



Primary admissions guide

Useful information about choosing a school and applying for a school, all in one place

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Introduction

Welcome to the primary admissions guide for junior, middle and starting school place applications for September 2023. **Please read this guide** before making your application.

Orchard Grove Primary School

Orchard Grove Primary School

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Primary Admissions – The important dates

The online form for junior, middle and starting school applications will open on **26 September 2022**

Important

Closing date for school place applications – **15 January 2023**

Closing date for exceptional circumstance applications and supplementary information – **3 February 2023**

Outcome emails will be sent to those who applied online. Outcome letters will be sent out by second class post to those who applied using a paper form – **17 April 2023**

Closing date for receipt of appeal applications from parents who were notified of their outcome on 17 April 2023 – **16 May 2023**

When your child can start school

Children can start school in the September following their fourth birthday, so, children born between 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2019 are entitled to a full-time school place from September 2023.

Children must start school in the term (January, Easter or September) after their fifth birthday.

Please see our [webpage](#) for further details on deferred entry, part-time schooling and delayed admission for summer born children.

Who can apply

Parents and carers are responsible for making a school place application for any children in their care. A legal definition of a parent or carer is included in the glossary at the bottom of this page.

Where shared care arrangements are in place and parents and carers of the child submit two separate applications for different schools, we will only accept one application, which will be the application made by the parent or carer who lives at the same permanent home address as the child. Where there are exceptional grounds, such as ongoing court proceedings, these applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

Where it is necessary to establish the child's permanent home address, parents or carers will be asked to write to us stating the number of days each week the child spends with them. We may also ask for evidence of which parent or carer was in receipt of child benefit when the application was made. If the parent or carer is not in receipt of child benefit, we will ask for proof of the child's home address as held by the doctor's surgery when the application was made. If the child's home address cannot be verified, we may ask for more information.

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Please be aware, if you are applying for a school place for your child and your child does not live with you permanently, then information will also be sent to your child's permanent home address.

Important things to think about before you apply

Important things to think about

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More important things to think about

More important things

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Siblings

Priority is given in the published local authority admission arrangements for siblings where there is an existing sibling link at the time of admission. **But no guarantee is given that siblings can attend the same school when the school is over-subscribed.**

For academies or schools which are their own admission authorities, you will need to check the individual over-subscription criteria for each school.

Make sure you fully complete the question about siblings if relevant (if not, your application may not be considered under this criterion).

If children of multiple births (twins and triplets) are tied for the final place, these siblings will usually be admitted over PAN (sibling definition applies).

SEND information - part of our Local Offer

Applying if your child has an Education, Health and Care plan

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) your school placement will be dealt with by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) team. Please do not make an application for a school place to the admissions team. You must contact the SEND team to make sure a plan is in place for your child's transition. There would also have been an opportunity to discuss your views on your child's next placement at their last Annual Review meeting.

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If a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, which names a particular school, then the admission authority for that school has a duty to admit the child. Where possible, the admission authority will take these admissions into account before the published offer day and will include these admissions in the published admission number.

The local authority has a duty to make suitable provision for children who have Special Educational Needs and to make appropriate education available in mainstream or specialist schools. Wherever possible, the local authority will try to place children with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools. The needs of the majority of children can be met from the resources available to the schools, including advice from the area support services.

For information, advice and support on Special Educational Needs and disability, please visit [Somerset SENDIAS website](#).

You may also find it helpful to visit [Somerset's Local Offer](#).

Children previously in care and now adopted

The admissions authority has a duty to give the highest priority within the over-subscription criteria to children in local authority care (Looked After Children) or children who were previously looked after and are now formally adopted or subject to a residence or child arrangement order or special guardianship order. Previously looked after children also includes children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

You may be required to submit a copy of the adoption order, child arrangement order or special guardianship order and a letter from the local authority that last looked after the child confirming that he or she was looked after immediately before that order was made. Further information may be requested.

Applying for a school outside Somerset

Applications must be made to your home local authority regardless of where the school is situated. If you live in Somerset please apply online and choose your preferred schools by 15 January 2023.

Please note that the published admission arrangements for another county may be different from those in Somerset. You must make sure that you fully understand the published admission arrangements and over-subscription criteria that apply to the school concerned before you make your application and to find out if you need to complete a SIF.

