we will withdraw any offer of a school place and may take other further action.

If your child lives at more than one address Monday to Friday (for example due to a separation) the address used should be where your child lives most of the time. Only one address can be used. If your child lives at two addresses, the local authority will consider the evidence available such as the address of the parent/carer that claims the child benefit or child tax credit and the address where the child is registered with a GP in order to determine what will be considered to be the child's main address.

You may also find the evidence checklists useful when completing the application form.

[What happens if someone uses a fraudulent address or gives other false information on their application?](#)

Every year we have cases where parents give false information about their home address to get a place at a particular school. You must make sure that everything you tell us is true and accurate. We carry out address checks and may ask for additional proof of address. Using a false address is taken extremely seriously (it is committing fraud). If not convinced your address is genuine and your child has not yet started school we will withdraw any offer of a school place and may take other further action. If the place is not removed because the child has been attending the school for some time, we will cancel the sibling link for any other children in that family.

We do all we can to make sure that fraud does not happen because it can prevent genuine applicants from getting a place at a school. If you have any concerns or information about the use of fraudulent addresses or other false information, please contact us in confidence.

[How will I know if you have received my application?](#)

Applications that include a mobile number or email address will be acknowledged by text or email. Applications without these contact details will not be acknowledged unless you include a stamped addressed envelope.

[Can I change my preferences after submitting my application?](#)

Yes. If you want to change your school preferences, send us a new paper form. Your original application will be cancelled and replaced with your new application.

[Can the offer of a place be withdrawn?](#)

We reserve the right to withdraw an offer of a place in certain circumstances. By submitting your application you are stating that the information given is true and accurate. Examples of when a place could be withdrawn include:

- Where you have given fraudulent or intentionally misleading information such as a false address.
- Where you have not responded to an offer within the stated timescale.
- Where the offer has been made in error.

If an offer is withdrawn as a result of fraudulent or misleading information, you will need to reapply using the correct information. If a place is subsequently refused when your application is reconsidered, you have a right of appeal.

[Rights of appeal](#)

- If you want to appeal for more than one school or one child you will need to appeal separately for each one.
- You can only appeal for a school if you applied and were refused a place.
- You cannot appeal if an offer is removed on the grounds of misleading or fraudulent information, unless you reapply for the school using the correct information and a place is subsequently refused.
- You will not improve your chances of winning an appeal by refusing an alternative school place.
- Submitting an appeal does not affect your position on the waiting list.

For further information regarding appeals, you can visit the website at:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/schools/school-admissions-and-transfers/school-admission-appeals/>

[How do I pass on a comment, suggestion or make a formal complaint?](#)

We value customer feedback on what you feel we have done well, and on ways we can improve the information, advice and support we provide for parents. Please contact us by email, phone or post with any comments or suggestions.

If you have a complaint about the service please contact us in the first instance on 01642 526605 (Ask for "School Admission") or email to school.admissions@stockton.gov.uk to discuss the problem. Usually most cases can be resolved in this way.

When you tell us what you are not happy with, we can try to put things right. In future, we can try to get it right first time. We will treat your complaint seriously and deal with your complaint positively.

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you can visit the website for further information at:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/stockton-council/customer-services/complaints-compliments-or-comment-about-stockton-council-services/>

What are infant class size limits?

The law states that no infant class should contain more than 30 children with a single qualified teacher. Children will be refused places if their admission would mean more than 30 children in a class. Infant class size limits apply to reception, year 1 and year 2 classes. Schools must comply with the infant class size limit.

The class size limit does not mean that all schools have to admit up to 30 children into each class. At some schools the size of classrooms and internal layout may mean that classes have to be smaller than 30.

Most schools in Stockton have a reception intake of 30 (one class) or 60 (two classes). In some schools 45 children are admitted into the reception year (usually taught in two classes) and then children are taught in mixed age classes in the older year groups of the school, in other words year 1 and year 2 children may be taught in the same classroom.

This means the 45 children from year 1 and 45 children from year 2 are brought together into three classes each of 30 pupils, which therefore complies with the infant class size limit of no more than 30 children with a qualified teacher. Where the school organises its classrooms in this way, a maximum of 45 children can be admitted into reception because of the impact in future years.

If a school you are interested in organises its classes in this way and it concerns you, talk to the school about how it works.