

Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for In-Year Applications for Schools in Worcestershire for 2022 to 23 Academic Year

Document Details:

Status: 0.2

Date: July 2021

Document Location: [Co-ordinated In-Year Scheme for all Worcester Schools \(opens in a new window\)](#)

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Introduction

In-Year admissions relates to applications by parents to move their child to another school other than at the normal point of entry e.g. following a change of address. These are also known as “casual” or “admissions outside of the normal admissions round”. The Scheme outlined below will apply to the academic year 2022/23.

Important things to consider before moving school

Moving a child to another school is a very serious step to take. It can affect a child in many ways. It is important to consider whether a transfer is really the best option. If you are requesting a change of school that is not as a result of a house move, before making a definite decision to transfer to another school, you should think very carefully and talk through any issues with your child’s present school. Before deciding to move a child to another school, please consider the following information carefully.

- Pastoral Care – the child will need to build new friendships and get used to a new teacher.
- Curriculum – although there is a National Curriculum, each school will deliver a part of this curriculum at different stages and times during the school year.
- Years 10 & 11 – you should be aware that moving a child in these particular year groups may not always be in the best interest of the child. Not all schools offer the same subjects at examination level and may use different exam boards and offer different syllabuses.
- Transport – How will your child get to the new school, you may not necessarily be entitled to transport assistance.
- Costs – All Worcestershire schools have a school uniform which all pupils will be expected to wear.

Many things that worry parents and pupils can be sorted out without the need to move schools. Talking to your child and staff at your child’s present school should avoid a transfer between schools in almost all circumstances. If a child is unhappy at school, speak to their class teacher or make an appointment to see the Head Teacher. If you have a complaint about a school, the teachers or the work your child is doing, if it cannot be resolved by the teaching staff, put your complaint in writing to the school’s Governors/Academy Trust.

If a child is not attending school, talk to the child about why they do not want to attend and speak to their teachers. If a child has special educational needs, speak to the teacher in charge of special needs (SENCO). If a child is about to be excluded, speak to your child’s class teacher or make an appointment to see the Head Teacher for advice.

There are strict regulations about the transfer of children between schools and the circumstances under which they can be taken off the school’s register. In the majority of cases children may not be taken off the schools register until they have been taken on to the roll of another school.

If you suspect that a child may be being bullied, talk to the child – ask them how they are – if there is anything worrying them. If they report an incident – write it down. Has this happened

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before? It is important that they know that it is not their fault. If it happened at school – tell the child's teacher. Keep a record. Encourage your child to tell someone straight away. If you believe a child is being bullied at school, it is very important to keep school informed of any incidents so that they can deal with the situation effectively.

If, after speaking to a child's teacher and allowing time for actions to be taken, you are not satisfied with the way the matter was dealt with, contact the Head Teacher and arrange a meeting. The Head Teacher should investigate the matter and action should be taken. However, if after speaking with the Head Teacher you are still not satisfied with the outcome and you still feel your child is being bullied; your next action should be to contact the Chair of Governors and ask them to investigate.

You are encouraged to consider all of the above points, decide whether a transfer is really the best option and discuss your concerns with staff at the child's current school. A change in school does not always lead to improvements in a pupil's behaviour. Moving your child to another school is a very serious step; it will not always solve the problem and can sometimes be more detrimental than helpful.

If you feel that a change of school is unavoidable you can make an application to transfer school.

Parents should be aware that different LAs and Academies, Foundation, Free and Voluntary Aided Schools may have different admissions criteria, and therefore it is strongly advised that they ensure that they have understood the information that is available from each LA/School, before stating their preference on any application.

Please make contact with the Admissions Teams of any of the relevant LAs, if further information is required. (The addresses and telephone numbers of all the neighbouring LAs can be found in the Information for Parents Book.)

The Application Process

The procedure for in-year admissions for Worcestershire residents is as follows;

1. The Authority provides a **common application form (CA1)** for parents to apply for a place at any mainstream school in **Worcestershire**.
2. In addition to the **CA1** Form, some Voluntary Aided, Academy, Foundation or Free schools may require parents to fill in a supplementary form which may request information that allows them to apply their oversubscription criteria. If schools use a supplementary form these must be consulted on and published and also available from the Local Authority.
3. A supplementary form, where required, must be submitted with the **CA1** form. It will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed the **CA1**.
4. Applications from parents for schools outside Worcestershire should be made direct to the school or the local authority in whose area the school is located to find out how they process in-year applications.
5. Parents will be invited to state up to three preferences on the **CA1** for schools in priority order and give reasons for those preferred schools. Preference order is not taken into

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account when applying admission criteria as the law requires all preferences to be treated equally.



6. Where a parent approaches a school directly the parent should be advised to complete a **CA1** and return it to School Admissions.

The Allocation Process

Following completion of the CA1 and returning it to School Admissions, the team will make available to all schools listed on the form full details of the application. All applications will be subject to scrutiny to determine whether or not they meet the criteria for consideration under the Fair Access Protocol.

Schools must consider requests with regard to the current number on roll, teaching organisation and accommodation and, in respect of infant and primary schools, key stage 1 class size limits. The school must inform the Authority of the availability of places and whether or not a place is available. This law requires that the outcome of an in-year application be communicated to the parent within 15 school days of the application being received. An admission authority can only refuse to admit an applicant if the admission would prejudice the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources.