All-through schools

An all-through school covers Reception through to the end of Year 11 – primary and secondary phase combined.

Parents who have children on roll at an all-through school do not need to make a separate secondary school application for the same school.

However, if your child is not currently on roll at an all-through school and you would like to apply for the secondary phase, you must make an application by the published deadline.

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Applying for a school

If you are applying online, please choose the 'No UID' (Unique Identification Number) option on the online form, because we do not use these.

Complete the application form on [Apply to Start School](#) or [Starting at a junior or middle school](#) stating your preferred schools in ranked order by 15 January 2023.

If you make a paper application, you will not receive email notification of your school place application on National Offer Day. Instead, a letter will be posted 2nd class to your home address on this date. Outcomes will **not** be given out over the phone.

Make sure you have completed any necessary SIF(s) that are required. Please make sure you have fully completed your application form and if you have applied online make sure that it has been submitted properly and you have received a confirmation email. You must re-submit your online form if you view or make any changes at a later date.

Supporting information such as a SIF or proof of address for on-time applications will be accepted up to 3 February 2023.

If an application is made to Somerset local authority by mistake, we will attempt to pass this on to the correct local authority or contact the applicant directly. However, please note that it remains the responsibility of the applicant to apply to the correct home local authority.

Important

Any change of preference submitted online or by paper application on or before the published deadline date will override any previous applications.

School place application checklist

- 1 Research the schools that you are considering applying for (for example, visit the school's website, contact the school for a visit, look at the school prospectus, attend open days or evenings, visit the OFSTED website, think about before and after school care).
- 2 Think about how your child will get to school.
- 3 Express a preference of 3 schools in preferred, ranked order.
- 4 Seriously consider stating your catchment or nearest school as one of your preferences.
- 5 Make sure you fully complete the question about siblings if relevant (if not, your application may not be considered under this criterion).
- 6 If relevant, make sure you have completed the appropriate SIF for each school you have applied for and returned to the correct address (if not, your application may not be considered under the appropriate criterion).
- 7 Make sure your application is received by the closing date – 15 January 2023.

How places will be allocated

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Every school has a legal Published Admission Number (PAN) applicable to the year of entry, which indicates the maximum number of places available in the year group concerned.

The PAN is set to maximise parental preference within the resources and accommodation available.

If there are less applications than the PAN (such as, places available), every child will be allocated a place. But, if a school receives more applications than the PAN (is over-subscribed) the published over-subscription criteria will be applied to determine which children should be offered the available places.

Places will be allocated using the 'Equal Preference with Ranking' method. This requires the admissions authority to consider all preferences received for a particular school (1st, 2nd and 3rd) equally and where the school is over-subscribed apply the over-subscription criteria. Where more than one of your preferences can be met the local authority will offer you a place at your highest ranked preference.

Unfortunately, at some schools, there will not be enough places for all the children whose parents would like them to go there. When all places have been allocated up to the PAN, the admission authority may refuse any further requests.

What you should do if your child has not been offered a place at one or more of your preferred schools

It may not be possible for the admission authority to offer your child a place at your highest preference school, however you may still be offered a place at your second or third preference school. On some occasions it may not be possible for an admissions authority to offer your child a place at any of your preferred schools.

If this is the case, we would normally offer the catchment school if there are places available.

If this is not the case we would try to offer a place at the nearest alternative school with places available within statutory walking distance of the child's home address (2 miles for children under 8 years of age and 3 miles for children aged 8 years and over).

Admission arrangements and over-subscription criteria

You can find the criteria used to allocate places at schools and academies on their websites. We also have links to the [Admission policies](#) on our Local Offer site. Just search for the school you are interested in and click on the admissions policy link.

For Voluntary Aided (VA) and Foundation (F) schools the governing body is the admissions authority, and for Free Schools (FS) and Academies (A), the Academy Trust is the admissions authority. For VC and C schools the local authority is the admission authority.

All admission decisions will be made in accordance with the published admission arrangements for the school or academy in question. Parents are encouraged to read the criteria for the schools they are considering.

