



In-year scheme for admission to school in 2025/26

I Legislative framework and key purpose of scheme

- 1.1 There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year admissions. Schools which are their own admissions authority (academies, foundation schools and voluntary aided schools) are therefore legally responsible for administering their own routine in-year admissions. Hampshire County Council, as the admission authority, is responsible for in-year admissions to community and voluntary controlled schools. However, the administering of in-year applications is delegated to schools, on behalf of the County Council.
- 1.2 This scheme sets out procedures for handling in-year applications to community and voluntary controlled schools. It also covers:
- In-year applications to schools which are their own admission authority
 - Fair Access admissions
 - Exceptional admissions
 - Withdrawal of offers.
- 1.3 The key purpose of this scheme is to ensure that Hampshire County Council, as the Local Authority (LA), and schools which are their own admission authority, comply with the relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code (SAC), to ensure that the LA is able to fulfil its tracking function, maintain information about available spaces in all maintained schools and academies in Hampshire, and administer the County Council's Fair Access Protocol, in which all maintained schools and academies are required to participate.

2 Applications to community and voluntary controlled schools

2.1 Applications

Any parent can apply for a place for their child at any school, at any time (SAC Para 2.23)

Parents requiring a place at a Hampshire community or voluntary controlled school outside the main admissions round should apply online via the Hampshire County Council website. Any parents unable to apply online can complete an electronic form, available on request from the County Admissions Team.

The governors of voluntary controlled schools require a supplementary information form (SIF) to be completed where parents apply under the faith criteria. This form is **additional to, and does not replace**, Hampshire's application form which must be completed in every case.

Applications will be handled by the school on behalf of the LA. Where there is any doubt about the outcome of an application the County Admissions Team should be consulted.

All applications received by the County Admissions Team will be forwarded to the school named in the application on the next working day after receipt.

Schools should contact the County Admissions Team promptly if:

- an application is received for a looked after or previously looked after child
- an application is received for a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- the applicant does not have parental responsibility for the child
- the applicant is requesting a place outside of the child's chronological year group
- the school is full in the relevant year group, but the child may qualify for admission as an excepted pupil (see section 4) or under the Fair Access Protocol (see section 5).
- there are any concerns about the application

Children will usually be admitted to their chronological year group. However, parents can request their child be admitted to a different year group. Decisions will be made by the LA, taking into account the view of the headteacher, based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child.

2.2 Address changes

In the case of a house move, parents will be required to submit evidence of their new address directly to the school. Schools must ensure that the appropriate evidence has been received prior to making an offer based on a new address. A signed tenancy agreement or a solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts will be accepted as evidence of a change of address.

In some cases, schools may want to verify that the family are resident at the new address after an offer has been made. The LA may withdraw an offer of a place if the address on which the offer was based did not subsequently become the child's main address.

Special conditions apply for UK service personnel and crown services families, in accordance with paragraph 2.21 of the SAC:

2.21 Children of UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces) and crown servants -
*For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to their area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in that area, admission authorities **must**:*

*a) allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area (as long as one is available) provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date. Admission authorities **must not** refuse to process an application and **must not** refuse a place solely because the family do not yet have an intended address or do not yet live in the area.*

b) use the address at which the child will live when applying their oversubscription criteria, as long as the parents provide some evidence of their intended address. Admission authorities must use a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria, where a parent requests this.

c) not reserve blocks of places for these children.

*d) ensure that arrangements in their area support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. Arrangements **must** be appropriate for the area and be described in the local authority's composite prospectus.*

Where a child lives at more than one address, the address where the child spends more time will be used for the application. Where a child's time is split equally between two addresses, parents may choose which to use for the application. Evidence may be required, and the school's admission policy outlines what evidence is required where there is a dispute.

2.3 Responding to applications

Schools should aim to notify parents of the outcome of their application in writing within 10 school days of the application being received but must respond in writing within 15 school days. The date of receipt for online applications is the date and time of submission. For paper forms, the date of receipt is the day it was received by the school or the County Admissions Team, if earlier. Where an offer is possible, parents are required to take up the place within four school weeks.

Applications requesting a September 2026 start for year groups other than the normal year of entry to the school must be considered from Monday 8 June 2026 (approximately six weeks prior to the end of the summer term). Applications received from 8 June 2026 for places during the summer term should also be considered from this date, allowing for summer term and September applications to be considered together.

The LA will publish model offer and refusal letters via the Education Information Hub for the school to use.

The offer letter will require parents to accept the offer within 10 school days and will outline possible entitlement to assistance with transport. Offer letters will also specify that the place must be taken up within four school weeks or the

offer will be withdrawn. Schools must establish that the address provided on the application is the child's correct address before making an offer.

The refusal letter will explain grounds for the refusal and include information about the waiting list and the parent's right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Schools must forward all application outcomes to the County Admissions Team as soon as is reasonably practicable but should aim to do this within two school days.

Where an offer is made, the child must be put on the school roll on the first **expected** day of attendance. This can be before the offer letter is received by the parent in circumstances where a verbal offer has been made and a start date agreed. In any event, the child will normally be required to be on roll and attending as soon as possible. Where additional support is required that is not available and/or there are significant special/medical needs, there may be a short delay. The child should however normally be attending within 4 school weeks of the date of the letter. The school must advise the County Admissions Team of the agreed start date.

If an applicant does not respond to an offer within 10 school days, a reminder letter will be sent giving a further seven calendar days to respond. If no response is received within those seven days, a final letter will be sent stating that the offer has been withdrawn.

If the child has not taken up the place within four school weeks of the offer (or by September for applications considered from 8 June), the place may be withdrawn. Schools may however use their discretion to allow parents slightly more than four weeks in exceptional circumstances.