The School Admissions Team will consult the preferred schools on receipt of the application and will let parents know if an offer can be made at any of the preferred schools. Where possible, this will be within 10 school days of receiving the application. The law requires an outcome to be provided to parents within 15 days of receiving the application at the latest. This is to ensure that children are not out of school for unnecessarily long periods of time. If it is not possible to offer a place at one of the preferred schools then an alternative will be advised to parents. This will normally be the nearest schools with vacancies, for which the parent can express additional preferences.

The Offer of a School Place

If a child can be offered a place at more than one school then a place will be offered at the highest ranked school possible. Where a school has advised that a place is available they will be informed if the place is the one to be offered or not to the parent. Parents will receive a single offer of a school place.

School Admissions will communicate the decision in writing to parents. If you are offered a place at a school the offer letter will instruct you to make direct contact with the school to arrange a mutually convenient start date.

Where an admission authority is unable to meet a preference, the law requires a refusal letter to include the reasons why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; any response date for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal as well as any waiting list procedures. The school will provide this information to School Admissions who will include the details in your letter. School Admissions will, where applicable and, if possible, provide details of schools with places available in the appropriate year group.

Where no place can be offered to a Worcestershire child and the child has no current school place, the School Admissions Team will look at the following alternatives, an alternative school place to offer, request further preferences from the parent and or a referral through the Fair Access Protocol will be made, where appropriate. In addition a referral to the Children Missing Education Team will also be made so that team can support a return to education.

Appeals

Any parent whose child is refused a school place will be informed in the decision letter of the reasons for refusal and their right to appeal against the decision to an independent appeal.

Your refusal letter will advise you of the full details, including who you should appeal to, where to send your written statement and will provide a timescale for response. Please note there is no deadline set by which you must lodge your appeal, but if you do not lodge your appeal within the timescale specified there may be a delay in the appeal being heard. All In-Year appeals must by law, be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools are maintained by School Admissions, and parents need to apply, in order to be included. These waiting lists will be maintained until the end of each term. Parents will need to reapply at the start of each term if they wish to be included on the list for the following term. The waiting list is ranked in line with the published oversubscription criterion. Each child added to that list will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criterion.

Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Academy and Free schools may choose to maintain waiting lists for in-year admissions. Priority on the waiting list is determined according to the school's oversubscription criteria. Where Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Academy and Free schools do maintain a waiting list, it is the responsibility of the school to notify School Admissions when places become available. The School Admissions Team will notify parents on behalf of the school that there is a vacancy and will also ensure that the current school is notified of any acceptance of an offer. This will allow the School Admissions Team to provide up to date figures on the availability of places in the area for parents, to accurately report to DfE and report information to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

Parents already on the waiting list and wishing to place their child's name on the list for the next term or academic year should be keep in direct contact with Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Academy and Free schools to find out the individual school procedures for the waiting lists.

Children allocated to a school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over any children on the waiting list.

The Fair Access Protocol

Although we hope that all children can start at school and continue until they transfer to the next phase of education, there are some circumstances when this progression through school is interrupted. This could be because of a change of address to another area, where children have especially challenging behaviour or who have been permanently excluded and cannot find another school place.

All LA's are required to have a "Fair Access" Protocol in place. This ensures that education placements can be made for vulnerable, excluded or "Hard to Place" pupils as quickly as possible. It also ensures that pupils are placed fairly and equitably across the education

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establishments in the LA.



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In Worcestershire these arrangements are overseen through “Fair Access Panels” that have been set up especially for this purpose. These meet throughout the academic year. Children subject to the Fair Access Protocol take precedence over children who may already be included in the waiting list for a particular school.

All Schools in Worcestershire take part in Fair Access to ensure that – outside the normal admissions round - unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. In agreeing a protocol, the local authority must ensure that no school - including those with available places - is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools, or who have challenging behaviour. The protocol must also include how the local authority will use provision to ensure that the needs of pupils who are not ready for mainstream schooling are met.

The operation of Fair Access Protocols is normally triggered when a parent of an eligible child has not secured a school place under in-year admission procedures.

All admission authorities must participate in the Fair Access Protocol in order to ensure that unplaced children are allocated a school place quickly. There is no duty for local authorities or admission authorities to comply with parental preference when allocating places through the Fair Access Protocol.

Where a governing body does not wish to admit a child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, even though places are available, it must refer the case to the local authority for action under the Fair Access Protocol. This will normally only be appropriate where a school has a particularly high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously excluded children. The use of this provision will depend on local circumstances and must be described in the Fair Access Protocol. This provision will not apply to a looked after child, a previously looked after child, including those who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have since been adopted, or a child with an Education Health Care Plan naming the school in question, as these children must be admitted.

As part of the Worcestershire Fair Access Protocol, which can be viewed at www.worcestershire.gov.uk and search for Fair Access Protocol. All schools with Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 classes can be required to exceed the published admission number to admit pupils covered by the Protocol.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health, effectively in the year group below or above their chronological age group.

The admission authority for any school must make the decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

In the case of a Community or Voluntary Controlled School the Local Authority will request the head teacher of the school to take account of the parent’s views; information about the child’s academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely in order to reach a decision as to whether or not it is appropriate for the individual child to delay or accelerate their entry into school and be taught permanently

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behind or ahead of their chronological age group. The reasons for the decision must be clearly set out.

Even if delayed or accelerated entry is agreed, the normal admission arrangements apply and there is no guarantee of a place.