School and Academies in Somerset

Here is a full list of all primary phase schools in Somerset and the Published Admission Number for each school. The different types of schools are:

First schools: Age 4 to 9 years

Infant schools: Age 4 to 7 years

Junior schools: Age 7 to 11 years

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Primary schools: Age 4 to 11 years

Middle schools: Age 9 to 13 years

All through schools: Age 4 to 16

- [School and Academy information and statistics](#)

Allocation Summaries for September 2022

Here is a [summary of how the places were allocated](#) at schools for September 2022 on our website.

Abbreviations

A – Academy

C – Community School

F – Foundation School

FS – Free School

VA – Voluntary Aided School

VC – Voluntary Controlled School

PAN – Published Admission Number

For a full explanation see our glossary below

Appeals

If you are not offered one or more of your preferences you will be advised of your legal right to appeal for a place at your preferred school. Information about the appeal process will be sent to you with your outcome letter or email, detailing your options.

Please note that your appeal will not affect any offer you have already received in respect of another school, unless you are successful at your appeal.

Places becoming available.

For every over-subscribed school a ranked waiting list will be held in order of over-subscription criteria by the Admissions Authority until at least the end of the Autumn term.

For VC and C schools, please make a written request to us for your child to remain on the waiting list after this time. For own admission authority schools you will need to check the individual school or academy's admission arrangements on their website.

If places subsequently become available within the PAN they will be re-allocated to the highest ranked child on the waiting list. The waiting list will include all applications refused, whether they were on-time or late and will be ranked according to the school's over-subscription criteria.

Important

You must make sure that your appeal application form is completed and returned by the published appeal application closing date (16 May 2023). If your appeal application is late, then it may not be considered until all 'on time' appeal applications have been heard.

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Help and support

The Somerset Choice Advice Service is a free impartial service to help families with school admissions and appeals. For more information please [visit their website](#).

Late applications

You can apply online on our [Apply to Start School](#) page.

Any applications received after 15 January 2023 will be considered as a late application.

For applications received by 2 May 2023 we will send outcomes on 5 June 2023. These will be sent by second class post.

Applications received after 2 May 2023 will be processed in strict date order of receipt and outcomes sent out after 5 June 2023. These will be sent by second class post.

If a change of preference is received and can be offered, the previous school place offer will automatically be withdrawn. It is not possible to withdraw a late application with a change of preference once the closing date has passed.

Starting a year late or early

When your summer-born child can start school

Parents of summer-born children (born between 1 April and 31 August) may request that they start reception a year later. This is called delayed admission.

This is an important decision and a number of factors need to be taken into consideration. So, please make sure you read this important information carefully first.

If you would like to apply for delayed admission you **must** still make an on-time school place application but may apply for your child's admission to be delayed at the same time. We would recommend that you include your catchment or nearest school as one of your preference.



[Application for starting school a year early](#)

PDF,

[Application for delayed admission](#)

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If it is agreed that your child's admission can be delayed this will only apply specifically to that school. Therefore we recommend that you request delayed admission at all your preferred schools, not just your first preference school. We would also recommend that you include your catchment school as one of your preferences. This does not guarantee a place but does provide a priority in most cases.

Your school place application will be considered against the published admission number for each school and the over-subscription criteria will be applied should the school have more applicants than there are places available. Should we be unable to offer a place at any of your preferences there is no guarantee that delayed admission would be agreed at an alternative school.

Decisions will be made on a case by case basis by the admission authority of each school. The Head teacher of each school will be consulted as part of this process. The admissions authority must clearly set out the reasons for the decision in writing.

As long as you have made an on-time school place application we will ensure you receive an outcome to your request for delayed admission before the primary national offer date.

If your request is agreed, your school place application will be withdrawn before a place is offered and you will then need to make a new school place application for the following year.

If your request is refused, you must decide whether to accept the offer of a school place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday. There is no right of appeal against the decision not to allow your child to be admitted outside of their normal age group.

If your child has delayed admission agreed, you may be unable to apply on-line as the system will not recognise your child's date of birth. Please contact us for advice in these circumstances.

Starting school a year early

Parents may request that their child starts reception a year early. **This is an important decision and a number of factors need to be taken into consideration. Therefore, please ensure you carefully read this important information first.**

If you would like your child to start school a year early (at age 3) you **must** still make an on-time school place application but may apply for your child to start school a year early at the same time. You will be unable to apply for a school place online as the system will not recognise your child's date of birth. Please contact us for advice in these circumstances. We would recommend that you include your catchment or nearest school as one of your preferences.