2.4 **Waiting lists**

The LA will operate waiting lists for oversubscribed schools. Each child refused a place will automatically be added to the waiting list of the relevant year group for the school. Waiting lists cannot include children for whom an application for the relevant school has not been made.

The waiting list is ranked according to the admission policy for the school with no account being taken of the length of time on the waiting list. However, Fair Access admissions, infant class size exceptions and on occasion school closure arrangements will take priority over the waiting list.

When a place becomes available at a school with a waiting list for the relevant year group, it will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list at that time, subject to the appropriate address evidence being provided. A place must be offered even if the child lives some distance from the school. It cannot be a condition of offering a place that a family move into the catchment area or nearer to the school, provided they can assure the school that the child will

arrive on time and attend regularly. If schools are doubtful whether parents will be able to ensure a child's punctuality and regular attendance, this must be discussed directly with them.

Schools must notify the County Admissions Team of any offer made from the waiting list.

Waiting lists will be maintained until 31 August 2026 at which point they will close. Parents wishing to apply for a place for the following academic year must submit a new application before 31 August 2026.

Parents should be made aware that the independent appeal process is entirely separate from the management of the waiting lists. Going to appeal has no bearing on a child's position on the waiting list.

2.5 Numbers on roll

All schools **must** respond to requests from the LA for up-to-date number on roll data within two school days of the request as per paragraph 2.27 of the SAC.

3 Applications to schools which are their own admission authority

Any parent can apply for a place for their child at any school, at any time (SAC Para 2.23)

The LA will include all own admission authority schools in the list of schools for which parents can apply online via the Hampshire County Council website. Any applications received by the LA for schools which are their own admission authority will be forwarded to the schools for processing on the next working day after receipt.

As required by the SAC, schools must forward all applications and their outcome to the County Admissions Team by email as soon as is reasonably practicable but should aim to do so within 2 school days. This includes offers from a waiting list.

Own admission authority schools also have a duty to supply the LA with up-to-date numbers on roll in each year group within two school days of a request from the LA, so that they can advise parents where places are available, as per para 2.27 of the SAC.

4 Exceptional Admissions

4.1 Looked after and previously looked after children

Applications for 'looked after' and 'previously looked after children' will be given the highest priority. In the case of 'looked after children', the protocol for looked after children will be followed to ensure that the LA (or other LA with whom child

is in care) discharges its responsibility as corporate parent to identify which school the child should be admitted to. The LA will normally require the admission even where this takes the school over its published admission number (PAN).

4.2 Infant Class Size – ‘Excepted pupils’

Infant Class Size (ICS) regulations state that infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) **must not** contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. Children may be admitted as an **exception** to the infant class size limit. These exceptions are:

- a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs specifying a school;
- b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- c) children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process;
- d) children admitted after an independent appeal panel upholds an appeal;
- e) children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

These children will remain as an ‘excepted pupil’ for the whole time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit (or where the cohort is more than one form of entry – the numbers in another class within the cohort fall below 30, providing an opportunity to reorganise the classes so that they all comply with ICS regulations).

5 Fair Access Admissions

By law, each LA is required to publish a Fair Access Protocol, agreed with the majority of schools in its area, to ensure that, outside the normal admissions round, unplaced and vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. The LA must ensure that no school is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools or who have challenging behaviour. The Fair Access Protocol allows an admission to be made over a school’s admission limit for the relevant year

group. Use of the Protocol is only triggered when a parent of an eligible child has not secured a school place under normal in-year admission procedures.

Should it be determined that an application can be considered under Hampshire's agreed Fair Access Protocol, the LA in discussion with the parent/carer, the school and any other relevant agencies as appropriate (e.g. Inclusion Services, social care) will determine the placement. This will take into account the circumstances of the individual pupil, as well as which school will be best able to meet their needs, bearing in mind concerns from schools about the admission and seeking to protect any one school from a disproportionate number of placements of children with challenging behaviour. In deciding a placement, every effort will be made to ensure transport arrangements, which are the responsibility of the parents, are reasonable and cost effective. Schools may act collaboratively to propose placements in their area under the Protocol.

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) without an EHC Plan must not be disadvantaged compared to other children. These children may be admitted under the Fair Access Protocol. Admission authorities cannot refuse to admit a pupil because they consider themselves unable to cater for his or her SEND.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all schools to admit a child with an EHC Plan that names their school.

Where a governing body does not wish to admit a child with challenging behaviour outside the main admissions round, even though places are available, it must refer the case to the local authority for consideration under the Fair Access Protocol. This will only be appropriate where a school has a particularly high proportion of either children with challenging behaviour or previously permanently excluded pupils on roll compared to other local schools and it considers that admitting another child with challenging behaviour would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Challenging behaviour is defined in the SAC as that which is unlikely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions to help prevent and address pupil misbehaviour or it is of such severity, frequency, or duration that it is beyond the normal range that schools can tolerate. We would expect this behaviour to significantly interfere with the pupil's/other pupils' education or jeopardise the right of staff and pupils to a safe and orderly environment.

A child cannot be refused because they are thought to be potentially disruptive on the grounds that the child is due to be assessed for an EHC Plan.

6 Withdrawal of offers

The LA will investigate allegations of fraudulent practice and may withdraw an offer if the place has been offered based on fraudulent or intentionally

misleading information. Schools should contact the County Admissions Team where there are concerns.

Relevant documents:

- *The School Admissions Code, September 2021 (SAC)*
[School Admissions Code - 2021](#)
- *Hampshire County Council's Fair Access Protocol*
[Fair Access Protocol](#)
- *Applying for a school or college place for Hampshire Looked After Children*
[applying-for-schoolplaces-Hampshire-Children-in-Care.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)