[Application for starting school a year early](#)

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If it is agreed that your child can start school a year early this will only apply specifically to that school. Therefore we recommend that you request admission a year early at all your preferred schools, not just your first preference school. We would also recommend that you include your catchment school as one of your preferences. This does not guarantee a place but does provide a priority in most cases.

Your school place application will be considered against the published admission number for each school and the over-subscription criteria will be applied should the school have more applicants than there are places available. If we are unable to offer a place at any of your preferences there is no guarantee that admission a year early would be agreed at an alternative school.

Decisions will be made on a case by case basis by the admission authority of each school where early admission is requested. The headteacher of each school will also be consulted as part of this process. The admissions authority must clearly set out the reasons for the decision in writing.

As long as you have made an on-time school place application we will ensure you receive an outcome to your request for early admission before the primary national offer date.

If your request for early admission is agreed, your school place application will be processed and you will receive an outcome on the Primary National Offer Day.

If your request for early admission is refused, your school place application will not be processed and you will need to make a new school place application for the following year.

There is no right of appeal against the decision not to allow your child to be admitted outside of their normal age group.

In-year admissions

Applications for children of school age moving to an existing year group in another school outside of the starting or transferring school process are called In-year admissions.

You can ask for an application form directly from the school or from the local authority. Decisions will be taken by each individual admissions authority who must also inform parents of their right to appeal against the refusal of a place.

If your child is refused a place at a VC or C school, they will be placed on a waiting list until the end of the academic year. If your child is refused a place at an own admission authority school, you will need to contact the school or check the admission arrangements on their website to find out if they keep a waiting list. All waiting lists must be held in order of over-subscription criteria and re-ranked every time a child is removed or added to the waiting list.

For information on availability of school places, please contact your preferred schools or phone us.

In Year Admissions – children of UK service personnel

Somerset local authority endeavours to make sure that admission arrangements in their area support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children.

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, the admission authority will:

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- 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.
- 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.

School transport

Considering travel arrangements when choosing a school for your child

Unless your child qualifies for free school travel assistance, it is the parents and carers responsibility to get them to school.

We will provide free school travel assistance to children who attend their designated transport area or nearest school, and they live more than the statutory walking distance of 2 miles for children aged under eight and 3 miles for children aged eight years old and over from that school.

It is your responsibility to check which school is your nearest or designated transport area school before applying for a school place.

Finding out if you are entitled to free school travel assistance

If your child is entitled to travel assistance, you will receive an email within 6 weeks of your child's school place outcome. If you do not receive an email this means your child has been assessed as not being entitled to free school travel assistance. Please do not apply for school travel assistance in the meantime.

Travel assistance entitlement is only assessed to the designated transport area or nearest school over the statutory walking distance of 2 miles for children aged under 8 and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over. If you wish for your child's travel assistance entitlement to be assessed under low income grounds, you will need to make a separate application. You can do this on [our school transport page](#).

Accepting an offer of school travel assistance

You will be sent a link to the medical needs form with the email offering travel assistance for your child. You must fill this out by the deadline given to accept the offer of travel assistance and to inform us of any medical needs your child may have. There is no guarantee that travel assistance will be set up for the start of the academic year if your form is returned late.

School travel assistance entitlement to schools that have changed their catchment area

Designated transport areas for schools match the catchment area for that school as at September 2012. If an admission authority has changed the catchment area for their school, there is no automatic change to the designated transport area. Designated transport areas are set by the local authority and can only be changed following a full public consultation.

Payseats

Since January 2020, we have had to comply with The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) regulations. These are accessibility regulations which cannot be met by the majority of the Somerset transport providers with their current fleet. The regulations prevent us from offering seats on a paying basis on vehicles over 22 seats which are not PSVAR compliant.

You can [apply online](#) for a payseat and you will be notified of the outcome before the start of the academic year, but it is highly recommended that you have alternative travel arrangements in place.

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Full information on all home to school travel assistance provision, including low income transport, faith transport and exceptional transport, is available [here](#).

Useful contacts

Other local authorities

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Independent schools in Somerset

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Last reviewed: **September 20, 2022** by Paul

Next review due: **March 20, 2023**

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